

THINGS SEARCHED OUT
and
OTHER ARTICLES

BY
ALFRED J GARDINER

Edited and Published by Andrew Burr
81 Roxburgh Road London SE27 0LE UK
burr.andrewlinda@btinternet.com

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Introduction

This volume is an addition to a series of books which I have produced in recent years to bring together ministry by Alfred J Gardiner not previously collected in this form. It adds to the collection a range of items which have come to light since it was completed. The sources of this material do not all include information about where and when the ministry was given. It is unlikely that Mr Gardiner himself revised most of these articles.

Some of these pieces were originally published in French, although one of them was originally given in London; I take responsibility for translating these into English.

A full list of books of our brother's ministry, including those originally published contemporarily, is at the end of this book; copies of the old ones can be readily found second-hand.

In my early years, I attended meetings in Streatham where Mr Gardiner broke bread; and have held him in great affection and regard. He was, of course, very active in ministry, and often away, but he never forgot his local meeting—either in his prayers or his attention to our practical and spiritual welfare. I remember him as apt to repeat himself in ministry, but I now

know this was not a sign of age—it will be seen in these books too.

Mr Gardiner has salutary advice about reading: ‘Books by themselves, however good they may be, cannot establish us in the truth ... It is only in the power of the Spirit that the thoughts of God can be grasped and made profitable, and if we are well aware of that, we are cast on God in prayer’. May reading of these books be taken up in this spirit to God’s glory!

ANDREW BURR

2020

Note—This book was first published as ‘Part 12’ in a collection of Mr Gardiner’s ministry; this is a re-issue including an additional article on Faith, an address given in Londonderry in 1959.

2026

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THINGS SEARCHED OUT

Proverbs 25: 1-5

These verses have come to my mind while our brother was speaking and I am waiting on the Lord to grant that we may get a profitable impression.

I believe that what we have read is of the greatest importance because we live in a world where evil increases, and it is true that, on the one hand, the truth would give us more clearly as to the thoughts of God concerning the assembly in its heavenly character and holy privileges; on the other hand we can be sure that Satan will not remain inactive and that he will seek to annul the light of this truth in our souls and to introduce among us what will discredit it; and it is therefore important indeed that we remember that God's government will operate infallibly, for after our conversion we are under this government as much as before. It is what has already been remarked to us, and it is true, dear brethren, it is in the assembly that we see the governmental ways of God manifested the most clearly. God has not yet publicly judged the evil in this world, but He does so in His house as it is said, "For the time of having the judgment to begin from the house of God is come", 1 Pet 4: 17. Paul, in writing to Timothy

also reminds us that “Of some men the sins are manifest beforehand, going before to judgment”, and he adds, “and some also they follow after” (1 Tim 5: 24), as if to insist upon the fact that, whether immediately or later, evil must inevitably be exposed. Then he says, “In like manner good works also are manifest beforehand, and those that are otherwise cannot be hid”, v 25. All this is very solemn and we have to admit the fact that in His house, God takes account of everything and that His judgment and His governmental ways infallibly come to pass, on the one hand to expose evil and to judge it; and on the other hand to recognise the good and reward it.

We can be assured that it is God’s great wisdom that we remain so long in a world of sin. It is the scene of Satan’s attacks against the truth, the gates of hades are opposed by every means and every kind of subtlety suggested by Satan to seek to destroy the testimony of God or to discredit it, but God uses evil even to achieve His ends. It is therefore very important, and on this very account, that the saints are found in a world of evil, for we have to learn there to judge the evil as God Himself judges it, it is a feature that must mark us. It is true that we must occupy the proper place of the assembly, and it is indeed necessary that we progress in holy discernment and spiritual sensibilities

according to Christ, so that on the one hand we have a horror of evil, as Christ Himself had a horror of it, and on the other hand, we cherish what is good as Christ and God also have. We may think that the standard is very high, but nothing less than that can suit a vessel which is the counterpart of the Man Christ Jesus, a vessel which will be the fulness of Christ, the expression of the glory of God.

And so this Scripture, which consists of certain proverbs valued in a day of recovery, says: "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the glory of kings is to search out a thing". There is nothing more stimulating than to have some impressions of the greatness of what God is working, in a hidden way it is true, in the saints currently. The world around us cannot take any account of a marvellous vessel, having the divine nature, and spiritual sensibilities, which God is preparing in the midst of evil conditions which surround us in the scene in which we live. But the glory of kings is to search out a thing. If on the one hands God conceals what He is doing, the glory of the saints is to be made intelligent as to His work, for I have not the least doubt that kings in this part of Proverbs refer to the saints in their dignity, and as royal persons, and as those who are destined to reign; as it goes on (we will leave verse 3 on one side for the moment), "... Take away the dross from the

silver, and there cometh forth a vessel for the refiner". This indicates, undoubtedly, that the present service of Christ, His continuing ministry, and His discipline also, God's discipline, but especially the ministry that the Lord gives us, is all to take away the dross from the silver, and there cometh forth a vessel for the refiner. How attractive that is! To think that the Lord, with patience and perseverance, follows us in all our assembly and individual exercises, and that He does this to take away what is in His eyes represented by the dross, so that a vessel may come forth which corresponds perfectly to Himself.

In order to arrive at this and to be a help to us, the Lord, it seems to me, uses two great means. If we do not respond to His ministry, if we remain deaf to the prophetic word, He will have to bring in discipline and chastisement, for He must reach His end—a vessel for the refiner. Our safety and blessing rests in the fact of having our thoughts on the lines of His own, so that we may discern the end to which He is working, and I see two ways that the Lord brings in to help us to resist every discouragement, two things suggested by "the heavens for height" and "the earth for depth"; and then it adds "and the heart of kings is unsearchable". This also contains a solemn warning: if divine things do not satisfy us, there

is the danger that we may be offered what will be harmful to us: “the heart of kings is unsearchable”, showing indeed that there is in us, as in kings, a great capacity, a possibility shall we say, as possessing the Spirit of God, that allows us to receive what is of God and to be *enlarged* by it; but if in the presence of such great thoughts of God we do not allow our hearts to go in for them and be satisfied by them, Satan will not fail to seek to fill the desires of an unsatisfied heart with what would be of him.

The Scripture says, “the heavens for height”, and “the earth for depth”. I think that the Lord would impress us with what is heavenly. The Holy Spirit has been given to us so that we have the possibility of entering into this realm. We have all been given a strong impression of this passage in Romans 8 where it is said, “And if the Spirit of Him that has raised up Jesus from among the dead dwell in us”. How remarkable—When God raised Jesus from among the dead, this showed clearly the great appreciation which he had of Jesus, and at the same time, it showed that He could not approve any other man than Him; it was a selective resurrection, if I may also be allowed to say so. He raised Jesus from among the dead. Jesus was raised by the glory of the Father and set by God even at His right hand in the heavens. What joy for the heart of God, not only to have

Jesus as Man down here, but to receive Him as the risen One, and to set Him in the place which had been reserved for Him before the foundation of the world, having in Him the guarantee of introducing a new order of things, in blessing and in glory, such that what the Father purposed in Himself for His own satisfaction, and to which we have been called by divine grace. Having therefore received the Spirit of Him who has done that, we are made able by the same Spirit to have part in a certain measure in the Father's thoughts and His feelings as to Christ, capable of understanding a little the delight that He finds in Christ, and also in the kingdom of glory which is seen in Him, a kingdom where the assembly has the first place.

What can be greater than God's thoughts about us? Thoughts that He has fully revealed in Christ. Stephen, His eyes lifted to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He saw the Centre of the glory, He who was to mark Him with His own features, Him to whom He would be conformed and to whom all are to be conformed; and Stephen, as drawn to Him, became like Him, entirely superior to death, finding his true life in the scene of glory where Jesus was found. It is such a scene that we are to find our life also. Before long, we will fill this sphere for the pleasure and glory of God, such is the place of

those who have taken on features like the features of Christ and who are full of the Spirit.

What a marvellous conception is that of Christ and the assembly, a conception which must have its expression now—a heavenly vessel, capable of serving God, a vessel which holds the ground for Him, for His glory. So it is in Acts 9, immediately after the martyrdom of Stephen, a light shone on Saul of Tarsus, a light coming from heaven. God led him to the light “the heavens for height”. The voice simply said to Saul: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou **me**?” The word “me” was enough that the heart of this man was filled by the light of what is heavenly. I desire that this word might have its place in all our hearts. If heavenly things fill them, they cannot fail to have a sanctifying effect on our souls, and to preserve us from evil. It is said in 1 John 3: 2: “Beloved, now are we children of God, and what we shall be has not yet been manifested; we know that if it is manifested we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is”. It adds, “And every one that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as *he* is pure”. So I suggest that “the heavens for height”, that is to say the light of what is heavenly, if we apprehend it in Christ, is one of the means which the Lord would use to carry on His work of purification in our hearts; He brings this light to us so that it makes an impression in our souls.

In Philippians 3: 12, we can see what impression the light had produced on Paul when he says: “I pursue, if also I may get possession of it, seeing that also I have been taken possession of by Christ”; the effect had been such that he had therefore been able to count as filth everything that had previously been a great advantage for him as a man in the flesh, and that on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

The light of heavenly things had brought out the greatness of divine grace, the greatness of divine glory, the greatness of divine wisdom; but on the other hand, we have “the earth for depth”. I think that that refers to the depths into which the Lord Jesus had to go: three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The very presence of sin in this world, our being included in this sin, and the necessity for us to be redeemed, all that has furnished the occasion for God to reveal the depths of His love and the love of Christ by His death; the earth has been a witness and that was going to be another means by which the Lord pursues His work of purification. His desire is that our souls and our hearts’ affections should be maintained by the light of the fact that He has been into the depths of death so that every element of evil which is asserted or manifested in our flesh should be judged; and we have in us the power for that. If

we allow ourselves to grasp these marvellous truths relating to the heavens for height and the earth for depth, they will contribute under the control of Christ to His work of purification, a work which is going on at the present time.

And so it says: “Take away the dross from the silver, and there cometh forth a vessel for the refiner”. Once this end is reached, it will be easy for the Lord to “take away the wicked from before the king” and to establish His throne in righteousness; that is the end to which we should look. At present, all this goes on in secret—it is the glory of God to conceal a thing— but has given us to discern this work of God in the saints and to be in full accord with Him in that.

KENNINGTON

12th February 1946

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MEETINGS IN VALENCE

31st OCTOBER & 1st NOVEMBER 1949

(MONDAY AND TUESDAY)

FOUR TYPES OF THE ASSEMBLY IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

First reading

Genesis 2: 8-15

Song of Songs 4: 16; 5: 1

A.J.G. I have thought that we could consider some types of the assembly, beginning in the garden of Eden. It is good to remark that, while what took place in the garden of Eden refers firstly to the first man and certainly the scene of the fall, there is at the same time a manifestation of certain thoughts of God as to the assembly. We need to remind ourselves that sin was in the universe before it entered into the world. That is clear, according to indications given in the second verse of the first chapter. God is just showing us how the enemy has brought in chaos; and the creation that God had made for His pleasure became a scene marked by confusion and darkness. There is therefore a definite fall from God. God has risen to this challenge, having in view to manifest in the assembly what He can secure for Himself in a scene in which He can find His pleasure. That

is the idea of a garden. The garden was in Eden; the word 'Eden' means 'pleasure', showing the general idea that everything that God created was to be for His pleasure. That idea has been brought into question, the world around us being a testimony to that; but God has planted a garden "in Eden", that is to say that He maintains His rights in the assembly to secure a limited sphere in which He finds His pleasure. I think that this type will help us to consider the assembly in this light, and that should develop in every locality. We find in chapter 3 that the serpent has come into the garden. Paul alludes to this in writing to the Corinthians, in telling them that he had espoused them to one man, to present them to Christ as a chaste virgin, but he feared that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craft, their thoughts should be corrupted and turned aside from simplicity as to the Christ. And so we have in this garden every tree that was pleasant to the eye and good for food, which suggests what the saints must be for the pleasure of God, and also reciprocally for our pleasure. Then there is the tree of life. There is also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which shows that God has in view that there would be in the assembly the possibility to discriminate between good and evil, to choose the good and reject the evil. Obviously, the first man was forbidden to touch this tree because he

was not able to take care of such things. He had to wait for the moment when men in Christ Jesus would be introduced, who would be able to see good and evil according to God.

Rem. These things are fully realised in John 20.

A.J.G. Exactly. The Lord said that he placed His confidence in them, and said to them, “whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained”. I am sure that that helps us greatly, because the Lord can find in the saints those who can judge things according to God, without excusing evil, but nevertheless marked by grace.

Ques. How does the garden represent the assembly?

A.J.G. It is the assembly in its local aspect, because it is effectively in our localities that these things are seen. The saints are held together by God, in their beauty and fruitfulness, bearing fruit, loving one another. Christ being the centre of everything, and they themselves having perfect discernment of good and evil. It is a great triumph for God to have down here what is assured in the midst of great confusion.

Ques. Is there significance in the fact that Jehovah planed a garden in Eden eastward?

A.J.G. Yes; that finds its counterpart in the first epistle to the Corinthians, where we read in chapter 1: 7, “so that ye come short in no gift, awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ”. That is what is in view, eastward, “awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ”, that is to say, the rising of the sun.

Rem. So that God had the end in view from the beginning.

A.J.G. We have to see that in what happened in chapter 1: 2 there had been a challenge to God, and God has faced it in claiming everything for Himself in the assembly, so that the Lord speaks of His assembly as being “my assembly”, and he says that the gates of hades will not prevail against it. That is what makes the local position so important. Even though our local position may be small, each local company must have in view to furnish pleasure to God, and at the same time, in the presence of a world of evil, to testify that God is still maintaining what is His due. We do not want to go straight on to the Song of Songs, but I would simply mention that what is found there shows how the pleasure of God can be maintained by affection for Christ. The Lord has always considered for the God, and if we are

considering for what pleases Christ, guarding each garden as being His garden, the result will be assured, that is to say, what is for God's pleasure.

Rem. I thought of chapter 2, where it says that the tree of life was in the midst of the garden; but Eve speaks of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which did not belong in the centre, Christ.

A.J.G. As soon as a restriction was placed on the first man, there was a suggestion, undoubtedly under the serpent's influence, to want what had been forbidden. That is why Eve associates the tree of the knowledge of good and evil with the central place that God had not given it; that was the tree of life, which was in the midst of the garden, because God had in view life for His own. But for His own glory, He waits for those who also had discernment between good and evil.

Ques. Do we see in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil the thought of God's commandments?

A.J.G. It was indeed right that God should impose conditions of obedience on His creatures; it is indeed right that man should be placed and maintained in this place of submission. This idea is seen in the Son, who

will subjected to Him who will have subjected all things to Him; not because He Himself is a creature, I do not suggest that at all, but that it is proper to man is taken up in the Person of Christ, and then it is in the assembly that derives from Him. None of God's thoughts could be realised in the first man. A divine Person had to come into humanity, and then there has been formation in men of His order, by redemption and the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that the assembly in Corinth, in which all these things are developed, is called "the assembly of God which is in Corinth", and, "sanctified in Christ Jesus". At the end of the first chapter of the first epistle, it is said "of him are ye in Christ Jesus". It is only thus, as being in Christ Jesus, that all God's thoughts can be appreciated and established.

Rem. The whole epistle to the Corinthians is a commandment of the Lord, and if we keep the commandments in a spirit of love, by the Spirit, we are protected from evil. I thought of the verse in Ecclesiastes, "whoso breaketh down a hedge, a serpent biteth him", Eccles 10: 8.

A.J.G. The commandment is for protection, submission to the commandment protects the creature.

Ques. What do you think about the river? It says that a river went out of Eden to water the

garden, which gives the impression that Eden was more extensive than the garden?

A.J.G. The river is an allusion to the Spirit, watering the garden first, making all that is living in the assembly to prosper, and then going out in the testimony of grace; so that the Spirit came first upon the one hundred and twenty disciples and formed the assembly, giving them life, and then the preaching went out in the testimony of grace, expanding from that point to the whole world.

Ques. Do we have an indication about it in John 14? “If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will beg the Father, and he will give you another Comforter”.

A.J.G. Obedience is assured first. If ye love me, keep my commandments”; that is what is suited between God and man, between God and His own, and then the Spirit is given to those who are marked by obedience. So we can well see what a great challenge was put to God by the introduction of evil into the universe. God has met it, but only on a morally fitting basis. In the epistle to the Romans, the Lord is presented as being the One who is characterised by obedience recovering all that the first man had ruined by his disobedience.

Ques. Eden existed before Jehovah planed a garden. Would you say something more about Eden as such?

A.J.G. I think Eden represents the general idea of the pleasure of God. It is said in Revelation 4, “for thy will they were, and they have been created”. So that it is right that God should find His pleasure in the work of His own hands. But all that is put into question, and God begins everything again in the assembly, in the face even of all the iniquity which is around us. The Lord says, “my assembly”, and He says that the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.

Rem. We have a similar thought to the garden when the Lord says, “I go to prepare you a place”, John 14: 2.

A.J.G. I think that John 14 refers more to God’s eternal purpose and to what comes into view in the last part of the passage in Genesis. However, before the Lord introduces the Father’s house and the purpose of God, He has said in chapter 13: 31, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him”. So that God must above all things be glorified as to all that has come in; nothing can be left unregulated before the introduction of what relates to God’s purpose. So, in the other of the development of the truth, the Lord sends Paul to Corinth, where the truth of the assembly in its

local character must be brought out, before sending him to Ephesus where the thought of Gd's counsel is developed. The introduction of sin has furnished God with the occasion to shine in a special glory, to make known that He cannot be overcome by evil. But He will always overcome evil with good. The glory is established and God is justified as to all that has come in; He has also shown what was in His purpose before the foundation of the world.

Rem. So the thought of the garden is more a local thought, and the house a universal thought.

A.J.G. It is so in the book of Numbers, in one of Balaam's prophecies, we read in chapter 24: 5, 6:

How goodly are thy tents, Jacob, and
thy tabernacles, Israel!

Like valleys are they spread forth, like
gardens by the river side,

Like aloe-trees which Jehovah hath
planted, like cedars beside the waters.

The garden is really the assembly in its responsibility down here, taking form in different localities. That greatly elevates our thought as to the local position, if we consider that there must be a garden for Jehovah. In spite of all that exists in the world all around us, what

is in the assembly according to God must be maintained. The power clearly rests in the Holy Spirit. That is why the river must water the garden.

Ques. Is there an important difference between the thoughts of tilling and guarding?

A.J.G. That is something else. Man is placed in the garden to till and guard it, man at that time comprising man and woman. The Lord has charge of everything in the assembly, but the saints are with Him in the acceptance of responsibility, for the tilling and guarding for the pleasure of God. So every feature of selfishness or independence that might mark us will result in the growth of something else that will not be for God's pleasure; on the other hand, if we see what God desires among us, and above all unity among us in the power of love one for the other, under the influence of Christ, we can well cultivate that. It is a matter of cultivating what is for God's pleasure, and also to watch what may be for his displeasure in the garden.

Rem. Apollos is a good help in the garden: "*I have planted; Apollos watered*", 1 Cor 3: 6.

A.J.G. There is also the house of Stephanas, who was devoted to the saints for service, for their well-being at Corinth. The house of

Stephanas was devoted to the saints for service. I think we can see that the assembly is the foundation of God's operations on the earth. So it is that the river becomes four great rivers. This will be a general way of alluding to the testimony of grace which goes out in the power of the Spirit. The last great river, the Euphrates, would seem to be what the Spirit is as holding back evil, because the Euphrates is the great barrier between East and West.

Rem. You are alluding to Revelation 16: 12: "the sixth poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates; and its water was dried up".

A.J.G. The barrier is taken away when the assembly shall have gone, so that evil will be able to penetrate and extend over all the earth. But in the present time, the presence of the Spirit in the assembly is a great hindrance to the development of evil.

Rem. "There is he that restrains until he be gone", 2 Thess 2: 7.

A.J.G. Then in the Song of Songs, we see how God's thoughts about the garden can be realised. At chapter 4: 16, the speaker says, "Awake, north wind, and come, thou south; Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow forth". Then she says, "Let my beloved come into his garden, And eat its

precious fruits”. That very much underlines the importance of each brother and each sister in each locality accepting the responsibilities for conditions which are found in the locality, understanding what the assembly is as belonging to Christ. It is a question of securing the conditions which will be for His pleasure. If these conditions are for Christ’s pleasure, they will be for God’s pleasure, so that divine thoughts will be realised. Exercises must be taken up in the power of affection for Christ. It is this that will produce the Supper each first day of the week.

Ques. Do you make a distinction between individual and collective responsibility?

A.J.G. If one is to take up collective responsibilities, one has to undertake individual responsibilities. Something cannot be produced miraculously from a collective point of view if the individuals themselves are not exercised.

Rem. The idea is presented in the virtuous woman at the end of Proverbs.

A.J.G. She is full engaged with the interests of her husband; she surveys the ways of her household. The speaker here invites the north wind as well as the south wind. In a general way, one does not like the north wind; and we are put to the test to know if we would invite it

to come. But there are certain fragrances that can only be manifested by the north wind, for example endurance, and love bearing all things, so that the north wind is not a disadvantage because it can bring out certain perfumes which are particularly for the heart of the Beloved.

Ques. Do we have the north wind in John 18? “Jesus, having said these things, went out with his disciples beyond the torrent Cedron, where was a garden, into which he entered, he and his disciples”? Then do we have the south wind in John 20, when the Lord manifests Himself to Mary of Magdala?

A.J.G. It is striking that allusion should be made to the garden in John 18. Jesus entered there with His disciples; He often came there, and Judas knew it. He himself entered the garden, that is to say that the enemy himself invaded the garden, but that only brought out the devoted love of Christ in that He says, “If ye seek me, let these go away”.

Ques. Was that the effect of the north wind in the garden?

A.J.G. If the north wind blows, that brings out in the saints what is for God’s pleasure. We can feel that there are discouraging and unhappy conditions in certain localities; but are there those who serve the saints in love, persevering

in the truth, supporting everything, hoping all things? If such is effective, there will be a perfume for the heart of Christ which will come out, and He will see to it that, at an opportune moment, the south wind will blow. At the end of chapter 4, what is in view is that the speaker is occupied with the Beloved, “who is come into his garden”, accepting every wind that will produce aromas for His pleasure. The answer on the part of the Beloved is immediate, so that at the beginning of chapter 5, He says, “I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse”.

Ques. Is the Supper a special occasion for that?

A.J.G. You would say so that the Lord may enter into His garden.

Rem. And to receive what is to His taste.

A.J.G. So that the Lord in Luke 24 comes in and says “Have ye anything to eat?”, that is to say that the Lord would appropriate what there is in the locality: “And they gave him part of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb; and he ate before them”. He only ate a little, so that what the Lord obtains for Himself in each locality is of the same character as is possessed in the whole assembly. It is simply a part of what is found in the whole assembly.

Rem. There is then an appeal to eat and to drink.

A.J.G. It is very touching. The Lord has the right to claim everything for Himself and to appropriate it, and he does so by showing that he appreciates the exercises that are there; but then he would desire to share what He has with his beloved. He says, “Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, beloved ones”. It is an allusion to the way in which the Lord would give us the feeling that we have part with Him in His own joy.

Ques. It speaks of the spices in chapter 4: 16 and the precious fruits. What is the significance of the two?

A.J.G. I think that, in the spices, there is the idea of perfume. It speaks of the Lord as having incense (Deut 33: 10), so that there would be an odour of sweet savour; but then the precious fruit is what can be eaten; they are just suggestive words for what is for the Lord’s pleasure.

Ques. What is the significance of this expression in chapter 1: 6, “Mine own vineyard have I not kept”?

A.J.G. It is something that one sees in the religious systems that are around us. Young believers are set to work. But the great matter

is to face local responsibility. “They made me keeper of the vineyards”, that is that one has been put to work, but she has to say, “Mine own vineyard have I not kept”. The great matter is to recognise the responsibility that has been laid upon us in the place where the Lord has set us, and to face it. Later, we might be qualified for every service that the Lord might require.

Rem. The apostle Paul says to the Hebrews that they had become dull in hearing and that they did not have the sense of good and evil.

A.J.G. The different exercises that arise in our localities have in view to develop this faculty of discerning good and evil, to lay hold of the good and reject the evil, and in particular to develop love, for love never fails. The important point upon which the Lord insists at the present time is the great need of love among us. There can be no answer to Christ in power unless the saints are united in love, because the assembly is an entity. It is not a question of certain number of brothers who express their responses, but it is about the assembly as being a single body, and what is produced in the assembly in response to Christ finds expression in the fact that we are together.

Ques. What does the honeycomb suggest?

A.J.G. The honeycomb suggests conditions of mutuality among the brethren, and the honey is the sweetness that results. Then there is the wine and the milk. The wine would suggest the joy that the Lord Himself has in the occasion which He has furnished.

Rem. Hence the importance of 1 Corinthians 13, and the apostle's injunction to "Follow after love".

Second reading

Genesis 2: 18-24

Ephesians 1: 8-14; 5: 25-32

A.J.G. This morning, we have considered the assembly being typified in the garden of Eden, in its local aspect, and corresponding to the truth presented in the epistle to the Corinthians. Now, in this passage here, we have the assembly from the points of view of the Ephesian epistle, that is to say that it is not in relation to evil surroundings but rather according to eternal purpose. We can see in the passage in Ephesians 1 that God is pleased to make us to know the mystery of His will for the administration of the fulness of times, which is to unite in one all things in Christ; and it is added, “in him, in whom we also have an inheritance”. I understand that this corresponds to the position presented in Genesis 2: Adam is presented as being established by God as head over the whole system which has been created by God. God has not only created the earth, but He has brought into existence a world of life on the earth, comprising the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth, as well as living things which are in the waters, a system comprising much variety of life. God placed man at the head of all that, having Christ in view, that is to say Christ personally as being

anointed head; he is established there over the whole heavenly and earthly system, and in that position, God has given him a helpmate. That helps us to see the elevated position of the assembly, as being furnished by God to be united to Christ in glory and to be with Him in the administration of the world to come. Ephesians also alludes to this, citing Genesis 2: 24 and adding, "This mystery is great, but I speak as to Christ, and as to the assembly". Ephesians 5 also presents certain other features of the truth. It speaks of Christ who sanctifies the assembly in purifying it by the washing of water by the word. That evidently goes further than Genesis 2. There is nothing in Genesis 2 which suggests the service of the love of Christ. The initiative is taken by God; it is He who says, "It is not good that Man should be alone; I will make him a helpmate, his like". It is said that, "Jehovah Elohim had formed every animal of the field and all fowl of the heavens, and brought them to Man, to see what he would call them; and whatever Man called each living soul, that was its name". That is to say that God manifested the intelligence which was found with man. That would give us exercise to acquire spiritual intelligence because it is very evident that man would hardly find satisfaction in a helpmate who lacked intelligence; hence the great importance now of acquiring spiritual

intelligence. The Holy Spirit, taking us in hand to this very end, is ready to lead us into all the truth and to develop in us a perception and spiritual sensibilities. We can see the whole importance of that of which we are speaking in order to occupy the position relative to Christ as a helpmate who corresponds to Him.

Ques. Are you introducing the thought of what a locality is in considering the assembly like this?

A.J.G. No. Except that wherever an expression of the assembly is found, that is manifested in a locality. That must always be borne in mind, so that the epistle to the Ephesians, although universal in its presentation, is nevertheless written to a local assembly, and to saints marked by spiritual features. What was your thought in raising this question?

Rem. I only had the thought that in speaking thus of the assembly, the universal feature had to be considered.

A.J.G. I am sure that is indeed so, because the helpmate for Christ must evidently be the whole assembly; it must comprise all the saints since Pentecost until the appearing of the Lord Jesus. That will be clearly seen, for the first time, at the rapture.

Ques. Are you speaking now rather of the appearing of the Lord Jesus, when He will be manifested in glory, because the rapture will be secret?

A.J.G. But at the same time we will see the assembly for the first time when the Lord comes for us; that will be a marvellous vision, to see for the first time the assembly altogether; and that will be produced in the twinkling of an eye.

Ques. Will we see that on the earth?

A.J.G. It will be seen on the earth for a very brief instant. It is said that the dead in Christ rise first—that places them on the earth for an instant; and those who remain, we shall be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall be always with the Lord. That supposes that we shall see it on the earth for an instant.

Rem. The Old Testament saints will have their place at the moment of rapture; they will be raised with the members of the assembly.

A.J.G. Exactly so, but I have no doubt that the Lord will set aside those who compose the assembly, so that in 1 Corinthians 15, it speaks of the victory over death, which reigned from Abel to the end. 1 Thessalonians 4 makes reference also to the same event, having in view the assembly especially; it is said that “the Lord

Himself shall descend from heaven with an *assembling* shout.

Ques. Do we see the Old Testament saints in those who are invited to the marriage of the Lamb?

A.J.G. I suppose so, as far as I understand it.

Rem. John the baptist speaks of himself as the friend of the Bridegroom.

A.J.G. The Lord says that among those born of women there was none raised up greater than John the baptist, but the least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he.

Rem. That underlines the distinction.

A.J.G. It is striking that we have a greater place than men such as Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, and many others; it is a matter of the grace of God, and that He loves to show forth the glory of His grace. The assembly is a unique formation; so that Adam, seeing the woman who had been brought to him says, "This time it is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh". Undoubtedly, he had taken account of the various creatures, each male creature having its corresponding female, but of Adam it is said, "he found no helpmate, his like". We can well understand what Adam's feelings were when he saw the woman who had been brought

to him, and we can well transfer all that to Christ in thinking of the feelings He has in considering the assembly divinely formed for Himself.

Ques. Is “this time” the expression of a heart that longs for the thing it desires?

A.J.G. Exactly.

Rem. And in attributing such sentiments to Christ, we must have corresponding sentiments.

A.J.G. We read in Genesis that Jehovah Elohim “built” the woman; she is not presented as being created, but rather built, which suggests a certain time. One is thinking of what is being produced now in the work of the ministry. Ephesians 4 speaks of the work of the ministry; it is said (v 12): “for the perfecting of the saints, with a view to the work of the ministry to the edifying of the body of Christ”, and Paul goes on to say, “until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, at the full grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ”. I think that shows edification, it is what is being pursued now. It is the work of God by means of gifts, by Christ.

Ques. Do we have the necessary state for such edification in v 16, the increase of the body to its self-building up in love, love being necessary for edification to follow?

A.J.G. Formation is according to Christ, the great end in view being to arrive at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ; and the influence of Christ, which is an influence of love, must be constantly felt. We have to hold the truth in love, and we must walk in love as Christ also has loved us. What is therefore in view is the formation of the body and its edification, what leads to correspondence in the assembly.

Ques. Is it what Christ is as Man?

Rem. It is what is said about the body of Christ just now; and that corresponds to the truth touching the assembly complete in the future.

A.J.G. The epistle to the Colossians presents certain thoughts which may affect the saints, and it speaks of things which are not according to Christ in chapter 2: 8, at the end of the verse—"and not according to Christ", which shows the apostle's great exercise, who feared that one might bring in what was not according to Christ. At the end of verse 17 of the same chapter, it is said, "but the body is of Christ". That shows us the measure that we must have before us in the ministry and that we must also have in all our exercises, not only as serving in the truth but in all our relations one with another. Our brother referred to Ephesians 4:

16: “from whom the whole body, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply, according to the working in its measure of each one part, works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love”. The apostle considers that we are also to build one another up in love; it is not only what the gifts can do by the power of Christ above, but what the saints do among themselves, as holding the truth in love.

Rem. God works on the one hand by the gifts which are made by Christ, and on the other by the mutual exercises of saints holding together in love.

A.J.G. That is why Adam speaks firstly of bones, and then of flesh; while in Ephesians it is the flesh first and then the bones. The bones represent the general structure, the framework that is inside what we see in the flesh.

Rem. It is essential for the edification of the body that each member has personal and direct links with the Head.

A.J.G. That is why it says in Ephesians 4, “from whom the whole body, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply, according to the working in its measure of each one part, works for itself the increase of the

body to its self-building up in love". Each part derives from the Head.

Rem. It speaks in the epistle to the Colossians of not holding fast the Head.

A.J.G. I believe that we must be impressed by the need to have the divine measure before us, because the work of God at the present time has in view formation of this wonderful vessel which answers completely to Christ as Man.

Ques. Does the exhortation in chapter 4: 3 have its full bearing and realisation in verse 16: "using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace"?

A.J.G. What we have in verse 16 is further on. In verse 3, it is more that we are exhorted to keep the unity of the Spirit, implying that we will bear with one another in love; but bearing with one another in love is not enough; it requires the activities of love in a positive way.

Rem. I thought that was indeed the case, we do not attain to the whole scope of the body because we neglect the exhortation in verse 3.

A.J.G. That is why verse 3 is of the highest importance; but the principle of support for one another in love cannot of itself produce unity; it helps us against disunity, but to have unity, it is necessary to think of a single thing and to move

positively in love: “walk in love, even as the Christ loved us, and delivered himself up for us”; so that the love of Christ must always be the standard for us.

Rem. Paul says in the Philippians “I exhort Euodia, and exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord”.

Ques. Would you make a comparison between the work indicated in chapter 4 and that we lead to self-building up in love,—work in which the saints are together—with what is given in chapter 5 which could be the work of Christ to present the assembly to Himself?

A.J.G. In chapter 5, we have the love of Christ for the assembly following what we have in Genesis 2; and my impression is that what is that what is said of the present work of Christ’s love in Ephesians 5 has in view our participation in the service of God in the assembly, that is to say that He sanctifies it, purifying it by the washing of water by the word. The Lord desires that we should be able to understand what we are according to God’s purpose, as being entirely for Christ, set apart from everything else by His precious death. Thus, there is the washing of water by the word; that implies intelligence to enter upon it, that is to say that the Lord produces in our minds, in our hearts, the reality of that which has been

effectuated by His death. The fact that we are entirely set apart from all that we might be otherwise—so that we are entirely according to God’s work—should be found before our eyes, in the same way as it is found to be in God’s sight.

Rem. In considering the assembly in that way, the edification is already accomplished.

A.J.G. The Lord can consider things in that way, and the Spirit leads us in accord with that. He constantly sets before us the importance of the death of Christ and the influence of love which led Him to death: He loved the assembly. It is as if these thoughts of God came before Christ, speaking with all reverence. He loved it and delivered Himself up for it. Now, each time we come together, he would put this before us, in a fresh way, the sanctifying power of His death, so that we should be entirely for Him, as being conscious of being suitable to Him.

Ques. Does that correspond to verse 23, “the Saviour of the body”?

A.J.G. I do not believe that is would be the thought. Here we have the service of Christ in view of presenting the assembly to Himself glorious; and while that will have its full answer when Christ comes, I believe that it is what the Lord would do on the first day of the week:

present the assembly to Himself glorious. In the Song of Songs, the Beloved says,

Thou art all fair, my love;
And there is no spot in thee.
(chap 4: 7)

Ques. Are you relating John 13 to this service of the Lord?

A.J.G. No, because the washing in John 13 is simply feet washing, while here the washing of water by the word has complete washing in view; that is the sense of the word used.

Ques. It is said that the washing of water is by the word. Does this thought include ministry?

A.J.G. It is the service of Christ which is in view here. This would be the way in which the Lord would apply the truth of His death to our own intelligences, so that in the power of the Spirit we might be able to dissociate from everything to which the death of Christ has put an end, so that only what is of Christ remains. That immediately puts us at ease with Christ; we are then conscious of being suited to Him, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh.

Ques. Is that new creation, of which Paul speaks in 2 Corinthians 5?

A.J.G. Yes, and also in Ephesians 4, where it is said “having put on the new man, according to God is created in truthful righteousness and holiness”. There is the thought of new creation there.

Rem. If we have the privilege of partaking in what is actually the assembly’s response to the love of Christ, we completely lose from view what attaches to a locality; we see the assembly as it will be in the end, in glory.

A.J.G. The assembly is considered from that point of view; having no past history (it is not therefore a question of a past sinful history). But at the same time, in order to be a company suited to Christ, she must have a holy knowledge of good and evil; that is to say, a complete appreciation of good and a holy horror of evil; hence current exercises. Christ Himself is the great standard by which God operates; for He has loved righteousness and hated lawlessness.

Rem. So it is that we can understand what the intelligence of the woman must be, since the man’s intelligence was set put at the beginning of our meeting.

A.J.G. One understands that in considering a horse, for example, which can be considered very attractive, Adam in naming it has indicated

the feature of glory that God has given it; however, Adam could not find pleasure in a horse because a horse could not enter into an understanding of Adam's feelings. Nevertheless, a horse expresses certain definite thoughts of glory, as we see in the book of Job. But the assembly must be capable, in affections and intelligence, of answering fully to the heart of Christ and to enter into all His interests as Man.

Rem. According to this scripture, all that is the product of the Lord's work.

A.J.G. The work of God cannot perish, but it is carried on by the gifts made by Christ above, and by the operation of each one in his measure; hence the great importance of love and of understanding the love of Christ Himself.

Ques. Would you say something about the Lord's declaration: "on this rock I will build my assembly" in connection with what we have said on the subject of edification?

A.J.G. As I understand it, that is not exactly an eternal thought; it is what the Lord established on the earth in the presence of evil, "on this rock" is what was in Peter characteristically. He had confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the Lord said, "on this rock I will build my

assembly, and hades' gates shall not prevail against it". The more the saints appreciate Christ, as being the Son of the living God, the more they will refuse every other strange influence against what is against Christ; and they will enjoy their part in the love of God. In consequence, they will be kept. Think of the times of the martyrs. Satan could not overcome them because they carried in their hearts the truth about what Christ was; they loved it, they would not abandon the truth, even if they would be put to death. It is thus that hades' gates have not been able to prevail against the assembly. We can see that that is a bit different from the assembly envisaged according to divine purpose.

Rem. I would like to know if this expression of the Lord's answers more to the house than the body.

A.J.G. I suppose so.

Rem. The administration in the millennium answers to the bride.

A.J.G. Ephesians 1 speaks of the administration of the fulness of times, which has the millennium in view more than the eternal state; the bride becomes the vessel of administration in the millennium as well as in

eternity; but the city prepared as a bridge adorned for her husband belongs to eternity.

Ques. Would it be right to say that formation is eternal, what is built is eternal?

A.J.G. Yes.

Ques. Does chapter 1: 10 in its setting, with the thought of heading up all things in the Christ, answer to the millennium?

A.J.G. Yes, it is the millennium, and the administration of the fulness of times has the millennium in view.

Rem. I thought more particularly of the fact of heading up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth.

A.J.G. That is God's purpose; the administration of the fulness of times is the millennium. All things in the heavens and on the earth must be reunited in Christ, and all that is typified established by God's work. There is a heavenly and earthly order of life. There are the birds that fly in the expanse, according to Genesis 1: 20. Then there are the beast of the earth and the creeping things. So there is God's pleasure in a heavenly and earthly order of life. In eternity, there are new heavens and a new earth; but in the world to come, He reunites on one everything in Christ. Paul goes on in

Ephesians in saying, “in him, in whom we have also obtained an inheritance, being marked out beforehand according to the counsel of his own will”. That sets the assembly as answering to the woman, partaking with the Man in His position as Head.

Ques. Would you say a word about the difference between purpose and counsel? We have both terms in verse 11.

A.J.G. I think that counsel comes in the first place, it is the counsel of His will. Purpose is the intention to effect what is His counsel.

Ques. Would you develop that?

A.J.G. The two are evidently closely linked to one another, but the first thing has to be the will of God and the counsel of His will. It seems that divine Persons have taken counsel together, and the counsel having been formed, there has been purpose to bring it about, and another can hinder this purpose.

Ques. So you would link the reunion of all things in heaven and on earth during the millennium with purpose, as well as eternal things?

A.J.G. Yes.

Ques. “Having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to His good

pleasure which He purposed in Himself for the administration of the fulness of times". Would you say that "his good pleasure" is the same thing as "his purpose"?

A.J.G. "According to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his own will". I believe that we must always remember that from the beginning, God knew everything; and He works all things together in a wonderful way, to bring about His purpose of love, and also to meet all the opposition which He has met in time. But it is very touching to see that God works all things according to the counsel of His will. One would be reminded of the days of Solomon, he made a remarkable throne of ivory covered in gold, having six steps to approach it; on each step there were two lions, and there was also a lion on each side of the seat. It was a throne covered in gold which, I believe, has the object of showing that God will be supreme in the end. The throne of gold represents the divine glory which shines supreme. It was approached by steps; on each step there are two lions; the lion does not turn aside for anything whatever. That has in view that we should grasp that, from the beginning, God has in view to secure conditions in which He Himself would be supreme in the hearts of the saints, and in reaching that end, He is not turned aside for anything. Satan may well seek

to oppose, but God always goes on, so that here, when God created the heavens and the earth, some enemy introduced chaos, but God pursues His thoughts and introduces a greater glory, in which no enemy whatever is allowed to enter; God will triumph over evil. This when Christ was born, the enemy went to try and put Christ to death. The incarnation was one of these wonderful steps, and God went on, not turned aside for any. Redemption has been another step. Satan had thought that he would gain the victory when Christ was put to death, but God secured redemption at that point, always going on, going from glory to glory. Then the resurrection is another step, and as soon as the resurrection took place, a lie was spread all over Jerusalem. There has been constant opposition on the enemy's part, but God goes on triumphantly. He has raised Christ from among the dead and given Him glory; man is exalted in the Person of Christ, and God shows thus what His thoughts are for men. Then the Holy Spirit has come down, and there were great new efforts of the enemy in opposition to the truth, effort having in view to displace the Holy Spirit in the assembly; but in our days, the Lord has recovered a lace for the Holy Spirit. We see that God always keeps going forward; He is not turned aside for any, and when the end will be

reached, He will be supreme in glory. That is what is suggested by the throne of gold.

Third reading

Genesis 24: 10-14, 54-57

A.J.G. We have already considered the assembly as being typified in the garden of Eden, a sphere which maintained what was for the pleasure of God. It is truly a garden and there is discernment there between good and evil, this being typified in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Then we have been occupied with the assembly as being typified by the woman led to the man. We will now consider chapter 24, which has often occupied us in the ministry, and my desire is that the Lord will give us a fresh touch this morning. Peter had confessed the Lord as being “the Christ, the Son of the living God”, and in Genesis 2, Adam is really a figure of Christ, that is to say one by whom God effectuated all that was for His pleasure; it is in the light of this that the assembly is given to Him. We could say that chapter 24 presents the Son of the living God, that is to say that Isaac is seen there as being the object of his father’s affections. It is good to see that Christ is not only the Head and Centre of a world of glory; but in this position, He is the beloved Son, so that the great system that God has before Him is a system of love all concentrated on the Son of His love.

This chapter therefore presents the assembly as being acquired by the service of the Holy Spirit and in view of being led to Isaac in the position of affection. That enters in a particular way into the service of God in the present time. In order that God should be served in the assembly, the assembly must be conscious of its own part in the affections of Christ. That is what is in view in the service of the Spirit in this chapter, to lead Rebecca to Isaac as being his wife. I think that we could concentrate especially on the great need for spirituality in the present time. There is a great emphasis not only on the presence of the Holy Spirit, but also on His power at His service; the well, the camels, the servant, all these typifying the Holy Spirit from different points of view. To confirm what I am going to say, I would refer to what the servant says in verse 13: "I stand here by the well of water". The expression, "I stand" indicates that he has taken a position in a definite way, and then again in verse 30, where Laban comes to the man, it is said that he was standing by the camels, by the well, which shows the great importance of the well as well as the camels.

Ques. Is there a special thought which goes with the fact that the servant, the camels, and the well of water, are considered in the evening?

A.J.G. That may well have a special bearing upon ourselves, for we can say that we are at the end of the day, and it is just at the end of the day that the Lord brings all this out. One of the features of spirituality is seen in dependence, and I believe that this is indicated in the fact that the servant makes the camels kneel down by the well. I know that camels kneel down in the natural way; but God has ordered these things in such a way that these animals, in taking this position naturally, represent the Holy Spirit. Dependence is a feature of the Holy Spirit's service. He does not speak from Himself, but He speaks what He hears, so that the presence of the Holy Spirit as being recognised by us will produce dependence in ourselves in a characteristic way.

Ques. Is it touching to see that this attitude of dependence has been introduced by the Lord Himself and taken on by the Holy Spirit?

A.J.G. The Lord having taken on humanity has particularly manifested what is proper to man, saying Himself that He had been cast upon God from the womb. As you say, the Holy Spirit moves and serves in the same line of thought, so that there is a double influence which is brought upon us at the same time from that of the Son and of the Spirit moving thus in view of our being delivered from independence

that we are so naturally, so that we should learn to depend really upon God. It is particularly important in the assembly that dependence on the Spirit of God should characterise us. It is important to remark that it is in a deliberate manner that the servant stands by the well, and it is not without importance what had part in the matter in his coming to the well. In the East, one comes to the well every day; one cannot live if one abandons the well; so that the fact of coming to the well suggests our recognition of the Holy Spirit every day, as being the very principle of our life.

Ques. Do we see an indication of the principle of separation in verse 11, “where he made the camels kneel down outside the city”?

A.J.G. Yes.

Rem. I find it very impressive that, when it is a matter of Rebecca, that is to say in type, the assembly, we have three essential characters of the Spirit.

A.J.G. I think that the well is the first thing, what is fundamental. If we do not learn to judge the flesh and give place to the Spirit, we will not enter into God's things. Then the camels are equally important because they represent the power for movement. It has to be noticed at the end of the chapter that, when Isaac lifted by his

eyes, what he saw was that camels were coming; it is this which attracts the heart of Christ when we are together in assembly, it is the fact that the saints are in movement together as being one in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Ques. Could it be said that to come to the well, one has to leave the city?

A.J.G. Yes, and the well was the great source of their everyday life; they needed water every day, so that the question is raised with respect to our concern about the well: What is the principle of our life? Is it that the Holy Spirit is definitely recognised by us and the flesh repudiated?

Ques. Have we a contrasting example with Hagar, who has despised the well and was content with other water?

A.J.G. If the angel had not opened her eyes to see the well, Ishmael would have died. But she is simply going to drink just a little water; then she took a wife for her son from the land of Egypt. So it is that Hagar and Ishmael represent those who at bottom are real believers but who give very little place to the Spirit of God, and who in reality find their own life in other things.

Ques. Is there any indication in the fact that the camels kneel before the well of water while the servant stands near the well of water? 5

A.J.G. The servant takes his place definitely by the well, near the camels, and while we recognise that the Holy Spirit is down here, in the end He leads us into all the truth and to reveal to us all that belongs to the assembly, nevertheless He cannot make progress with us if we are not accustomed to give place to the Spirit and if we do not learn to leave ourselves to the power of the Spirit, being dependent on the Spirit when we are gathered in assembly.

Ques. Is it not touching that it should say, “at the time when the women came out to draw water”?

A.J.G. That should indeed impress us. If one of the maidens of the people of the city had not come to the well, they would surely have been excluded.

Rem. I believe that what our brother has said has more in view the fact that the camels are kneeling before the well of water, while the servant is standing by the fountain.

A.J.G. The well would be the general thought, while the fountain would be more the springing up.

Ques. Would you say that the well is the system of grace?

A.J.G. Not necessarily.

Rem. I think that it would be right to say that the well represents the whole system. The well would represent the thin taken together, while the fountain would be the springing up; it speaks of a fountain springing up.

A.J.G. It is what is furnished for the fountain to spring up; that requires certain exercises on our part to maintain the well. In the days of Isaac, the Philistines had stopped the wells; they could hinder the springing up of the fountain by stopping the well, but the fountain is still there. the well needs to be dug to make room for the fountain, so that the well indicates the necessity on our part of ensuring the free springing up of the fountain.

Rem. The nobles dug the wells with their staves.

A.J.G. It is not the usual way of digging wells, but that brings in the idea of dependence which is suggested in the staff.

Rem. If the wells of water are here *outside* the city, in the Song of Songs, we find a fountain *in* the garden, a well of living water which flows from Lebanon, the principle of separation.

A.J.G. If there are good conditions maintained in the path of separation, then there will be occasion for the springing up of the

fountain in the garden. It is a case of knowing if there is a custom in our lives of coming to the well.

Ques. What do you think of Numbers 21 where there is the well and it is necessary to sing for it to rise up, rather than having the fountain?

A.J.G. I rather think that Numbers 21 would apply particularly to an occasion such as this, that is to say we recognise that the Holy Spirit is here with the saints and in a spontaneous way we sing to Him, recognising that He is ready here to serve us, putting His service at our disposal, not having confidence in some possibility that might be of ourselves, but waiting on the Spirit so that he will show us the truth in a fresh way; that is what the fountain suggests.

Rem. The well was there and we have the general thought, but it is necessary to have special exercises for us to be able to benefit from the water.

A.J.G. This there is the responsibility on the part of the nobles to dig the wells under the direction of the Lawgiver, which suggests that there is submission to the Lord; then the thought of the staff suggests dependence. All of us in principle are nobles as having received the Holy Spirit, but that would apply in a particular way

to those who lead among us in each locality, those who accept their responsibilities, who recognise the Holy Spirit every time that we come together, so that the truth can be developed in a living way.

Ques. Would you say that those who forsake the assembling of themselves together are people who are not coming to the well?

A.J.G. Neglecting the well could be found with people who do not miss coming to meetings, because the thought of coming to the well is more individual in the body of Genesis 24. That raises the question of knowing if we living according to the flesh or according to the Spirit, because to move in what belongs to the assembly answering to Christ, there must be spiritual conditions.

Rem. There were other camels besides these ten.

A.J.G. Abraham had other camels, which would indicate the riches in the Holy Spirit. The servant took what was necessary, that is to say ten camels.

Rem. He did not take them under an order, but of himself.

Ques. Would you say why it is that it is the maidens of the city who come to the well? Is it

that the feminine side is in view, corresponding to the assembly?

A.J.G. The feminine side is actually emphasised because it has to mark the assembly in relation to Christ. It is clear that Rebecca had found how it was easy to serve the servant; the more we learn to act thus with the Holy Spirit, the more we will apprehend how it is suitable to serve the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is Himself God and He dwells in us; and all the things that please God, in which we occupy ourselves, would furnish refreshment to the Holy Spirit; and all that we do that is for the displeasure of God would grieve the Holy Spirit. Rebecca is a person who had the habit of coming to the fountain; she was able to respond freely to the servant's request and to pour water not only for himself but for his camels.

Ques. Is Rebecca distinguished in that from the other young women of the city?

A.J.G. Yes, and the servant took note of in a particular way of certain features, as it is said in verse 22 that the man took a gold ring and a nose ring of gold, and two bracelets for her hands, and he put all that before her, as if he took particular pleasure in the features of spiritual discernment or sensibilities that characterise those who come to the fountain. He also took account of activities for the hands suggest all

the activities of love which are developed among the saints, hospitality for example, and other things; all these things are the fruit of the Spirit, which pleases God. The Holy Spirit would bring all this out as being the features which please Him in the assembly.

Rem. In John 4, it is a question of springing up for him who drinks, and in chapter 7, it is a question of rivers of living water which *flow out*.

Rem. I have understood, according to what you said at the beginning, that you had rather in view the fact of being led by the Holy Spirit in present enjoyment.

A.J.G. That is precisely what I had in my mind. The fact of coming to the well is basically characteristic, so it is a case of knowing if we have put ourselves in the way of the power of the Spirit.

Rem. A remarkable thing in verses 15 to 21 is the haste with which the servant and Rebecca act.

A.J.G. Sometimes, when we are together, there is a lack of liberty, and as a result a delay, while Rebecca before the servant has remarkable haste, a readiness to act immediately, not that she manifests in any way

the activities of the flesh, but the Holy Spirit would produce liberty and spontaneity.

Ques. Is the well linked with spiritual life in the individual, and the camels with the power of movement in the assembly?

A.J.G. Exactly so. But it is good to note also the question that follows in this chapter, which is that Rebecca, far from being detained by bad things, will not even be detained by something legitimate, in its own sphere, when her brother and her mothers wanted to detain her. She shows that she is determined to go with the man; and then, having said, "I will go", she acts according to her determination. It is said that she arose and her maids, and that they rode on the camels and went after the man. As soon as she acts thus, it is said that the servant took Rebecca. I believe that this would greatly help us when we are together in the assembly, if our minds were to be decided to give ourselves over to the Spirit. John says, "I became in the Spirit on the Lord's day"; that is something which is done by its own power; He became such. It is a little like Rebecca mounting the camels, and then the servant took her.

Ques. What is the difference between going with the man and going with the servant?

A.J.G. The thought of going with the man would indicate that we are served in the power which is deployed in the camels; while following the man would show that he leads in a certain direction.

Rem. In the first part of the story, we have the servant who is called servant; until Rebecca agrees to give to drink; when he has received the water and he has made his gifts, the servant is called the man; and when Rebecca goes with the man, he is once again called the servant.

A.J.G. That is very interesting. He begins as being Abraham's servant; as being honoured by Rebecca, he becomes a man who takes charge of her; and then he becomes once more Isaac's servant, saying, "That is my master".

Rem. There is another well at the end of the chapter, verse 62.

A.J.G. Isaac had just returned from the well of Beer-lahai-roi. It is a well which has some reference to the revelation of God, which suggests that the Lord would be known by us in relation to the whole revelation of God, that is to say when we come to enjoy our full portion with Christ, what is in view, although it may not be presented in this chapter, is that we should be available under the hand of the Lord to respond to the blessed God, in the way in which He is

made known, the Holy Spirit being necessary for that also.

Ques. What do you think about Isaac's meditation?

A.J.G. It is very touching to see that he had gone out to meditate, and that that happened towards evening. I believe that we could rightly say now that the Lord is particularly occupied with the assembly, and that He is waiting until there is on its part a response in the power of the Holy Spirit. So it is that he lifted up his eyes; and it is said, "behold, camels were coming". That shows, it could be said, with all reverence, that the heart of Christ is moved in seeing the camels coming, that is to say that He sees the saints in movement towards Him in the power of the Spirit, so that there is entire harmony between Isaac and Rebecca. It is said that Isaac "lifted up his eyes", and "Rebecca lifted up her eyes.

Ques. Do we have such a moment on Lord's day morning?

A.J.G. I think so, That is what the Holy Spirit would produce, a perfect harmony of minds between the assembly and Christ. The Holy Spirit understands perfectly all that moves the heart of Christ, so that the great need is to be subject to the Spirit.

Ques. Is that why it is said in verse 6, “she had said to the servant”?

A.J.G. There is an idea of communion between Rebecca and the servant: “she had said to the servant, who is the man?”

Ques. Would you say something about the fact that Rebecca got down from the camel?

A.J.G. She sprang off the camel; that shows great activity and energy on her part. What do you think yourself?

Rem. You have said that the camels would represent power.

A.J.G. It is not that we can ever dispense with the Spirit’s power, but the camels are the power by which we are led to Christ in the assembly.

Ques. Do you think that the service of the Spirit changes its character when the assembly is near to her Head?

A.J.G. I suppose so. It is not that the Spirit withdraws; we are always dependent on His power, so that it is through Christ and by the Spirit that we have access to the Father. But it is very evident that the service of the Spirit is to lead the assembly to Christ down here. It is to be especially noted that when Isaac lifted up his

eyes, he saw that camels were coming, and it is clear that his heart was moved by seeing them.

Ques. Is there a connection with Song of Songs 8: 5:

Who is this that cometh up from the
wilderness,

Leaning upon her beloved?

when we enter into another sphere, after the Supper?

A.J.G. What is accentuated there is the support of the Beloved, while what is accentuated in Genesis is the power of the Spirit.

Rem. When she has come into relation with Isaac in the tent, she had no need of the camels.

A.J.G. We have no need of the camels in the tent, that is to say the Spirit under that character, but we are never without the power of the Spirit.

Rem. He will be with us eternally.

Rem. It is well to contrast the varied character of the Spirit's service.

A.J.G. There is another thought. It is said that "she took the veil, and covered herself". That shows an increase in spiritual sensibility on her part as to what suits the presence of the Lord.

Ques. Could we think in that connection of the exclusiveness of the love of the assembly for Christ?

Rem. Her beauty must be kept for Him.

Ques. Is there not also the thought of reverence?

A.J.G. There is, I believe, great sensibility as to what is suitable, and the Holy Spirit produces that in us.

Ques. Is there not an idea of greater attention to the Spirit in the fact that Rebecca, who did not know Isaac, said, “I will go”?

A.J.G. That shows how the servant had spoken of Isaac. It says, for example in verse 35: “And Jehovah has blessed my master greatly, and he is become great ...”, then in verse 36, “And Sarah, my master’s wife, bore a son to my master after she had grown old; and unto him has he given all that he has”. So that we can well understand that Rebecca would be more and more attracted to Isaac as a result of the service of the servant towards her. That is exactly what the Spirit loves to do; He loves to glorify Christ and to take of the things that belong to Him and communicate them to us, to make us feel comfortable as being One who has come from heaven exactly for the purpose of leading us to Christ, and that at the present time.

Ques. The testimony of the servant at the beginning was that a young maid would become the wife of Isaac. Does the fact that Rebecca has taken a veil show that she has arrived herself at this thought in her own soul?

A.J.G. She proves what she must be personally by the spiritual features that mark her.

Ques. Does the end of the chapter lead us to the greatest intimacy that we can reach with the Lord?

A.J.G. I think so.

Rem. It is very interesting to compare the end of verse 65 and verse 67; the servant took Rebecca, and then Isaac took Rebecca.

A.J.G. Do you not think that that should affect us, that the assembly should be such an object of divine interest: she is provided by the Father for the Son, and is the subject of the Spirit's interest. The Lord puts such great value on the assembly, that He can consider it on the one hand as being the provision of His Father for Him, and on the other as being the result of the faithful service of the Holy Spirit; and in the third place as being the result of His own service to her. If we are in movement on these lines of thought, we will realise that we must be very precious to the heart of Christ.

Ques. What do you say about verse 66: “And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done”?

A.J.G. It is something between the servant and Isaac. I do not know that I could say much about that sort of thing. However, it is very interesting to see what perfect accord exists between one and the other, between the Son and the Spirit.

Rem. It is the second time that love is mentioned.

A.J.G. The first time it is the love of the Father for the Son: “Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest” (Gen 22: 2); and the second time, the love of Isaac for Rebecca, the love of Christ for the assembly.

Rem. The assembly is very near to divine Persons.

Ques. What is the thought in the wife: “She became his wife”?

A.J.G. In think that that indicates the reality of union. He would love her because she had become his wife; she would enter into union and he would love her because she has entered into it.

Ques. Could we say that the assembly is kindred to Christ as being bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh?

A.J.G. That is indeed true, but it is not what is found in this chapter. This chapter would envisage Rebecca as being of the same line as Isaac; that flows from the fact that we are not only born of God but as having the Holy Spirit, we are of the same order of man as Christ, having part in the life of the heavenly Man. It is the life that is in Christ Jesus, the Lord is able to consider us as being of His own order of humanity, and as a result dignified by Him, as it is said in the epistle to the Hebrews: "He that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one" (Heb 2: 11), that is to say that they are of the same order of humanity.

Rem. The Lord possesses the assembly not only by His death and all that He has done, but by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

A.J.G. There is nothing in this chapter that suggests the death of Christ, as far as I see.

Rem. That is seen in the type of Eve.

A.J.G. There had been a work of God which is not the subject of this chapter. God had worked before what we have in this chapter to produce Rebecca's state of mind.

Ques. Would you tell us the difference between Ephesians 5 (“Christ loved the assembly”) and this passage where Isaac loved Rebecca?

A.J.G. I think that in Ephesians 5, where it is said that “Christ loved the assembly”, the Lord takes account of God’s mind, which was that He should have the assembly; and so it is that He loved the assembly and gave Himself for it. But in this chapter here, Isaac loves Rebecca on account of the features which come to light in her, that is to say that she says herself, “I will go”. That signifies much for the heart of Christ. The Lord sees the saints ready to give an ever greater place to what is of the Spirit, and not to be held back by what is natural, because the present day is the day of spiritual things. The Lord Himself is a quickening spirit, and our blessings are spiritual blessings in heavenly places; today is the day of the Holy Spirit, so that the Lord is waiting that we should be marked by what is spiritual rather than what is natural, and He loves to see the saints moving on this line of thought.

Fourth reading

Genesis 41: 41-57

A.J.G. This passage has an important application to the present time, Joseph's wife being a figure of the assembly as being needed by the Lord in the administration of food. There is an abundance of food under the hand of Christ; all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily, but effectively, there is no administration of food if there is not a recognition of the truth of the assembly. That it why it is necessary to remark that, while Joseph is placed by Pharaoh in the place of administration, he does not enter upon this administration until his wife has been given to him. His wife is mentioned as being the daughter of Potipherah, the priest in On, that is to say that his priestly character is emphasised. It is an allusion to the truth in 2 Timothy, where it speaks of what is due to the Name of the Lord; and on account of His Name, and in separating from iniquity, we come rightly to the truth of the assembly. It is on this line of thought that the truth of the assembly has been recovered in our day, and what goes with that is the thought of the administration of spiritual food. All around us there is a great famine spiritually; nevertheless, there is an abundance of food in the hands of Christ—food administered

practically where the truth of the assembly is known. It is in light of this that Joseph's wife typifies the assembly. With that, we have mention of two sons, and what they are to Joseph. Evidently it is an allusion to the consolation that the Lord finds now when as compensation for all His work and also giving Him double fruitfulness—for that is the significance of the name Ephraim—that is to say that in the assembly, the Lord assures more for the heart of God than all that has been secured before in Israel. There is great significance in the fact that Pharaoh gives Asnath to Joseph, as being the daughter of Potipherah the priest in On. It is not spoken of on the side of affection; it has only in view what was necessary for Joseph in the position in which he was placed, and in the development of this chapter, it is clear that this is what is seen in localities, because Joseph gathered the food supplies and put them in cities. As we go on, and in the measure in which needs become manifest, he opens the places in which the provisions are found, hence the importance of meeting in our own localities, because if the truth of the assembly is included, there has to be in each place what corresponds to the temple where the light of God is found, in the Spirit, and also the truth of the body in effective

expression. It is according to God's mind that food should be administered.

Rem. The food supplies that were around each city were placed in the city.

A.J.G. That shows that our exercises in our homes, in our business, or elsewhere, all have in view to contribute to the spiritual richness of the assembly; that is in view of making us grow in the knowledge of God.

Rem. In the divine mind, all were to come to benefit from what there was.

A.J.G. That is the whole question; there is abundance of food, but that has to be obtained in the way God indicates, and it is thus that God is leased to use the assembly.

Ques. It seems that the nature of this food is especially wheat. Is that a reference to Christ?

A.J.G. I have no doubt about that. The wheat is the best there is for food.

Ques. Would you say what the conditions are to have an assembly in a locality?

A.J.G. There has first of all to be separation from all that is not suited to the Lord. If there are two persons or more who are exercised to take part, who pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, who call upon the Lord with a pure

heart, these two people, or more, can surely continue together. If two believers walk together, the only truth by which they can regulate themselves is the truth of the assembly, because there is no other truth which must regulate the saints in their movements. It is on these lines of moral thought that the truth of the assembly has been recovered. Then, what is needed is that we should continue to recognise practically the places of Head that Christ occupies, and the presence of the Holy Spirit; there must also be love among us. If these conditions are furnished, then you have what answers to the assembly in a locality.

Rem. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph; what he says to you, that do”. It is a question of obedience to the Lord.

A.J.G. All that underlines what we have been saying, to grasp that God is pleased that the administration of food should be by means of the assembly.

Ques. Would the beginning of our passage correspond with Acts 2, where we have Peter who speaks with emphasis of the Lord, then there are those who led to be added to the assembly?

A.J.G. Exactly so. There is the exaltation of Christ in Acts 2, and all the food was in the

company that recognised Him as such. When Paul's ministry is introduced, all that had taken form in localities. It is very touching to see that God is pleased to place the food within the range of man, so that Joseph did not have to concentrate the food in the same city, but he put the food supplies in diverse cities.

Rem. In chapter 47: 21, it is said, "And as for the people, he removed them into the cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end of it".

A.J.G. That would indicate that the Lord exercise His own sovereignty so that the brethren sometimes have to change their residence, in their circumstances, without their being any will on their part. That might indicate that the Lord desires that the food should be available by this means in a new locality.

Ques. Is that what we have in Antioch?

A.J.G. It is a little like that. After the persecution which took place in the days of Stephen, the saints had been dispersed and the assemblies have increased in number.

Rem. As to what relates to our relations together, we have to be regulated by the truth of the assembly.

A.J.G. That is very important, so that it is remarkable that Joseph's wife is always mentioned as being a priest's daughter, that is to say that if we do not consider first what is due to the Lord, we will never have the spiritual food. But in considering first what is due to the Lord, we will find that there are others who do the same thing. Then we can walk with them, pursuing righteousness first, then faith—because it is a path of faith, not having any visible support, —then love which must come in, and finally peace. If these conditions are assured, the Holy Spirit is not grieved and food is available, but there cannot be spiritual food otherwise, and that is what is evident otherwise among believers.

Ques. Do we have in the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine the side of privilege and the side of responsibility?

A.J.G. Not exactly privilege and responsibility, but it seems to me that the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine in a sense come together spiritually, that is to say that there are no limits on spiritual abundance which is at our disposal, and on the other hand we are conscious that there is a lot of spiritual famine around us. I think that it is a spiritual exercise for us that what the Lord has given us in ministry should be established in our souls,

as being in the assembly. That is the question raised: is the ministry in our souls? Is it found in love of the brethren, in every locality, so that spiritual food is available for all those who hunger?

Rem. All that began in Europe in the heart of Lydia.

A.J.G. Lydia was attentive to the things spoke by Paul, so that the truth could take form at Philippi. All those who had felt the need of food at Philippi had been directed by the Lord to find food where it was.

Rem. At Philippi, we have what would correspond to the well we had this morning, with the river, because they sat by the river.

A.J.G. It is the suggestion that the Spirit is recognised as being at our disposal, but the food in every locality depends on the fact that Christ is recognised as Head, and also the presence of the Holy Spirit. Having arrived at those conditions in a practical way, the Lordship of Christ has to be recognised, and what is due to His Name.

Rem. We must be sensitive when one cries “Abrec”¹

A.J.G. You would say that that implies practical submission to Christ.

Ques. You have said that Asnath had been given by Pharaoh. What difference is there with the Father giving the bride to the Son, as we had this morning?

A.J.G. It is different: there is not the side of divine affections, nor the service of the Holy Spirit, but simply this great question of the administration of the food placed in the Lord’s hands, the assembly being necessary for that.

Ques. Would you add that the assembly being nourished in such a way, it is possible to bear fruit, because we have two sons here?

A.J.G. It is very interesting to see that these two sons are introduced and it is said a second time that Asnath was a priest’s daughter. It emphasises what is possible on the lines of moral thought, of the assembly in the [present time as furnishing compensation to Christ for all

¹ This refers to Genesis 41: 43 in the French Darby Bible, to which JND has added a footnote to explain that it is an Egyptian expression, rendered ‘Bow the knee’ in his English translation.

His labour and also as giving a double fruitfulness during the time of His rejection.

Ques. I am wondering if the thought of double fruitfulness is an evangelical thought. 7

A.J.G. That could well be so. It refers for me to the fact that the assembly has a richer character of fruitfulness, under the hand of Christ, for the heart of God, than all that has been assured or could have been assured in Israel, even in the best days as those of David and Solomon.

Ques. In chapter 48, Israel reclaims the two sons for himself; is God's pleasure found in the two sons?

A.J.G. It is interesting to see in chapter 48, as you have said, that Israel who represents the Father reclaims the two sons as being his own sons, and embraces them.

Rem. These conditions are maintained normally by the service of the gospel.

A.J.G. That could be so, indeed, but the scene that we have to contemplate is in a time of famine; famine turns our souls to God. This is not a time that souls are searching for others but feeling the need to be led to Pharaoh; it is the lack of food. In that sense, it is perhaps a figure not so much of the work of the gospel among those who do not know God, but rather the state

of spiritual famine that exists among the greater number of true believers.

Ques. Do the disciples express this thought when they say, “to whom shall we go? thou hast words of life eternal”, John 6: 68?

A.J.G. Exactly so. They knew that there were words of eternal life in Christ and they could not find them elsewhere. It is striking here that, although they went to Pharaoh to ask for bread, he said to them, “Go to Joseph: what he says to you, that do”. It is the secret to getting food, that is to say, obedience to the Lord’s commandments.

Ques. Would you say that these circumstances correspond to the governmental circumstances that exist today?

A.J.G. That is indeed what was actually in my mind, and it is what gives us the feeling of the great importance of the local position. It is not simply what we can retain, or even what according to this chapter what is found in God, but it is as a foundation for the administrative operations for food in the midst of where the need is felt. There is no doubt that there is famine at the present time, except where the truth of the assembly is recognised. One hears say from all parts the Christians do not have spiritual food.

Ques. What difference do you make between the food stored in the cities and the hidden manna in Revelation?

A.J.G. The hidden manna in Revelation is the promise made to the overcomer in Pergamos; it is a secret between the overcomer's soul and the Lord. In this assembly in Pergamos, there were certain evil doctrines that were maintained secretly, they held the doctrine of Balaam but they did not teach it openly, so that the evil worked in a secret way. In contrast with that, the overcomer is sustained in a hidden way, and fed on the hidden manna, and he is given a white stone on which a name is written that nobody knows but he who receives it. What is secret for the overcomer is put in contrast with what operated secretly that was evil.

Ques. Do we have the thought of administration with the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31? She gives food to her household.

A.J.G. Exactly. That actually goes well with our subject, because the virtuous woman is another type of the assembly, and her household would represent the saints individually. It is said that she brings her food from afar, which signifies that she recognised the Holy Spirit; bread is brought from afar, would you say, so that it is constantly fresh.

Rem. We have a contrast there with Laodicea, which says I have need of nothing.

A.J.G. It is sad to think that this condition should be possible. The Lord being outside, she says, “I am rich ... and have need of nothing”. The Lord says, “knowest not that *thou* art the wretched and the miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”. Such conditions are not considered here, but the food and the distribution to all that have need, and all under the hand of Joseph who put the supplies into cities.

Ques. What would you say about the name that Pharaoh gave to Joseph in verse 45?

A.J.G. We are told what its significance is: Saviour of the world, or Sustainer of life. That is in view, do you not think? The knowledge of all true food comes from Christ. It is a thought that affects us particularly, to know that he administers nothing directly, but one must have the assembly to this end. Thus when Saul had been converted, he was told he had first to go into the city.

Rem. It is important to recognise that the assembly must have its part in the distribution of food.

A.J.G. That is why it is said that in Him—Christ—all the fulness of the body dwells

bodily; and “ye are complete in Him”, Col 2: 9. As we mentioned yesterday, the epistle to the Colossians says, “and not according to Christ, chap 2: 8. “See that there be no one who shall lead *you* away through philosophy or vain deceit, according to the teaching of men, according to the elements of the world, **and not according to Christ**”. That is the important point; that is the whole question, that we should be “according to Christ”. I believe that it is important to be on our guard about the truth of the local assembly according to the epistle to the Corinthians. The two great features are the temple and the body, that is to say that in recognising the presence of the Holy Spirit, it is always possible to have light from God. But this light must be shed in an atmosphere of mutual love among the saints, so that the whole position is altogether attractive. What the Lord has in view is that the administration should not be done by a single brother—which would be a tendency to clericalism—but rather the saints as being set together, in love, recognising what is available in the Spirit.

Ques. What is thought about Joseph’s chain and gold ring?

A.J.G. It is a special distinction.

Ques. What do you think about chapter 47: 26?

A.J.G. I have not gone that far in my mind. It is nevertheless very interesting in relation to our subject to see that chapter 47 extends the thought of the administration of food supplies extend the thought of Joseph's administration. The result of the constant administration of supplies that the people come to belong entirely to Pharaoh, what they have and what they are is entirely maintained at Pharaoh's disposal. It is indeed what the Lord seeks in the present time. All the spiritual food that we receive has in view to secure us more for God, for His will and for His service.

Ques. In connection with the food, could we make an application to what is said in Ephesians 4: 8, "Having ascended up on high, he has led captivity captive and given gifts to men"?

A.J.G. It is not exactly that He has given gifts, but rather what is found in each local company. The gifts are given in view of helping the saints as to the truth of the assembly, but the assembly will remain when the gifts cease. God's great thought is that our souls should be drawn to the assembly and find their part there.

Ques. What are we to think of the fact that the two sons of Joseph were born before the year of famine came?

A.J.G. That indicates what is there for the heart of Christ and for the heart of God before the necessity arises to face the needs of souls. If souls feel their need of spiritual food, what will attract them is that they are to be found in a place where Christ is served and where God is served; I think that is what is represented by the two sons, that is to say there is a compensation for Christ's heart, and under His hand, a double fruitfulness in God's service. The Lord draws attention to that, although other conditions exist. There are spiritual sensibilities that true believers will appreciate, and in line with that, the administration of food.

Rem. And so after David had danced before Jehovah, he returns to bless his house and distributed food.

A.J.G. That is most significant.

Ques. What does the fact suggest that the food is bought in the last two verses of our chapter?

A.J.G. Well, we have to buy the truth and sell it not. Growing in the truth always implies sacrifice in one way or another. Generally, we appreciate things more if we buy them.

Ques. In such conditions, could they be maintained in a locality where the brothers are in a great state of weakness? We read in

Proverbs 30: 25, “the ants, a people not strong, yet they provide their food in the summer”.

A.J.G. So long as there are two or three persons who go on in the ways of the assembly, there is no reason why spiritual food cannot be dispensed to them.

APPREHENDING CHRIST

Exodus 16: 13-15

Luke 21: 37, 38

1 Timothy 6: 13-18

Philippians 3: 8-14

I have read these four scriptures, dear brethren, with the desire to bring before you four aspects, four settings, in which Christ may be apprehended by us. Each of them distinctive and each of them important in its place.

Exodus 16 gives us the manna; that is Christ as the food appointed by God for the wilderness. When one speaks of the wilderness one speaks of our position as in this world where Christ is not, and the ordinary circumstances of responsible life in which we have to move. We are here, I need not say, dear brethren, for the will of God; that is the only reason why we are here. We have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ and God has in that way established incontestable right to each one of us in a most absolute way. He has in mind that we should be with Christ eternally, but for the moment, as regards most of us, He is pleased to leave us here; that is in His will, and it is well for us to understand that we are here for the will of God. We have no right to have any other object before us than that our position here in the world as redeemed is to be here for the will

of God. And so Romans 12 speaks of our presenting our bodies a living sacrifice unto God, “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God” (v 1), and our not being conformed to this world, but being transformed by the renewing of our mind in order that we may prove “what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”, v 2.

Well now our position as here in the wilderness for God’s will needs to be sustained, or rather, we need to be sustained in it. As in natural things, so in spiritual things, the principle of being sustained is by the appropriation of suitable food; and God in His grace has provided food for His people in the wilderness, food suited to that position. This chapter presents to us that, having been brought out of Egypt, they found themselves without food. Just before, in the previous chapter, they found themselves at Marah and the waters were bitter; and that is an experience which we often find—that, to be here for the will of God, we find that the circumstances that He orders in His will are not at all to our natural liking and may not be at all what we would have chosen or what we would have expected; so that bitterness in that sense confronts us. But then Moses cried to Jehovah and Jehovah showed him wood; not a tree, but *wood*, and he cast it into the waters and the waters became sweet. There is no doubt that

the word refers to *the manhood of Jesus*; but in the circumstances which the will of God has appointed for us, it is a great comfort to see that the Lord Jesus Himself as having become Man entered into the ordinary circumstances of human life, sin apart, and went through those circumstances on the principle of uncompromising obedience to the will of God. As He is contemplated in those circumstances and marked by that principle, there is that which is attractive to the renewed mind, the renewed spiritual being. So the waters become sweet as made attractive by seeing the Lord in relation to the ordinary circumstances of human life. And so it was at Marah that God made them a statute and an ordinance and said, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God, and do what is right in his eyes, and incline thine ears to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the complaints upon thee that I have put upon the Egyptians; for I am Jehovah who healeth thee", *Exod.15: 26*. That is, God has established this principle of obedience to His will as the principle which is now to govern a believer's life; and as that principle is followed we will be immune from all the diseases, all the complaints, which mark people of the world. And so it is, dear brethren, that we find it so in experience, that the more we are simply governed by God's will, the more

we are freed from anxiety, the more we are freed from discontent, the more we are freed from all the elements of bitterness which characterise the world around us. It is a great thing to see that as redeemed to God and in the world for His will the principle of obedience to that will in all things is the governing principle of a believer's life.

But then, as I say, that needs to be sustained, or rather, we need to be sustained in relation to it; and the manna comes in as a presentation of Christ as food for our souls to sustain us in that position. The people when they murmured (I am referring to verse 6) were answered by Moses, who said: "In the evening, then shall ye know that Jehovah has brought you out from the land of Egypt; and in the morning, then shall ye see the glory of Jehovah". Well now, in verse 13 where we read, it says, "And it came to pass in the evening, that quails came up and covered the camp; and then in the morning the dew lay round the camp. And when the dew that lay round it was gone up, behold, on the face of the wilderness there was something fine, granular, fine as hoar-frost, on the ground". I believe at this point the quails were given by God in such quantities that they covered the camp in order that they might understand that God was quite able to do *anything* in the way of power to meet *any* exigency. But then that is not what He

wants us to learn. He does not want us to learn to expect great displays of divine power to operate on our behalf; that is not His way. He can do it if necessary—and will do it if necessary. He could show Elijah an earthquake and a fire and a wind in order to assure Elijah that, if it is necessary, He can use *any* power, absolutely irresistible by man, to accomplish His end. But then that is not His way, and therefore while in the evening they were allowed to see that divine power was there, it was divine power that got them out of Egypt.

Yet on the other hand, in the morning, they were to see something different, they were to see the glory of the Lord. And in this setting, there is no glory so great as the wondrous fact that He who is God Himself in grace became a Man and in wonderful grace entered into the ordinary circumstances of human life, sin apart, and moved in those circumstances in obedience and daily dependence and confidence in God, and contentment too; in order that as thus moving He might become the food and the support of His people. That is great glory indeed. It shows how wonderfully God can come down in grace and adapt Himself to the needs and exercise of His people, and how in doing that in type, He has in mind that Christ should become not only our food in wilderness circumstances, but that in the very appropriation of Him in those

circumstances, He Himself should become endeared to us.

And so we can understand that God said that there was to be an omer of this food, this manna, laid up before Him, He would have it before Him. In the 9th chapter of Hebrews we have Paul, the writer of the epistle, telling us what there was in the holiest, and he refers to the ark and he says, therein was “the golden pot that had the manna”, v 4. We are not told elsewhere that this was a *golden* pot, but in the speaking of it in the light of Christianity, it says it was a *golden* pot, as though he would emphasise the glory of it. But there are specific tests in connection with the wilderness circumstances of God’s people here of grace that has come down so low. As the hymn says, ‘Christ, once humbled here’ (Hymn 79); come down as a babe and grow up, and be a boy, and be subject to His parents, and work in conditions not attractive to the natural man, and all that kind of thing. And in those circumstances work and move daily on the principle of obedience and of dependence and of contentment.

So if anyone wants to understand something of the moral excellence of Jesus as Man here, I would commend to them not only to read the gospels but also to read Psalm 16, for instance, and other scriptures which give us an

understanding as we look at them carefully of the moral excellence that marked Jesus in His pathway here. And so there was this manna. It says, “And when the dew that lay round it was gone up, behold, *on the face of the wilderness* there was something fine, granular, fine as hoarfrost, on the ground”; something very small, something that being very small would fit in to any circumstances, and the more you test it out, dear brethren, the more you will find that the principle of obedience to God renewed daily, the principle of dependence on God coming into expression daily, that these principles will fit into *any* circumstance and lighten *any* burden.

And so, dear brethren, this is the first presentation of Christ that I desire to bring before you; not to go into much detail as to the manna as the hymn puts it so beautifully ‘Of Christ once humbled here’, but especially in the ordinary circumstances of human life in which we have to move according to God’s will. And I do not think we shall ever get very far in practical, effective, identification with God’s testimony, or in ability to move in privilege in the service of God if we do not know something of what it is to be here in the wilderness according to God’s will and for His pleasure. Indeed, I believe I may say that, morally speaking, feeding on the manna is like the development of acacia wood; that is, acacia

wood is figuratively the kind of manhood that can stand in the testimony. And if we are to develop the kind of manhood according to Jesus Christ that can stand in the testimony, we must know what it is to feed on manna and go through wilderness circumstances as governed by God's will and affording Him pleasure in those circumstances.

And there is something more before we leave this chapter on the manna, and that is that as you read the chapter you find that they had manna for six days and then there was a sabbath. And that is indeed the idea, dear brethren, that six days feeding on manna leads in principle to rest, leads to a sabbath, and in the gospel of Matthew, He says, "Come to me, all ye who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me ... and ye shall find rest to your souls", Matt 11: 28,29. That is, the appropriation of manna day by day leads to rest.

Well now I pass on to Luke 21 in order to draw attention to the principle upon which the Lord lived as here now in testimony. Not now the ordinary circumstances of human life, but here as in testimony for God, though for the moment it is not the side of testimony that I want to suggest because that I suppose is seen in connection with the scripture read from

Timothy. But what is particularly in mind is in verse 37, it says, "And by day he was teaching in the temple", that is the side of testimony and service, "and by night, going out, he remained abroad on the mountain called the mount of Olives". It is put here as not something done on one particular night; it is put here rather as that it was *His habit*. As we remarked this afternoon, at the end of John 7 we read, "And every one went to his home" (v 53), and then at the beginning of the next chapter it says, "But Jesus went to the mount of Olives". That again confirms that the idea is that it was His habit. Now the idea of a mountain, as the mount of Olives, is that it is a sphere which can be entered upon while we are on earth and yet is above the level of the earth. The mount of Olives suggests a *spiritual sphere*, and in the case of the Lord Jesus I have no doubt that what is referred to is the continual communion which He had with His Father. We were saying this afternoon that the eternal life which the apostle discerned as contemplated in Jesus was with the Father. It had that character, it was lived in relation to the Father. It was characterised by communion with the Father, the Father's interests, the Father's pleasure, the Father's world, was that in which the Lord Jesus really found His life.

Now dear brethren, for us these things involve the Spirit, which is what the mount of Olives

has in mind. The mount of Olives has in mind a sphere to be known here on earth that can be resorted to in the power of the Holy Spirit but lies outside of the world itself and is above its level. Now that is something for us to ask ourselves about as to how much we know of it, because it is quite clear that it is the principle upon which the Lord Jesus moved. His life was lived with the Father. It says in verse 38, "all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple to hear him". That is, when the morning came, He would again take up His place of service and testimony, and in that position, He would encounter opposition, as He did. But what lay behind the position publicly which He filled in service and testimony, and all the opposition He encountered in it, was that He had spent the night abroad on the mount of Olives. I am not suggesting, of course, that it is physically possible for us to do without sleep. I am not suggesting that, but I am suggesting, dear brethren, that if we would be maintained in spiritual power in the position that we are to fill here in service and testimony, we must see to it that this principle of resorting in the power of the Spirit to heavenly things which are really ours and in which God intends we should find our life, should not be given up; should not be neglected.

And so in the passage we were reading this afternoon John says to the little ones, the little children, He told them “if what ye have heard from the beginning abides in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise which he has promised us, life eternal”, 1 John 2: 24,25. It is a great thing to withdraw in our spirits, to the system of affection which belongs to us and into which we have entrance in the Holy Spirit. It says, “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand”, John 3: 35. There is a system of divine affection established now, it is subsisting in the Son, having its part in the Father, and we through grace have our part in it. The Thessalonians were “in God the Father”, 1 Thess.1:1. And so it says in the end of the first epistle of John, “we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding that we should know him that is true”, 1 John 5: 20. That is, God has come out now in full revelation in love according to His will. It is apprehended in Christ and “we are in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ”. That is, God has set us before Him in Christ and in Him we are in the abiding position of love. We are loved of the Father, we are loved of the Son, and I may say we are loved of the Holy Spirit. For He has taught us as having taking up His abode in us and keeping us livingly in touch with Christ

where He is and the Father known in Him, so that whatever arises here we may find our resource, our retreat in a scene of love where Jesus is and where the Father is known and where we belong. We belong there: we are in Him that is true, that is, in God, “we are in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ”. That is a fixed position, and the Holy Spirit enables us to withdraw into it and to enjoy it; and that all the Father’s *things* are ours. Not only the love of the Father but the Father’s things are ours because they are all of Christ and all that is Christ’s is ours. It says in the epistle to the Corinthians, “all are yours; and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s”, 1 Cor 3: 23. Wonderful position, wonderful position that we are in these affections, that all things are ours because we are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.

So the whole system of the Father’s pleasure, and all that is so soon to be brought into display, seen by the Spirit and centring in Christ is all ours, and we may enter upon it and withdraw into it. Indeed the Father’s Spirit is seen in that character, the power to dwell in our hearts by faith and to enable us to understand “the breadth and length and depth and height”.

Well now what I have been saying touches on what we have spoken of this afternoon as to the enjoyment of eternal life, and it is most

important that we should know something, and increasingly so, of the enjoyment of eternal life, if on the one hand we are to be furnished with right substance and right feelings in the service of God, and if on the other hand we are to be effective in the position of testimony, so that we are not overcome by the world in which we have to render testimony. And so I commend this verse to you, dear brethren, that “by night, going out, he remained abroad on the mountain called the mount of Olives”. We gather from the first chapter of the Acts that it was on the mount of Olives that He was taken up into heaven. It says the disciples, after they had seen Him go up, that they returned from the mount of Olives to Jerusalem, about a sabbath-day’s journey. The mount of Olives represents our retreat in the power of the Holy Spirit; Jerusalem is the sphere of testimony and it is near, it is only a sabbath-day’s journey off; the one stands in relation to the other. So if there is to be power in testimony in Jerusalem then we must know something of the mount of Olives.

And so that leads me now to the epistle to Timothy where we have the Lord Jesus presented to us as having witnessed before Pontius Pilate “the good confession”. That is, it is now Jesus in the position of testimony. Of course He was in that position from the moment that He went forth as anointed by the Holy

Spirit. I am not in any sense limiting this thought of testimony in the case of the Lord Jesus to His testimony before Pontius Pilate; because He was faithful in testimony, the faithful and true witness from the moment He went forth in testimony as anointed by the Holy Spirit until the moment that He lay down His life. And so it says, "I enjoin thee before God who preserves all things in life". That is a great thing that, as having any little part in testimony, and incurring opposition and feeling it, and understanding that the opposition if permitted might go to any lengths, it is a good thing to be before God, and before God who "preserves all things in life". That is to say, it is God that we rely upon, the God who "preserves all things in life", and he says, "and Christ Jesus", "I enjoin thee before God ... and Christ Jesus who witnessed before Pontius Pilate the good confession". It tells us in the gospels, in the gospels of Matthew and Mark and Luke, it was reported that before Pontius Pilate that the Lord said *two words only*. In each of those three gospels it is recorded that Pontius Pilate said to the Lord, "Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered and said to him, *Thou sayest*", Mark 15: 2. And then accusations are made and He answered him, "not so much as one word", Matt 27: 14. So that it says the governor *marvelled*, Mark 15: 5. In the gospels of

Matthew and Mark especially, and Luke perhaps to a lesser degree, but the gospels of Matthew and Mark especially present the Lord Jesus in testimony here was “led as a lamb to the slaughter, and was as a sheep dumb before her shearers, and he opened not his mouth”, Isa 53: 7. It presents the Lord in that character as committing Himself to Him that judges righteously (1 Pet 2: 23), and not answering a word in personal defence; but if the testimony required it, answering at once. So if it was a question put to Him involving the testimony, “Art thou the king of the Jews?”, He immediately answered, “*Thou sayest*”; but if it is a question of personal accusation He answered not a word. But then when it comes to the gospel of John, we find that according to record there, He said a good deal to Pontius Pilate, and that He was there in faithfulness in witness to the truth. He said before Pilate, according to John’s gospel, “I have been born for this, and for this I have come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth”, John 18: 37.

That is an important matter, dear brethren. I was saying at the outset that we are here for the will of God, and what is involved in that among other things is that we are here identified with the truth. We are here in order to walk in the truth, and we are here as occasion requires to

testify to the truth, the truth as to God, because all that the enemy has brought into this world is a denial of the truth unto God. And now God has made Himself known, “we are in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ”, 1 John 5: 20. We have a fixed known position in His love. He has come out in righteous grace and in holy love, and so, dear brethren, it is a question of God in His real nature and His moral attributes being expressed by the saints, and testimony as the occasion requires being borne to the truth. That is what we are here for. Now in that position, the Lord, I need not say, He has been a faithful and true witness; indeed He presents Himself in that way in the first chapter of Revelation, and He is presented in that way also, or rather presents Himself in that way to Laodicea, so that is “the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God”, Rev 3: 14. And so it says here, “Christ Jesus who witnessed before Pontius Pilate the good confession, that thou keep the commandment spotless, irreproachable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ”. The commandment I take it is all that was enjoined upon Timothy in this epistle, and he is to keep it spotless, irreproachable, and indeed, dear brethren, as we draw near the end, I believe that God expects a higher standard.

It says in the prophecy of Ezekiel if you remember you get a man with a measuring reed, and the reed, if I remember rightly, was six cubits long, but then it says that every cubit was a cubit and a hand breadth (Ezek 40: 5), which seems rather anomalous, but the Spirit of God is suggesting to us that there is a measuring-reed with a precise standard of six cubits long, but then it is as though the Spirit says that now in these closing days the standard has got to be more exacting. It has to be a cubit and a hand-breadth each cubit, which is a remarkable thing, and I believe in that way God would exercise us that as the end approaches we are to see to it that God is looking for a higher standard of things. Indeed, He is looking for nothing short of perfection, and if we are to have perfection before us, we can only have it before us in every setting in Jesus. And so he says, "that thou keep the commandment spotless, irreproachable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ", that is the public appearing, "in its own time the blessed and only Ruler shall shew", that is God, "the King of those that reign, and Lord of those that exercise lordship; who only has immortality"; He has it, He has it Himself. We are going to take on immortality; it says, "this mortal must put on immortality". We are going to take it up by the power of God, but God has it, "who only has immortality". That is,

however man may seem, however great they may appear to be in opposition, they are *only mortal*. God only “has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen, nor is able to see; to whom be honour and eternal might. Amen”. That is, that the approach in our exercises is before God, but also before Christ Jesus.

Well now, finally I come to Philippians because it is not now a question of Christ as food for the wilderness, but Christ as exemplifying to us the importance of eternal life, and entering into it livingly and enjoying it while Christ is in the position of testimony here, Christ as in heaven; as it says in the first epistle of John, “we know that if it is manifested we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is”, 1 John 3: 2. Not ‘as He was’ but “as he is”. This third chapter of the epistle to the Philippians presents to us Christ as He is and where He is, apprehended by Paul as the expression in Himself, that is in Christ, as God’s calling on high has a place, “the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus”. Christ Jesus is, as we often say, the Man of God’s purpose. That is to say, He is the One who has from the very outset been in the mind of God. God’s purposes are bound up with Him, and it is a great thing to apprehend that in Him God sets forth His calling of place, it is called “his calling on high” in order that we might be impressed

with the exalted and elevated character of it, “the calling on high in Christ Jesus”. Let me refer for a moment to a well-known verse in 1 Corinthians 15, the Spirit of God says, “the first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man, out of heaven”, v 47 KJV.

I would just ask you, dear brethren, to consider that for a moment, “the first man is of the earth, earthy”. Adam was never more than that, he was never any more than that. Even in innocence before he fell, he was never any more than that, “of the earth, earthy”. “The second man”, that is the Man Christ Jesus, is “out of heaven”. What kind of manhood do you think, what kind of glorious manhood, what supreme moral excellence in manhood is to be found when one of the Godhead Himself becomes Man, manhood that is characteristically out of heaven? And think of the grace of God that has called us that we should have part in that order of manhood, as Paul says, that I may know Him, that I may be found in Him, found in Christ. Not a trace left of what Paul was as a natural man, and yet it *is* Paul, identifiable as such, and he knows himself as such, “a man in Christ”, 2 Cor 12: 2. Think of the glory of it, dear brethren, the calling is that every one of us has been called, that we should be found in Christ; as it says, “such as the heavenly one, such also the heavenly ones”. We *are* heavenly already,

and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. And hence we may well desire to get an impression by the Spirit of what Paul speaks of here as “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord”. Paul is here speaking near the end of his days, a devoted servant of Christ, and in no way relinquishing the exercises connected with the testimony and the welfare of the saints, although he was a prisoner. But here he is as a brother, as an individual saint, and he allows us to see the kind of thing that is occupying his mind as he draws near the end of his course. He has Christ in glory before his heart as the One in whom he himself is about to be found, he is going to be found in Christ, and he says, I would like to know Him, I would like to apprehend and take up the moral excellency that is found in Christ Jesus. And so he would accept every exercise that came upon him as the means by which God would grant further to promote in Paul correspondence with Christ Jesus.

And so in the second chapter of this epistle we are told, “let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (v 5), that is to say the epistle is full of the thought of Christ Jesus, and we are intended to contemplate Christ Jesus, not as He was, but as He is, and yet as that wonderful mind that was in Christ Jesus came into

expression in that stoop, and in obedience even unto death. But then the apostle says, Let that be in you. And now the apostle has before him that he is to be found in Christ, and he says, Whatever it involves I want to reach it; he says, that I may “know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings”. I believe he means that he saw in the sufferings of Christ such moral excellence, that he wanted to have some part in them, the sufferings of Christ, “the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death”. He found moral excellence in the dying of Jesus, the death of Jesus, and he wanted to be conformed to it, so to speak the moral road by which he would reach this; his resurrection from among the dead when he will be found entirely in Christ.

So he says, “Not that I have already obtained the prize, or am already perfected; but I pursue, if also I may get possession of it, seeing that also I have been taken possession of by Christ Jesus”. And then most encouragingly he says, “Brethren, I do not count to have got possession myself; but one thing—forgetting the things behind, and stretching out to the things before, I pursue, looking towards the goal, for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus”. The goal is at the end, and the prizes that we shall get at the end, and the prizes at the end are

to be found wholly in Christ, in all the moral excellence that that involves. Even as to our bodies, as it says at the end of the chapter, we look from heaven, “we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to his body of glory”, v 20,21. So that our calling, the calling on high of God, is to be found in *every way* in Christ and conformed to Him both morally and bodily.

Well now in the light of that, dear brethren, may the Lord help us to take character from Paul and be marked by one thing; one thing, not to be diverted from it. If we have one thing before us, that is Christ known now in glory, as the expression of God’s mind for us, then I say we will move on the lines that I have indicated as appropriating manna in wilderness circumstances, as availing ourselves of eternal life and contemplating Christ in faithfulness in testimony. As having Him before us where He is and as He is, the great end that we are to reach by the grace of God, and the more we have Him before us, the more we shall find that God will use everything to promote that end in moral conformation in us now. May the Lord bless the word.

CRANFORD NJ 106

10th June 1950

*From a recording—and not therefore revised
by Mr Gardiner*

THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY EXPRESSED

Exodus 25: 1-22; 33: 7-11

A.J.G. In proposing this passage in Exodus 25, one has no desire to engage the brethren with a great deal of detail, but rather that we might get some definite thoughts as to the assembly in its local expression in the various places where God has set us. The first thing being that each of us is called upon to provide the conditions that are acceptable to God for His dwelling amongst us. I think it would greatly elevate our outlook on our occasions of coming together, and indeed on the assembly, whether convened or not, if we understood that God has expressed His desire to dwell amongst His people, and that while He Himself will prescribe with great detail what conditions He looks for, it is for us to provide them. He goes into great detail in this chapter and the succeeding ones, and says to Moses that He is to see that He makes everything according to the pattern; but everything that was made was dependent on what the people brought. And that is the first thing that one has in mind, and then to dwell a little on the ark of the centre of the system, and God speaking in relation to it. But I think it would help us to get this clearly in mind, that the extent to which God finds conditions that are pleasing to Himself and

suited to His dwelling depends on ourselves as to what we bring. I suppose what we bring is ourselves, but ourselves marked by certain features that have taken character from our knowledge of God, or our appreciation of Christ, or our apprehension of the Spirit, or our appreciation of the saints according to what God has made them. All this, I believe, enters into this matter of what we bring. God is looking to us to bring these things that are needful, so that His dwelling place should take concrete form amongst us in a way that is pleasing to Himself.

Then chapter 33 will show us the lines on which divine thoughts can be realised in days such as the present when there is general departure from the truth. The divine thought is not to be given up but it is to be secured, but secured on a moral basis of complete separation in an absolute sense from all that is unsuited to God; so that when Moses took a tent, the tent it is called, a tent, he pitched it outside the camp far off from it—not as near to it as possible, but far off from it. Showing that separation from all that is unsuited to God and idolatrous in character is to be absolute if God's thoughts and pleasure are to be realised.

Ques. Do you think that the affections come into this matter; like David? He says, “in

my affection” I have prepared for the house of my God, 1 Chron 29: 3.

A.J.G. Well, they certainly do. It is everyone whose heart prompts it. He shall “take my heave offering”. The idea of a heave offering is the heart rising up in responsive affection to the God who has redeemed us to Himself. I think we might do well, each of us, to give a little more place in our thoughts to the great fact of redemption and how it has been accomplished. It is striking how the apostles emphasise the personal claims of the Lord over us. Peter says, “himself for our sins in his body on the tree” (1 Pet 2: 24), making it a personal matter between the Lord and each one of us. And John says that “he has washed us from our sins in his blood”, Rev 1: 5. That is, we are never again to be marked by lawlessness. But He has made of the kingdom preached to his God and Father. I believe we do well, each brother and sister, whether old or young, to give increasing place in our minds to the fact that we have been redeemed personally by the Lord, at infinite cost to himself, that we might be secured for the pleasure of God now.

Ques. Does the apostle refer to that in 1 Corinthians 6: 11 when he goes over certain things and he says, “such were some of you, but

ye have been washed”. Did he have that in mind?

A.J.G. He did: “ye have been washed, but ye have been sanctified, but ye have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus”—that brings in the testimony to what He has done in His death – “and by the Spirit of our God”, that is the subjective power that makes it real in us.

Ques. inaudible

A.J.G. Yes, that is right, and it is a striking thing that one year after they came out of Egypt, a year during which they proved the grace of God giving the manna and giving the water from the smitten rock and so on, God then proposed this to them, that they should make Him a sanctuary. And then from that time onwards, the sanctuary of God, which for us is the assembly, became their commanding interest and the centre of all their movements.

Ques. Would it be right to say that Israel’s collective history began with what we speak of in the Passover lamb? And it is not without significance that when the Lord was on earth near the end of his pathway, the idea of the Passover was emphasised, would you say?

A.J.G. Yes, quite so. It is the beginning of months. “This month shall be unto you the beginning of months”, Exod 12: 2. So it is the

beginning of our moral exercises, the Passover lamb, the judgment of sin in the person of Christ on our behalf and the claim over our affections that that establishes.

Rem. It is never supposed that God would ask the people to bring anything that they could not bring. It is not suggested here that it would be difficult to bring what God asks.

A.J.G. No, exactly, and I think we can see without going into a lot of details and that the gold and the silver and the copper really refer to certain things that we learn in God. And the blue and the purple and the scarlet and the byssus and the goats' hair and the rams' skins dyed red and the badgers' ski's and the acacia wood, eight things, are things that we apprehend in Christ. The oil for the light, the spices for the anointing oil, and the incense of fragrance drugs would direct our thoughts to the Spirit. And then the onyx stones and stones to be set refer, I believe, to the permanency of God's work in the saints. So it is a question of how far we have an appreciation of God and of Christ and of the Spirit and of the saints. If we have, it will work out in conditions being found with us that will contribute to God's dwelling amongst us congenially.

Ques. Is it affecting that Jehovah asks for a habitation, not when they come into the land,

but in the time of their sojourn? There was at this time, I judge, no idea of the wilderness journey being so prolonged, and yet God asks for a habitation in that period immediately following redemption.

A.J.G. Exactly, and in that way, it makes the present time particularly important and valuable that conditions pleasing to God, where He can dwell, can be provided and maintained by the saints in the presence of what is evil and hostile around. Is that what you had in mind?

Rem. Yes, there was much that would mitigate against the habitation, but nevertheless God would have His saints go through with it as overcomers.

A.J.G. Exactly, yes. I think it helps to see that it is contemplated that it is to be a commanding interest, that to which everything else is subservient. In Exodus it is to be provided, in Leviticus, God is to be approached and served in it, and in Numbers it is to be carried in testimony. But from this time onwards, it is to be the commanding interest of God's people.

Rem. They would all have been fully occupied if so many things had to be brought, would they not?

A.J.G. Yes, indeed. You mean it would not leave them any time for other interests that would be inimical to God's pleasure?

Rem. Yes, exactly.

Ques. inaudible

A.J.G. Yes it is, and the first thing that is called for is gold, which I believe refers to love. It is what is of God, the divine nature. If we have not love, we have nothing, we are nothing; it is not simply we have nothing, but we are nothing. The first essential in the dwelling place of God is conditions of love, love amongst ourselves. God being love, He cannot possibly dwell happily and restfully in conditions other than conditions of love. And hence we have got to challenge ourselves as to how far we have been formed in love. Because it is ourselves as formed in love that constitute the first ingredient, so to speak, in these dwelling conditions for God.

Rem. It must be put together according to the pattern.

A.J.G. But the first thing is to bring the material. And then we have to be set together according to the divine prescription, but the first thing is to bring the material.

Ques. It would be the result of exercise.

A.J.G. Well, say a little more as to what is in your mind.

Ques. It is what we have in ourselves.

A.J.G. Well, of course, we start with an apprehension of love. It says, “God commends *his* love to us, in that we being still sinners, Christ died for us”, Rom 5: 8. And “the Holy Spirit sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts”, Rom 5: 5. So that we begin our Christian history with some impression of love, but then we have to increase and abound in it. It says, “Hereby we have known love, because he has laid down his life for us; and we ought for the brethren to lay down our lives”, 1 John 3: 16. God has come out in Christ, and everything that we are to know of God is to be learned in Christ. And therefore we must study Christ if we would be impressed with love. And we have no value at all in the divine system, except in the measure in which we are formed in love.

Ques. Would the divine standard be seen in John 14 and 15, in relation to what the Lord says, in relation to the commandments? He says, “A the new commandment I give to you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you”, John 13: 34. Would that answer to the goal and the divine standard you are referring to?

A.J.G. Yes, quite so. But it is a question of laying down our lives. Love is absolutely unselfish and self-sacrificing. A question of laying down our lives. That is how love has come out. Love that is of God has come out in that way. And so when God established a system for his dwelling place, it's a system that was marked by continual sacrifice. If the children of Israel had answered the divine mind, anyone going near to the tabernacle would have seen constant sacrifice going on all the time. That's what God loves to see, because it is the expression of the way he has come out in Christ.

Ques. It says, "and this is the heave offering". Do you think that God in that way is particular in regard to what is at brought? While it is that everyone who is half-prompt of him, does it seem to suggest that there to be no alloy, no open ore as you suggested, lawless or independent element entering into this matter?

A.J.G. Quite so. I think if we keep in our minds, "that I may dwell among them", God says; if we would take home the exercise to ourselves and ask what kind of conditions God would look for, it would help us greatly in our outlook on the assembly and in our coming together, and in our relations with one another, because it is as set together that we constitute this dwelling place.

Rem. I thought of another illustration, of this. The way that God is acting, in Romans 8, “He who, yea, has not spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all”, Rom 8: 32. Do you think that would be enough culture to bring out these offerings?

A.J.G. Yes, it would. I am sure that we get helped by going back sometimes in our minds and going over the foundations of Christianity, the death of Christ, and what its import is, and what has come into expression there; and the way God has approached us in Christ. It does us good to go over these things in our minds sometimes so as to become deepened in things and not merely take things up mentally.

Ques. Has not every fundamental truth to be carried forward. We have an idea, I think, sometimes, that we can leave elementary things behind us because we have touched greater. But if we are not carrying these things with us all the time, there will be breakdown, will there not?

A.J.G. There will. We have to carry the foundations all the time and then build upon it in keeping with it.

Ques. Is it interesting that these things are brought to Moses, and the particular place that Moses seems to have in the formation of this divine system, bringing the heave offering with

that in view. But has Moses a particular place, do you think?

A.J.G. Well, it says Jehovah spoke to Moses, but then it says that “Jehovah spoke to Moses saying, speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me a heed offering of everyone whose heart combs with him, ye shall take my heave offering. That seems to be more than Moses, I is “ye”, it is in the plural, Moses and those who are working with him, I suppose. What had you in mind?

Rem. What I had in mind is how Moses comes in so definitely, “thou shalt make me a table”, for instance it says. Moses seemed to take charge of the different gifts that were brought with a view to the building of the tabernacle system.

A.J.G. Oh, yes. He typifies Christ and all is to be done under the control and direction of the Lord.

Rem. That’s what I had in mind that when we are together and love is prompting us and there are these, the bringings of the saints, it would be under the control of Christ.

A.J.G. Quite so. They are all brought to him in order that they might be set together suitably.

Ques. Would faith go along with love? I was thinking of the intelligence needed to lay hold of the great thoughts of God in this faith system.

A.J.G. Yes, I am sure that is important.

Rem. So that, following what you say and what our brother has said, when Paul is writing to Timothy in his first epistle, he does not hesitate to delineate the mercy and the grace that has come to him from God, “but the grace of our Lord surpassingly overabounded with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 1: 14), would you say?

A.J.G. Yes, indeed.

Rem. There is nothing left for the people to bring from their own imagination as to what would be suitable, is there?

A.J.G. No, nothing at all. And yet there is plenty of variety in what is required, leaving scope for plenty of exercise to be developed as to what is suitable to God and His dwelling place.

Ques. Had they not to work out all these things together in love?

A.J.G. They had. But what a help it would be to us if we could carry this continually in our minds, that we are set together to provide God

with a dwelling place, congenial to Himself, His desires. On one occasion, as we remember, the Lord said to Zacchæus, “come down, for to-day I must remain in thy house”. And Zacchæus, to his credit, came down and received him gladly. But what exercises would be raised with Zacchæus as the Lord came into his house and dwelt there the whole day? And what education there would be afforded to Zacchæus if he watched the movements of Jesus and the way he did things and so on; how it would have kept him. His house would be entirely changed because he had a new standard, so to speak, brought into it, by which he was to govern himself for the future.

Ques. Would you say a little about the copper and the relation to this? You spoke about the gold as being a love of God, as expressed in the death of Christ, on the ground of redemption. Would the copper begin the thought of self-judgment and all parts, and keep it with us so that there would be those conditions that you speak of, for God to dwell?

A.J.G. Yes, copper always refers, as I understand it, to the judgment of evil. We learn love in that life, that love is not in any sense tolerant of evil, but intolerant of it. And in order that evil might be judged according to God, Christ has given himself for us, and sustained

the judgment. And God executes the judgment upon Him so that both on the part of God and on the part of Christ, infinite sacrifice is entered into the dealing with evil. And we are to view evil in that light as something that has to be judged unsparingly and not allowed for a moment.

Ques. Would 1 Corinthians 3 have a bearing upon this? If “anyone build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones”, 1 Cor 3: 12?

A.J.G. Yes, quite so. He says, “for other foundation can no man lay besides that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ”, v 11. That is that order of manhood. And what was built upon it must be in keeping with it. Hence, we are constantly thrown back upon Christ, to study Christ, to consider Him.

Ques. Would it be right to see the acacia wood, and the way the Spirit of God records it, that there is special significance in the acacia wood?

A.J.G. Yes, it seems to stand by itself. What do you think of that?

Rem. I am thinking what you’re saying as to the prominence of the order of man, Jesus Christ.

A.J.G. Well, it is very important that, and I know we are speaking of things that in a sense we all know, I suppose, but I am sure we need to give them more place in our minds; to take account of the different kind of man that Jesus was, as He was amongst men. And God has shown His approval of Him by raising Him from among the dead, and leaving every other man in death. And hence we are to consider Jesus Christ; He is the great foundation. He enters into Corinthians, He enters into Ephesians. You will find that Jesus Christ runs right through as the foundation, so to speak, upon which God has built all that He is securing for Himself and for His pleasure in men.

Ques. Is that the reason that there is such a variety in the things which you suggested, these eight things, which refer to Christ, ending with the acacia wood, and is that to encourage us to consider and study Jesus Christ more than perhaps we do?

A.J.G. Yes, I think so. We get, for instance, Psalm 16, a delineation of the kind of man that was under God's eye in Jesus here. And then you find that on the day of Pentecost, Peter quotes the last four verses of that Psalm in full. And then he says, "This Jesus has God raised up"—"This Jesus ... having therefore been exalted by the right hand of God, and having

received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this", Acts 2: 32, 33. That is, the Spirit has come upon the saints to form them in keeping with the man whom God has raised up from among the dead. And nothing else will do for God.

Ques. So you have in mind that all these lovely features which are delineated in these eight things you have spoken of, sin and Christ, should now take shape and character in the saints. So you have in mind that all these lovely features which are delineated in these eight things you have spoken of, seen in Christ, should now take shape and character in the saints.

A.J.G. Well, that's exactly it. God has made known His pleasure that He should find a dwelling place among men. And we are the men. It is ourselves. And these things are to take form now in a concrete way in Coatbridge and in London, and in every other place where the saints are moving together in the light of the assembly. And hence if we are to rise to divine thought, we must give time to consider these things and see that they are produced.

Ques. Do you think that it is in mind that these things are to be found in a permanent way?? That we would be able to put things in order, to see things in order?

A.J.G. Yes, I think so.

Ques. Does the apostle in Romans 16 give some of that material which is suitable to God's habitation?

A.J.G. Yes, he does. You mean all the different brothers and sisters that he mentions by name.

Ques. Is there any significance that these things are acquired through pressure and process?

A.J.G. Well, some of them are. A thing is not of great value unless it costs something to acquire it.

But now the centre of the system, of course, is the ark. And the ark with the testimony inside it and then covered with a mercy seat; and I think we have got to pay attention to that too. The ark of course is typical of Christ, one of the Godhead become man, and having come into manhood, He has the will of God in his heart. In "coming into the world he says, Sacrifice and offering thou willedst not; but thou hast prepared me a body. Thou tookest no pleasure in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin", and so on, "Then I said, Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, thy good will", Heb 10: 5-8. "To do thy good pleasure, my God, is my delight, and thy law is

within my heart”, Ps 40: 8. Now that is the testimony, that God is going to secure man here who wholly delights in God’s will and has no other will. And the centre of the system is the one who became man with that in view, to establish God’s will at all costs and exclude every other will.

Rem. So that in Him there was perfect correspondence between the within and the without, “inside and outside, shalt thou overlay it”. I suppose as yet it is not true of any one of us.

A.J.G No, but it is a good thing to have the centre of the system before our hearts, do you not think?

Rem. I was thinking contemplation brings transformation, does it not?

A.J.G. Yes, indeed.

Ques. Is it striking that the ark never needed to be changed? God begins his people with what is unchangeable and requiring no change.

A.J.G. Exactly.

Rem. Most of the furniture of the tabernacle was unsuited to the temple, but the ark went through in its own distinctive glory.

A.J.G. Quite so. Yes, I am sure that is good.

Ques. In speaking of the gold, we have to bring gold. But in relation to the making of the ark, the ark should be made of pure gold, within and without. Could you help us with that question?

A.J.G. Well, I suppose it is to draw attention to the personal glory of Christ. He is in manhood. He has come in grace into manhood conditions, and He takes manhood condition eternally. But we are to be impressed with the glory of the one who has become man, and who as man is the centre of the divine system.

Ques. Would the gold have special reference to His ministry and work? The shittim wood would what was there constitutionally in the man.

A.J.G. Well, what have you in mind with regard to ministry and work?

Rem. Well, I was thinking of what comes before us [*fault on recording*]

A.J.G. ... It says that man came seeing. So that if He cast out demons, for instance, although he did it by the Spirit of God, He says, "I command thee", Mark 9: 25. The apostles say, in the name of Jesus Christ, go out, and so on. But the Lord says, "I command thee".

Ques. So that the half-sizes and the dimensions would have a bearing on that, would it? Mr Taylor used to tell us that it indicated that, in looking at the Lord Jesus, there was infinitely more than the human eye could see there.

A.J.G. Yes, exactly. But I think it is an immense thing to get into our minds the idea that God has introduced in Christ a man wholly devoted to God's will, and His intention is to fill the universe with men who take character from that. Well now, does that work out in practice in our localities? Are we in fact devoted to God's will and His pleasure, or do we ever introduce some feature of our own will?

Ques. [There were two things in the ark as well as the tables of testimony.]

A.J.G. No, the testimony is in the ark. I think the testimony is that God secures, in the world where Satan has sway, men who are devoted to His will. That is the idea: "To do thy good pleasure, my God, is my delight". Now that was presented in testimony in a man, in Jesus. And it is to work out now in the saints. And God loves to dwell in conditions of that kind.

Rem. The second element is that the two things that were put in there during the carrying

period, the suggestion of exercise in keeping with that.

A.J.G. Oh, I think it was. I think Aaron's rod, of course, was brought in because of the murmuring of the people, but then it shows how grace meets it. So that Aaron's rod was a very precious thought, and also the manna too. But then they are not here. They are brought in later. The great thing here is the testimony, and that is man secured as devoted to God's will. The thing here is the testimony, and that is, man secured is devoted to God's will.

Ques. Does that involve that we are brought into the immediate presence of God; was it not in the holiest?

A.J.G. It was. And that is another thing that I think we should be concerned to know more about, to go into the immediate presence of God; because God has established Himself upon the mercy seat. We want to learn mercy and how God delights in it.

Ques. Would you say something about the cherubim?

A.J.G. The cherubim are always, as I understand it, symbolical of the assertion and maintenance of God's right. It is a remarkable thing that when He does assert His rights, it is a right to show mercy. He says, "I will have

mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will show compassion on whom I will show compassion”, Rom 9: 15. When He asserts his right, it is His right to show mercy. But how He must have loved Christ as giving Himself in order that that right might be made good in righteousness.

Rem. The mercy seat and the cherubim were all one.

A.J.G. They were.

Ques. Is it not important to see that “out of the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim”?

A.J.G. Well, go on.

Rem. I mean, they are not independently symbolic creatures. It is the rights of God secured in Christ in the same way as that in which He showed his mercy.

A.J.G. Yes, indeed. I think the mercy seat is a very glorious thing to consider; and Christ going to death in order that sin might be dealt with according to God ,so that God might be free to maintain this attitude of mercy that He loves. Now that is to affect us. In Matthew 9, there was a certain one who complained that the Lord was sitting at table with the publicans and sinners. And the Lord says, “go and learn what that meaneth. I will have mercy, not sacrifice”,

Matt 9: 13. Go and learn it, He says, as though we have some time to go and learn things and take on the feature of mercy that God delights in.

Ques. Is that why the blood sprinkled on and before the mercy seat seven times?

A.J.G. Well that would show how God is vindicated and His rights are established, and there is liberty now to draw near. But then the Lord had to say to certain persons, “go and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice”. As though in our relations with one another, we may be getting away from the mercy seat. So He says, go and learn it.

Rem. It is a beautiful suggestion, that the rights of God which are inflexible are connected with wings: “the cherubim shall stretch out their wings over it”.

A.J.G. That is protection, I suppose, is it not?

Rem. Yes, I was thinking of what you have said as to the expression of mercy, that there is loving kindness and goodness and protection connected with the maintenance of the rights of God.

A.J.G. Yes. Well, it is the most affecting thing. It is not mercy, of course, at the expense of what is right. Christ has died in order that all

that is right might be maintained, so that mercy might prevail. And therefore we are to go and learn it, as though he would say, go into the holiest, and consider God's rights in mercy, and how they have been established. Let it have its own effect upon your spirit.

Rem. So God says in Hebrews that "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness".

A.J.G. That is what we just referred to in Matthew 9 and then in Matthew 12 we find that when the disciples went through the cornfields on the sabbath day and plucked the ears of corn, the Pharisees found fault with them; and the Lord said, "if ye had known what is, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless". So that the matter of mercy is intended to have a great effect upon our bearing towards one another.

Ques. Is this not the very place where God Himself sits?

A.J.G. Yes, He always is presented as sitting there, and from that point He speaks.

Ques. Does not Romans 12: 8-10 express that, behaviour one towards another? "He that shows mercy, with cheerfulness ... be kindly affectioned towards one another, as to honour, each taking the lead in giving it to the other", and so on.

A.J.G. It does indeed.

Ques. Do you think those are qualities that really proceed from the holiest?

A.J.G. Exactly. And hence the great importance on our part of studying Christ in the holiest, the Person of Christ and what characterises Him as delighting in God's will, and then devoting Himself to death in order that God's rights and mercy might be established; and God maintaining His seat there and speaking from there. Now we should go into the holiest and contemplate these things so that we are rightly affected in our spirits, in our relations with one another.

Ques. Do you think that Paul had the mercy seat in view in referring to his dealings with Philemon his brother?

A.J.G. Yes, he had the mercy seat in his mind and heart. So he was bringing it to bear upon Philemon to act in that spirit toward Onesimus.

Ques. Is it not significant that the epistle that presents the highest features of the truth, the apostle in speaking about the saints, I am thinking of Ephesians, and "God, who is rich in mercy", as if he had the gain of that in his own soul.

A.J.G. Yes, and the highest truths, as you say, in Ephesians, come out that there everything takes character from God. And here, things are to take character from God. He is going to dwell amongst his people.

Ques. Do not you think in that way that part of our difficulty lies in the fact that we enjoy mercy as an objective matter, and the results and blessings it brings to us, but then demands may be made upon us to act in that setting towards others, brethren, for instance, would you say?

A.J.G. Yes, but is it not a happy thing? Think of the year of jubilee, the jubilation connected with the spirit of release, the jubilation of it.

Rem. Just so.

A.J.G. That really flows from getting some sense of how God delights in it, and establishes His seat on the mercy seat.

Ques. Would you say it is the tenor and character of all God's communications at the present time: "There will I speak with each of you"?

A.J.G. Yes, that is another feature, of course, in the divine dwelling, is that there is constant speaking from God. That is another thing, that we are to have an ear attentive to what God is

saying, and we are to regulate ourselves by what He says; and therefore the dwelling place of God is characterised by constant freshness, because it is affected by constant speaking on God's part. Mr Taylor has said years ago that it is more important that the Lord should speak to us than that we should speak to Him; not that he was in any way decrying our speaking to the Lord or to God, of course. But the more important thing is that God should speak to us, and that we should be regulated by what He says.

Ques. Is that the meaning of what, uh, occurred at the end of Numbers 7. It says that Moses went in to speak with Him. Then he heard a voice speaking to him from off the mercy seat.

A.J.G. Yes, and then Moses spoke. That is very interesting, that Moses goes in to speak with Him, but God intercepts him and speaks first, and then Moses speaks. Well now Moses speaking then would be regulated by what God has just said to him. There is no doubt about that. And hence, if I refuse the light for the moment, if I refuse what the Spirit of God is stressing among the saints, then my part in the assembly will be out of place, so to speak. God intends that we should take on whatever He

says, and then our speaking is to be regulated by it.

Ques. Is it not remarkable that the first indication of an assembly spoken of in the Acts of Antioch?

A.J.G. They were first called Christians there., showing that they had taken on the character of the man, the man Jesus Christ, and then in that position there is divine speaking.

Rem. So the Spirit says, “separate me now, Barnabas, and Saul”.

A.J.G. Yes, well, that only confirms what we’re saying, that there are first the conditions that are secured locally that are leading to God’s habitation, and then you get God’s speaking; living conditions resulting from God’s voice being heard.

Ques. Is it not important that preceding the fact of speaking is, there is “I will meet with thee. There will I meet with thee and speak with thee”?

A.J.G. Well, go on: what is in your mind?

Rem. I was only thinking of the divine presence there and preceding speaking, so we should be very conscious of the presence of God.

A.J.G. Yes, quite so; so the tent becomes called the tent of meeting. That is where God meets with his people and they meet with Him. One is only concerned for oneself and us all that we should have more living and elevated thoughts as to the assembly and our coming together. So we do not simply say, well, we are coming to the meeting. It is a good thing to come, of course, not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. But if we could have carry in our minds a little more that God was dwelling amongst us and wants conditions suitable to His dwelling, it would greatly help us. And then that He is prepared to speak to us.

Ques. Would it be a normal thing that God should speak to us in the assembly on the first day of the week?

A.J.G. I think so. I think you could, we might well expect that.

Ques. Is it remarkable that whilst the principle of separation comes in and is very, very necessary, the idea of the tabernacle is never given up, the greatness of it?

A.J.G. Well, exactly.

And that brings us to Chapter 33, because it is a good thing for us to be clear in our minds as to the ground on which we are, and when we speak of the assembly. Young ones

are constantly coming amongst us, that we are thankful for it, and young ones who perhaps have been brought up in the position in which many of us have been through mercy. But it is a good thing to understand why we are where we are.

Rem. So that it's a very touching word, "every one that sought Jehovah went out to the tent of meeting".

A.J.G. Well, the remarkable thing was that the tent of meeting itself, that is the tabernacle, had not yet been made. God had made known His mind in regard of it, but had not yet been constructed. And then this condition of idolatry in the camp arises. I think perhaps many do not realise that the children of Israel, in making the golden calf, would have told you that they were not giving up Jehovah; they made this calf and they could speak of the feast of Jehovah: the calf was their conception of Jehovah. They reduced Him to the mere conception of the human mind, and then they worshipped it. It was a lifeless state of things, and yet they were professing to go on with Jehovah. And in that condition of things, they could sit down to eat and drink and rise up to play. They could just please themselves, and yet go on ostensibly with the service of God. And it was formal and idolatrous in God's sight. Well, now, that is

exactly the position in the religious world around us. with the service of God. And now in that position, Moses moves with instinct. And he takes the tent, presumably his own tent, or any tent, and pits it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tent of meeting. He does not give up the divine thought, but he shows that in very limited circumstances and in much reproach, as it would be just a tent far off from the camp, he would maintain the divine thought, and that it was essential that it should be far away from what was idolatrous. and that it was essential that it should be far away from what was idolatrous.

Rem. Geographically, it was not very far away because they watched Moses go into it, but morally it was far away.

A.J.G. Yes, exactly.

Rem. It is suggested that it seems to be an individual matter: “and it came to pass that everyone who sought Jehovah went out to the tent of meeting”.

A.J.G. It was an individual matter.

Rem. Like Hebrews, where it says, “going forth to him without the camp”.

A.J.G. Yes. And like 2 Timothy 2, “him who names the name of the Lord withdraws

From iniquity”. It is a matter of each one taking up in his own soul that we must not connect what is iniquitous with the Name of Christ.

Rem. So that this tent would really speak of Moses’ own living conditions, which he judged would be acceptable to God; and therefore taking it away from the camp where the iniquity was, God would be free to still continue with the people?

A.J.G. Yes, exactly. We do not read here anything of gold or silver or copper or anything of that sort. The essential for the moment was separation from evil. And Moses understands that.

Ques. You think that for the time being, until the ark was made and the tabernacle set up, God has a moral basis for going on with Israel in the tent of meeting removed far from the camp by Moses?

A.J.G. Exactly. And God was quick to show His approval of this action on Moses’ part, because it says that “the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the entrance of the tent and Jehovah talked with Moses”. So we have got the presence of God and divine speaking secured on these lines, though it be in such outward smallness and obscurity.

Rem. And divine speaking in excess of expectation.

A.J.G. Yes, I suppose so. He talked with Moses.

Rem. Yes, He talked face to face as a man speaks with his friends.

A.J.G. Quite so.

Ques. When Moses is called it the tent of meeting, he is giving us no divine thought, is he?

A.J.G. Well, that is the idea, I think; that he is cherishing divine thought, but he sees that the first essential is that there must be a repudiation of evil.

Ques. Do you not think we need to be concerned to develop more of this feature so that when things may become unhappy in our locality—which God forbid, yet you see the apostle, the resort that he had at Corinth, to hold to the position abstractly till it becomes true of them concretely?

A.J.G. I am sure that is right. So Moses took a tent and pitched it outside the camp and called it the tent of meeting. He is holding to the divine thought, is he not? And relying upon individual exercise to come out and support the position.

Ques. May we then expect that, where there is the cherishing of divine thoughts and the complete repudiation of evil, we may expect that God would be with us in greater liberty and intimacy, as verse 11 might suggest, do you think?

A.J.G. Yes, I do think that. And then it brings to light a young man, Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man “departed not from within the tent”. He was wholly committed to it. He went into the text and departed not from it.

Ques. The name, Nun, means continuation, and would he be one like Timothy who would link on with all that had been brought to his notice, and for his affections in Moses? And as far as he was concerned, he would desire that that should be continued to the end.

A.J.G. He was a young man with a with a good history. He had led the conflict with Amalek; that is, he had learned to judge the flesh, so as to make room for the Spirit. And now he commits himself fully to this position, whatever the reproach of all this. And he never goes back from it. That is an important matter. He departed not from within the tent.

Rem. There was no speaking on the part of Jehovah with anybody who remained in his own tent, was there?

A.J.G. No there was not.

Ques. What does it mean to go out to the entrance of his tent, what is the entrance to his tent?

A.J.G. Well, every man was at the entrance of his tent, his own tent; that is that a great many of them were more concerned with their own affairs than considering for God: “his tent” is the individual’s tent in contrast to the tent of meeting.

Rem. The idea of the together is to judge evil first and then choose the good.

A.J.G. Yes, “cease to do evil, learn to do well” (Isa 1: 16, 17); that is the great principle.

Rem. This is not just an ecclesiastical situation, but a reflection of the condition which Philadelphia represents.

A.J.G. Well, yes, I suppose that is right. It is a question of individual instinct with Moses, a recognition that the name of God must not be connected with evil, and on the other hand, that divine thoughts are not to be surrendered. And hence, as withdrawing from iniquity, individually, we find others have done the same, and we go on with them. And as moving together, you come then to the light of the assembly, because that is the only light to

regulate the movements together of saints of God.

Ques. Are there not some Christians who claim to be outside the camp, but they have not gone far enough, and they miss the communications because they are only given in one place?

A.J.G. Yes, I am sure that is important.

Ques. Is there some principle of God identifying himself with the position? Would that still be discernible today?

A.J.G. Oh, I am sure it would.

Rem. The pillar of the cloud is quite a new matter, is it not, at the entrance of the tent?

A.J.G. The pillar of south had previously come between them and the Egyptians. But now He shows His approval of this position by identifying Himself with this small position, just an ordinary tent, far off from the camp, and yet God is there.

Ques. Was the pillar of clouds, in that way, God giving confirmation to the movement of Moses?

A.J.G. Yes, the confirmation of His own presence and His own speaking. There is nothing more precious than that the presence of

God to be realised, and His communications heard.

Ques. Does Hebrews 13 bear on what is being said, the suffering of Jesus and the shedding of His blood calculated to awake our hearts so that we might turn out to Him, resulting in praise Godward?

A.J.G. Yes, exactly. That is, the appeal that has gone forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. And then, as you say, it results in the sacrifice of praise to God continually.

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THE TABLE AND THE CANDLESTICK

Exodus 25: 29-31

Leviticus 24: 1-9

Numbers 8: 1-4

Colossians 3: 12-15

2 Corinthians: 4: 5-11

A.J.G. We had this morning the first part of Exodus 25, what was before us being God's desire to have a dwelling place amongst his people, and that we all are to have our part in providing what He looks for in his dwelling place. So the children of Israel were to bring the various materials that He required. We were saying that what we bring is really ourselves, but ourselves as formed in features that are according to God, as learned from God, learned in Christ, learned in the Spirit; having appreciation, too, of the work of God in one another. And then that the great centre of the system is Christ, to reside in the ark and the mercy seat upon it. God is apprehended as taking His seat there between the cherubim, and speaking from that point. So that we are to know more of going into the holiest and contemplating Christ, a man who came into this world with the sole purpose of doing God's will, of delighting in it; and to bring in a man of his own character who would delight in God's will. And then that God is to be known in His mercy.

We are to allow the sense of mercy to affect our spirits, so that it regulates us in our relations with one another.

I thought this afternoon we might get one or two thoughts in relation to the next two great features of this system. That is firstly the table, suggesting the saints under God's eye as ministering to His pleasure; not exactly in a priestly way, but as presenting under God's eye the features of Christ. And then also the great system of light. There is also the great system of light to reside in the candlestick. So the scriptures we have read refer to the table and the candlestick. I think the passage in Colossians will link with the table, and the passage in Corinthians will link with the candlestick. And the passage in Corinthians will link with the candlestick. It is a great thing to get some idea of the glorious system that is existent here on earth in the saints, in whom God dwells, and amongst whom these features should be discernible.

There are other features, of course, which we cannot touch on today: the altar of incense, prayer in relation to divine interests; the altar of burnt offering, the constant sense of acceptance with God; the provision, too, to meet sin if it arises. And the whole system of sacrifice. All these are features that God takes

pleasure in as characterising His dwelling place among the saints.

But we might get help together this afternoon on these two features of the table and the candlestick. The first thing that is mentioned about the table—the table no doubt is typical of Christ Himself, as presented in Colossians, as able in his own life and under His influence to sustain the saints for the pleasure of God. But in the verse where we started reading, we have the suggestion of the saints. That is, on the table there are dishes, and cups, and goblets, and bowls with which to pour out. It is a question of a system in which the saints appear as vessels that furnish the pleasure of the heart of God. Then also the showbread is on the table, speaking of the order of manhood, the heavenly order of manhood seen in the saints, set together in love and in order, in unity.

Rem. It says, “of pure gold shalt thou make them”. But thus be the saints as formed in the divine nature.

A.J.G. Yes, I think it would be. I think it would help us if we could more continually carry in our minds that we constitute this great system which God has on earth in His saints. And it is intended to have these different features. The passage we read in Leviticus speaks of “continually”. Several times over

there is the expression “continually”. And the “pure table”, “pure frankincense”, as though divine thoughts are to go through in their purity continually, right through to the coming of the Lord. We are to see to it that it is so.

Ques. Is there a kind of correspondence between the vessels and the loaves? The loaves perhaps setting out the truth abstractly before God, but the vessels, the saints in love, prepared to serve in that connection?

A.J.G. I think so. I think what you say helps, that the loaves really are the saints abstractly according to divine thoughts, as before God. And therefore, as we have often noticed, when David was about to enter upon a period of rejection and persecution by the people of God, he was strengthened by feeding on showbread. A great thing if there are conditions of difficulty in any locality, or if any of the saints are not behaving as they ought to behave, as saints of God, it is a good thing to nourish your soul on how God regards them in Christ. So that you are preserved in your spirit, whatever happens. What would you say?

Ques. Is that true of Corinth? Does Paul speak of the saints abstractly first, before he begins to touch on their state?

A.J.G. Yes, exactly.

Rem. Is it in your mind that these vessels should be constantly available for commission, for usefulness?

A.J.G. Yes, that is what the saints should be, vessels available to afford pleasure to the heart of God. There is a variety: some are dishes, some are cups, some are goblets some are bowls, but there is variety in them; but at the same time they are all for this purpose. To pour out so that there might be something for the pleasure of God.

Ques. I suppose the drink offering would be included, would it?

A.J.G. I suppose so. Paul spoke of himself as being ready to be poured out in Philippians (Phil 2: 17), and in Timothy it had come,. He says, "I am already being poured out", 2 Tim 4: 6. It involves that you are entirely used—it is the will of God—without any reserve. If water is being poured out, it cannot be gathered up again. And that is the idea, I believe, that as devoted to God's will, there is no reserve. You are wholly here for his pleasure.

Rem. The consideration of that would help us and preserve us, would it not, that these vessels, primarily in themselves, were constructed to be receptacles for usefulness. How often we are concerned about what we

receive among the brethren, which has its place, but primarily for God.

A.J.G. It greatly elevates our view of our position here, set among the saints, to think that God has in His people this system, in which His pleasure is being continually ministered to, and that we are to hold ourselves in that night is available for the pleasure of God.

Rem. The saints of Macedonia had that in mind, that they gave themselves first to the Lord, and then to the apostles by God's will.

A.J.G. Well, there you are. It shows that they have embraced the idea.

Ques. Would you say that they are vessels of capacity, although of different degrees?

A.J.G. Well, that is clear. Vessels of capacity, it may be varying capacity. And no doubt vessels will be of different capacity in eternity. The great point is that they are to be filled, full vessels.

Ques. Would Daniel make it clear that they are vessels of quality, that holiness, that God is particularly jealous for the way that these vessels are to be employed, as he said to Belshazzar?

A.J.G. Yes, exactly. That is an important matter because as having been brought to Christ and

been sealed with the Spirit, we are vessels. But then it does raise a question, and an important question, as to what use is being made of them and who has control of them. If the world gets any control of the saints, it is control that the world has no right to, and the world is jealous of it.

Ques. Would this be just the service Godward?

A.J.G. Well, I do not think it is exactly so much the thought of formal service, which would be more connected with the priest. But rather that there is that which God can look down upon with pleasure. That is why I think Colossians suggests the idea that they are elect of God, holy and beloved, and then certain features that are to mark the faith. It's a question of a system in which God conceives Christ, the life of Christ, working out in detail in the saints under his eyes.

Rem. When Paul writes to the Philippians, he speaks of what they had sent him, "an odour of sweet savour, an acceptable sacrifice, agreeable to God", Phil 4: 18. A very similar word used in regard to the sacrifice of Christ Himself in Ephesians when He delivered up Himself, Eph 5: 2.

A.J.G. Well, exactly. And then you see the detail of that action of the Macedonians, the Philippians. They were poor, as we gather, from Scripture, and yet they had things that they were going to send to the apostle that they knew would be acceptable to him; and one of their number had to carry them and undertake a perilous journey, a long journey, to bring them to Paul. And he does it and he nearly loses his life over it. All that was attractive to God, all those movements the thought of the Philippians in providing the things and the action of Epaphroditus in carrying them. All that was delightful to God.

Rem. That would be the pouring out from the vessels.

A.J.G. It would indeed.

Ques. What is the purpose of the vessels, with which to pour out? Does it suggest a state of readiness from our part?

A.J.G. I think it does. To pour out means that you just extend yourself. As the Samaritan said to the host, “whatsoever thou dost expend more”, Luke 10: 35. As though to say, I am not going to impose any limitation on the movement of love. You can extend yourself to any degree. You can pour out, so to speak, to your heart's content.

Rem. It is interesting that the apostle in Philippians speaks first of being poured out before he speaks of being filled. Would it confirm this idea of committal to service? God will see to the filling if we are prepared for the pouring out.

A.J.G. I believe that is right. And the more we are prepared to serve in any way that life needs, the more God will provide us with what is needed to enable us to do so. It may be material things, or it may be health and strength, or whatever it may be. But if he sees anyone ready to pour out, so to speak, do it if you have the means to do it.

Rem. I was thinking of Isaiah 53: 12, where it speaks of the Lord pouring out His soul unto death.

A.J.G. Well, that is right.

Rem. And the portion assigned amongst the strong.

A.J.G. Yes, quite so.

Rem. inaudible

A.J.G. Yes, that's how it worked out.

Ques. Was Epaphroditus a model of this?

A.J.G. We have just referred to him, yes. He was sick nigh unto death. So he was

prepared to sacrifice himself in order that the love of saints might reach the apostle.

Rem. So the apostle refers to the house of Stephanus, that “they have devoted themselves to the saints for service”, I Cor 16: 15. Mr Darby says in the footnote, given themselves up to serve them.

A.J.G. Yes.

Rem. They were not devoted to service, but they were devoted to the saints, were they not?

A.J.G. Quite so. That is a question of what is learned from Christ. That is the great value, I believe, of the epistle for Colossians. So it says where we read, “compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, forgiving one another”. It is striking that the Spirit of God contemplates that conditions will not be exactly perfect. There may be an occasion for a complaint against another, but if there is, let it become an occasion for the spirit of forgiveness according to Christ to come into expression. And thus what is imperfect in its terms becomes an occasion for a presentation under God's eye of what is supremely precious.

Rem. There are various ones mentioned at the end of Colossians. It speaks about Tychicus

the beloved brother, and it speaks about Onesimus the beloved brother, and about Epaphras, and Luke the beloved physician, as if these features that you are speaking about, referring to the saints, would be coming to expression at Colossians?

A.J.G. Yes, quite so. Especially in the fact he was a local brother and Onesimus, I think, was a local brother too. The apostle loved to indicate particular ones in whom the truth is exemplified, did he not?

Rem. inaudible

A.J.G. Yes, but say a little more, would you, as to what's in your mind in connection with what you are saying?

Rem. All that the mind of the Spirit is that, in any service in regard to the saints, they should be edified.

A.J.G. Oh, that is so.

Rem. Perhaps you have in mind, or would it be going too far, to think of these vessels in the presence of God as being something of resources that are not quite public, but are there before God to be called upon at any given time. I am thinking perhaps of a locality where things might become unhappy and yet God has set them there to go on quietly and perhaps

privately with the pouring out for the pleasure of the heart of God.

A.J.G. I think that is so. I think what is in mind here is not exactly the service of those who are gifted or anything of that sort but more a question of their relations to one another as affected by Christ, held on the influence of Christ.

Rem. Remark about the woman in Matthew 26: 6-13, who anointed the Lord: it is that we should hold for the Lord?

A.J.G. Yes, she has done what she could, that is what he says.

Rem. Being in the holy place, not in the holiest, not in the court, but in the holy place would confirm what you are saying. It would be love relative to each other.

A.J.G. Exactly. And the passage in Leviticus 24, which brings in both the features that we are speaking about—for the moment we are speaking about the table, but it also mentions the candlestick—seems to be a remarkable passage because you get the impression that it is a passage that has particular reference to the last days. It is in the setting of a man who is the son of an Israelitish woman, but at the same time the son of an Egyptian. That is, there are mixed conditions such as we

have in Christendom all around us. And it leads up to this man blaspheming the Name. It is virtually apostacy. And the presence of these things, this idea of the candlestick on the one hand and the table on the other, is to be maintained in purity. There is a great stress on purity, pure beaten olive oil for the light, a pure candlestick, a pure table before Jehovah, pure frankincense; and a great stress on “continually” too. And so whatever the conditions around us, these divine thoughts are to be maintained by us and, more than ever as the end draws near, they are to be brought into evidence under God's eye.

Ques. That is calling on the Lord out of a pure heart?

A.J.G. Out of a pure heart, quite so.

Rem. Would the fine wheaten flour flower suggest that there is nothing to appear of the coarseness of these lines of nature that you have been speaking about.

A.J.G. Quite so. The fine wheaten flour is the the saint as formed after the heavenly One: “as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly”, 1 Cor 15: 48.

Ques. Are not the features you referred to in Colossians perfectly and attractively steps forth in the Lord Jesus in the four gospels?

A.J.G. Well go on.

Rem. I was thinking of bowels of compassion and kindness, which is Luke's gospel; lowliness and meekness, as Matthew; long suffering, perhaps Mark; and the thought of love and forgiveness in John's gospel

A.J.G. Yes; and then it says "let the peace of Christ reside in your hearts, to which also ye have been called, in one body, and be thankful". It has in mind the saints set together in complete unity of affection, as affected by Christ. It is the question of the mystery, Christ and the assembly, a body held in relation to Christ as its Head, and deriving character and impulse from Him. How delightful all that is to God. as He sees it work out in practical detail?

Rem. "Rejoicing and beholding your order", is again in Colossians. Would that be like the loaves set in two rows?

A.J.G. Yes, it would. Yes, it says they are in two rows of six in a row, twelve loaves altogether, the suggestion of unity and love and, as you say, order. Now, all this is a question of our seeing how far it really does work out in our localities; that is one's concern, that one should not only have a kind of understanding in some

degree of what the scripture means, but where the thing is actually seen in our localities.

Rem. If they are to come into expression practically and concretely, it must be in relation to those who are near to you.

A.J.G. It must be.

Rem. I am thinking of the size of the table, it would mean that the loaves and vessels were close, would it not? There is a certain way in which the dimensions in a locality serves us to great profit in that we are not far removed from one another. It is a kind of compression in love.

A.J.G. Exactly, and hence you can understand the exercise raised by the Lord years ago as to not having the meetings too large, but if they grow, providing a second meeting, and so on. I think someone has said that really the size of the meeting is regulated, or should be, on the one hand by the one cup. It should be small enough for all to drink out of one cup. And it is also regulated by John 13, as to whether. At the moment you can wash the feet of all in the company. If you have got a company of two hundred you cannot do it very well. But if you have fifty you can, two hundred, you cannot do it very well. You can remember the names of fifty brothers and sisters and pray for them by name; and see to them individually, and make

links with them individually, and wash their feet.

Ques. Is this matter of being close and near to one another, conveyed in that further expression in Colossians, “and to all these things add love, which is the bond of perfectness”.

A.J.G. Yes, exactly.

Ques. Inaudible

A.J.G. Yes, that is the idea.

Well, then in connection with the candlestick, we have that it is a great system of light. Light has to God. And what we find in the Leviticus 24 is that we are to bring the oil. To some extent the system is dependent on the degree in which we provide the Spirit. We have the Spirit, but is He unhindered amongst us? If He is unhindered amongst us, there will be light shining; light to affect us, light as to God, the mind of God, and then what God is. And then it is to work out through exercise and pressure. There is the idea of beaten work. But first of all, in Leviticus 24 it says, “command the children of Israel that they bring unto thee pure beaten olive oil for the light, to light the lamp continually”.

Ques. Is the feature brought into view the adornment in Exodus 25? The features marked in Exodus 25 suggest adornment and purity in Exodus 24.

A.J.G. Yes, I think that would be right. But there is the thought here of “continually”. And they bring unto thee pure, beaten olive oil for the light, to light the lamps continually”. That is, the light is always to be there. If we come to the meetings, for edification, to read the scriptures, or for ministry in other ways, well, are the spiritual conditions brought? The light may be shining on one occasion, but will it be shining equally the next time we come together? We are to bring the pure, beaten olive oil to light the lamp continually.

Ques. Does that refer to our spirits, or what does it refer to?

A.J.G. Well, I think it means that the spirit, the Holy Spirit, is free. We bring him with us in an unhindered way, I think, so that we can enter into the occasion and contribute to it.

Ques. Does the reference to the lamps help in that matter, in relation to the dressing of the lamps. and contribute to it. There is a link to Aaron: help in that matter in relation to the dressing of the lamps.

A.J.G. Well, you mean that the Lord has this system under his hand to see that it functions? Is that what you had in mind?

Rem. Yes, and that those who have to do with him are sensible of their relations with him as being of a sanctified company.

A.J.G. Well, quite so. And Aaron was to dress it, he is zealous for God. The Lord is zealous for God, that every thought of God should be in expression amongst us. But this is a remarkable passage because it places the responsibility on us to bring the pure, beaten oil for the light.

Rem. That fact is remarkable because we think as we meet of how the Spirit presents personally, Himself. What is the answer of bringing the oil for the light? How is that possible?

A.J.G. Well, it is the pure, beaten oil. That is to say, it is a question of how I come to a meeting, it seems to me. I have the Holy Spirit and you have Holy Spirit, but then if I come without any exercise at all, and my mind is filled with other things and, one has not been walking in self-judgment, well the pure beaten oil is not available. That is how it works out it seems to me. The Spirit is hindered and

quenched and the meeting is affected. The light will not be shining.

Ques. Does the Lord not say, “having no part dark”, Luke 11: 36?

A.J.G. “Having no part dark”. It really conveys that one is concerned that the Spirit should be active in me, and each of the brothers and sisters is concerned that the Spirit should be free to be active in him or her, so there is full flow for what the Spirit may bring in in the way of light.

Ques. Is it important that the thought of statute is linked with that, an everlasting statute regard to the thought of an everlasting covenant? At the end of verse 9 we have the everlasting covenant

A.J.G. Yes, at the end of that verse, we get the everlasting statute as well. What have you in mind as to it?

Rem. I was only thinking of the fixity of matters spiritually in divine mind.

A.J.G. Well, I think that is important, that we should understand that there are certain fixed conditions that are necessary. The divine mind is that the light should be shining continually, and that is to go on till the coming of the Lord. But on the other hand, there are

certain fixed conditions necessary in order for that, and that brings us in.

Ques. It says of Simeon in Luke 2, that he came in the Spirit into the temple (Luke 2: 25), and what light shone as a result. Would that fit in?

A.J.G. Yes, it would, exactly. He not only had light in his soul, as having been told by the Spirit that he should not see death, till he had seen the Lord's clout, but he came in the Spirit into the temple. The result was that the whole position became lit up, as you say.

Rem. I was going to refer to him too. It says of him, that it was divinely communicated to him by the Holy Spirit. Did he carry in something in the way of the pure, beaten olive oil?

A.J.G. I think he did, but then it says he came in the Spirit too, so that his movements were in the Spirit. There was no hindrance at all to the Holy Spirit. And therefore, what was a position that was extremely small outwardly became lit up with glory.

Rem. There was a background for it, in that he was just and pious.

A.J.G. There was and then he blesses God, that is the result; and then he communicates the mind of God to Mary and Joseph

Rem. inaudible

A.J.G. I remember Mr P H Hardwick telling me once that he asked Mr Coates the question somewhat on those lines—I could not tell you what the question was exactly, thinking that perhaps he would get a prescription that would help him. And Mr Coates said, well, I suppose prayer entered into it.

Rem. What you have been hearing helps us in that regard, because we do enjoy the thought that God has set up in our various localities through infinite grace what is intended to be a life-bearing testimony to His presence. At the same time, we are encouraged to think of what you say, that we should be concerned that the power of that does not begin when we arrive at the meeting room.

A.J.G. We are to bring it, we are to bring it with us.

Ques. Would you say why they were commanded to bring the oil here, whereas in chapter 21 they brought it because their hands prompted them?

A.J.G. Yes, but now it placed upon us because of the urgency of the matter. You see, we are in the presence of apostasy all around us. And divine thoughts are to go through. They are to go through right to the end, till the Lord comes. And it is a holy obligation placed upon us in our several localities to see that these things are actually working. And therefore it partakes of the nature of a command.

Rem. So that it is not without significance that, when conditions were so bad at Corinth, Paul emphasises and outlines the procedures of the meetings as we speak for ministry, as if it's very matter that you are referring to was lacking in their homes.

A.J.G. Yes.

Ques. I was wondering if it would be in order to suggest that what was lacking in current was perhaps conditions in the home so that the apostle outlines the meeting for ministry.

A.J.G. You mean that was an occasion for the prophetic word to come in to meet the conditions so they might be improved?

Rem. Quite so.

Ques. That is in effect of the dressing?

A.J.G. Yes, that would be the way Aaron dresses it, from evening to morning, I would say, yes.

Ques. Did not Mr Taylor say in regard of 1 Corinthians 14, that it was not necessarily the kind of meeting the Corinthians *were* having, but if they followed the instructions, that would be the kind of meaning they *would* have, and hence the necessity for us to be in the full gain of what is given to us before that chapter is reached?

A.J.G. Yes, quite so.

Ques. Do you think that light would make things very simple for us? There is no substitute for light, is there? I mean, knowledge will not regulate the saints, but light given currently is what we all need, is it not?

A.J.G. It is, I am sure. And that is what is possible as the Spirit is afforded the liberty that He seeks. Is it not so?

Ques. Do you think in a normal reading we should look for light, should we not? Not a rehearsal of something fairly well known, but an added bearing of the mind of God on the position?

A.J.G. Well, that is exactly what one has in mind. And the part that our own individual

responsibility—every one of us—plays in contributing to that. There is the idea of gifts which the Lord has provided for the edification of the assembly, but at the same time we need this feature of providing conditions in which light can shine in this way.

Rem. So that the gifts are contributors, there is a certainty about them, would you say, but the Spirit would help us in this matter of our contributing as the oracles of God?

A.J.G. Well, that is what we are to have in mind, according to Peter: “If anyone speak—as oracles of God”; (1 Pet 4: 11) not that he is to assume that, but that is to be in his mind. It says, “that God in all things may be glorified”. It is not that people may go away and say what an able brother he is, but that God's mind may be conveyed, and that God may in all things be glorified.

Ques. Would you say, Mr. Gardner, that the responsible side is prominent, in regard of the candlestick? I was thinking of the setting in Revelation 1, where the Lord is moving amongst them.

A.J.G. Oh, it is. Very definitely.

Rem. It is not an optional matter.

A.J.G. It is not an optional matter. The Lord is moving amongst the seven golden lamps in Revelation 1, in order, because he is jealous, as the light of His church, and whether it glorifies God or not.

Ques. Will you include the thought of light-bearers too, in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation?

A.J.G. Well, I think that it is really the great system of light. It is really to shine upon Christ in whom God is known, but yet it is in human vessels that the light appears.

Ques. Was it not shining continually in Paul and Silas in the darkness of the prison?

A.J.G. Well, it was.

So what this chapter in Leviticus stresses that we are to bring the pure beaten olive oil, and stresses the purity of things, and that they are to be continued, the passage in Numbers stresses that it is a beaten work. This was the work of the candlestick it was of beaten gold. From its base to its flowers was of beaten work. That is why I suggested the passage in Corinthians, because while we have, of course, the idea of light shining in the Spirit when we come together for our meetings, there is also the idea of the vessels in whom the light shines, and not to be limited to the occasions when we are

together. And Paul showed us in this epistle for Corinthians that, as having this light, as one who was responsible to disseminate it, he was made to feel what something of the reality of beaten work. That is the pressure, the pressure which was brought to bear upon him which caused the light to shine only the more brightly, because he was intelligent in the matter and was determined that, whatever happened, the life of Jesus should be manifested in his body.

Ques. Whilst we think of Christ in the candlestick, would it allow of the assembly being brought in, especially in connection with the Spirit's day, Christ in the saints?

A.J.G. I think so. I think it is a great system of light in the assembly, in the local assemblies, because the seven assemblies in Revelation are the seven golden lamps. It is a great system of light, but of course it is Christ that shines if the light is pure light. And that is what worked out in this epistle to the Corinthians, that Paul had got this light from God shining in his soul in the face of Jesus Christ, but then it was actually working out in the midst of a great deal of pressure, beaten work.

Ques. Is that what Paul was jealous of in writing in writing this first epistle? He was, as it were, using the golden snuffers in order that

the light may shine in all its brightness in the second epistle?

A.J.G. Yes, and he was encouraging the Corinthians to accept their share in the tribulations by showing the spirit in which he himself went on. Although he was persecuted, he was not forsaken. Although he was cast down, he was not destroyed. He was bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus; not exactly the death of Jesus, but the dying—the purpose of dying. That being wholly yielded up and self-sacrificed so that the light of God should shine out in its purity. So it is that the life of Jesus might be manifested in our body.

Ques. Could the beaten work be analogous to the exercises of Gideon's men, his army being reduced to three hundred? Is it that which the apostle would have in mind?

A.J.G. Well, yes, I think that the second epistle fits in very much with Gideon's history.

Rem. It is with the idea of formation in suffering. Gideon seems to be impressionable.

A.J.G. Yes, that is it. Our brother referred earlier to ornamentation, and of course that adds into it too, because the life of Jesus being an expression is certainly ornamentation.

Rem. It gives a great object, does it not, to the suffering that we will be called upon to pass through?

A.J.G. It does, especially if we accept it as that by means of which what is of God, morally and known in Christ, comes into expression. You see God has come out in love in Christ. He has expressed it in the laying down of His life, going to the utmost limit that God might be known in His love and His holiness, and every way in which He is known. Now Paul has taken on that spirit and, having the light entrusted to him, he is prepared to go the utmost limit in order it might shine in its purity.

Rem. There is a very interesting feature in that chapter, you will have noticed it. It speaks of the “God who commanded that out of darkness light should shine, who has shone in our hearts”. Not merely for the shining forth of light, but for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the faith of Jesus Christ. You think there is something beautiful about that, that in the process of the outshining, knowledge was imparted, the knowledge of the glory of God.

A.J.G. Yes, I think so. So the result is that others are affected by the light. It is a great system of light to which we belong, and God takes great pleasure in it that there should be this

shining out of the knowledge of the glory of God, as known in the face of a Man.

Ques. So that Paul uses this matter skilfully, does he not? Because he characteristically was a sufferer, and it would appear as if the Corinthians somewhat despised him on that account. But in his skill, he is able to bring forward the fact that in these sufferings God had been with them and their lack of suffering somewhat explained their lack of spirituality, would you say?

A.J.G. Yes, I think that would be so.

Ques. Would Stephen exemplify what you are saying? He could say the same word as the Lord, “lay not this sin to their charge”.

A.J.G. Well, quite so; not the same words as the Lord, but the spirit of the Lord. The Lord says, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”. Stephen says, “lay not this sin to their charge”. But he was exactly in the spirit of his Master; quite so.

Ques. Always bearing about—do you link that with the thought of continuing?

A.J.G. Yes, I do: “always bearing about in the body, the dying of Jesus”. And you might say that was the principle too of pouring out in that too.

Rem. Mr Darby, I think often quoted a Spanish proverb, that ‘it is harder to live a Christian than to die a martyr’ (Notes and Jottings p45), by which was meant, I suppose, the dying, “always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus.

A.J.G. Yes, and we get the two expressions, “the body” and then “our mortal flesh”. The life of Jesus manifested in both the settings. The body, I suppose, would be the dignified vessel that a Christian's body is. It belongs to the Lord. But the mortal flesh would stress the frailty of the condition that we live in. And in spite of that the life of Jesus is to be manifested.

Ques. The possibilities in mortal flesh really are subject to the Spirit are wonderful are they not?

A.J.G. They are indeed.

Ques. Is there something beautiful about the candlestick. There are no dimensions given. I think somewhere it says of a talent of pure gold. But then it is from its base to its flowers. That is, it reaches maturity and ornamentation, not exactly to a standard of height, but just in the normality of life.

A.J.G. Quite so, and that from its base to its flowers, this beaten work appears.

Ques. inaudible

A.J.G. Just like almonds. Well, I am not much good at detail, but it is some suggestion of life I have no doubt. I think the Armands might refer to life out of death. That is the great point in this second epistle for Corinthians, that God was rolling in death upon the apostle. And it is all there that the superiority of life might be seen in him.

Rem. I was thinking in that connection that the first chapter in that way would bring in something of the beaten oil, the pressure, the presence of the Spirit.

Rem. Paul had a great reputation for suffering.

A.J.G. We are all to take it on in our measure, this idea of being prepared to see that the light of God is shining in us, and we ourselves are devoted to it. It is not only a question of those who serve in a public way, although the setting in Corinthians, of course, is that, but then it is written for the edification of the assembly. So that the assembly should take on similar features; the assembly is the vessel of light.

Rem. The Thessalonians become great models.

A.J.G. Quite so.

I think the two ideas of the pleasure of God on the one hand, and light shining as to God on the other, are two great matters that we are to carry with us; not as just ideas but as something that is to work out concretely in our localities.

Rem. You can see a little as to the treasure. I was thinking of the treasure as following on what you have been seeing.

A.J.G. Well, I think it is the treasure of the knowledge of God, the knowledge of the glory of God. It is in earthen vessels, but it is to shine, notwithstanding that. Gideon has been referred to, and they had earthen pitchers and lamps in the pitchers. They had to break the pitchers in order that the light should shine. That's really what is being worked out in 2 Corinthians 4, that the earthen vessel is being broken, but as it is broken, the lamp shines more distinctly.

Rem. In Leviticus, it is to be according to the form. Does that suggest a complete idea?

A.J.G. Yes, I suppose it does. We are trying to get the divine idea now so that we should be helped to see to it that it is reproduced in our localities.

Rem. With Gideon we see the surpassingness of the power was of God, the whole suggestion with the three hundred men was of extreme frailty.

A.J.G. It was. And it is remarkable that it says, which I remember rightly, that they were to hold the trumpets. They had no weapons. Gideon had a sword. They were to hold a trumpet. He put a trumpet in every man's hand and empty pitchers, and torches within the pitchers, Judg 7: 16. So that every man's hand was filled either with a trumpet, to go on with the testimony, or a pitcher, an earthen pitcher with torches within.

Rem. And then they were to blow with the trumpets which would help to emphasise the surpassingness of the power of God, the vessels that God takes up. Paul, speaking of himself in his later years evidently, as having been insolent and overbearing, yet becomes a model of patience and love among the brethren.

A.J.G. Yes, exactly.

Ques. And would the continuance be seen in the fact that, after the combat, they return, not faint altogether, but it says “faint yet pursuing”, Judg 8: 4. Would that be your thought as to what is continual?

A.J.G. Yes, quite so, That they were to blow
with the trumpets and break the pitchers.

Note: in these two readings, only those on the platform had microphones; as a result, speakers in the body of the hall have not come out clearly enough to be transcribed. Mr Gardiner's replies mostly address the brother by name, but it has been expedient not to try and identify all the speakers with initials.

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE

Exodus 30: 6

John 17: 9-26

We have been seeking together, dear brethren, to gather some of the features that mark God's dwelling amongst his people. For the assembly to which we all belong, if we have received the Holy Spirit, is at this moment during this dispensation, the dwelling place of God, and it is as well that we should have before our minds and hearts, the various distinctive features that characterise the dwelling place of God.

We have spoken of the ark as the central feature of that system, Christ cherished in the hearts of the saints as *the* Christ, that is the Person of the Godhead who became man in order to give effect in power and forever to all those thoughts of God has cherished, and who came into this world with God's will in the whole extent of it, whatever it might entail, cherished in his heart; His language being, "I delight to do thy will, oh my God; yea thy law is within my heart", Ps 40: 8. And then we have spoken a little of the table and of the candlesticks and I do not need to go over again what we have said in regards of those. But I wish now by the Lord's help to say a little as to what is the pre-figured in the altar of incense, the golden altar. It represents, as I understand it, the great feature of prayer in

relation to the interests and testimony of God, and it is something that we should all be concerned and to take up. It is an important matter to have recourse to prayer continually. It is one of man's greatest glories, man as recovered the God, that he has access to God and can be pleasing to God. And if we are to have part in assembly prayer, or rather in prayer in relation to the interests and testimony of God, we must learn what it is that, first of all, to have liberty with the Father in private individual prayer, prayer in relation to the divine interests, while it finds expression particularly in the assembly gatherings for prayer, it is not to be limited to that, in no way should it be limited to that. There is plenty of scope for prayer in relation to the interests of God and the testimony of God to find expression by each one of us individually in our secret relations with God. There is no reason why the youngest brother, the youngest sister should not—and when I say brother and sister, I mean of course the youngest believer who has received the Holy Spirit. You may say, I am not yet breaking bread. Where all the Lord knows why you are not, it may be that you are not old enough yet, the Lord knows, but the point is you are one of the sons of God, if you have received the Holy Spirit of God, and you can have access to your Father, your Father who is in heaven, and you

can begin to cultivate the habit of praying to the Father, not only in relation to your own matters, but then extend further.

And so the Lord, in Matthew 6, as you remember, says, “when thou prayest, enter to thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret”, Matt 6: 6. Notice how the Lord makes it very personal. You ought to have your own closet that you use for drawing the God in secret. You ought to see that the door of that closet, your door, is shut. If everything else is excluded, you go there to express purpose of drawing near to your Father, praying in secret to Him who sees in secret. And so it is an important matter to cultivate this, the aggression, yet the youngest of us begins, if he has not already done so, and let the oldest of us continue, “when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret. And thy Father who sees in secret shall render it to thee”. You might say, if I pray to the Father and pray to Him in secret, I have in mind that He will *hear* in secret. He certainly will. But the Lord says He *sees* in secret. That is, that as you take up this attitude of having to do with the Father on your own account, where in relation to your own private interest, and you may supplicate those also, for the Father's interest is in all our interests, that you may address the Father in

taking on His interests. As you do so, He will give us the feeling that He is near. He is not only hearing, but He is near and seeing in secret. He would impress that idea of “in secret” upon you, that you know what it is to be alone with God, and to be content that His eyes shall rest upon you, and see you, and all that connected with you, as you draw near to Him in prayer. You may say, well, that will involve certain heart-searching and certain exercises. It may be that they will be. But then the Spirit of God has taken His abode in us, in order that we might be helped according to God, in facing every exercise that He raises. The desire of the blessed God is that every one of us should know the reality of liberty with Him continually and characteristically, and that we should not only know that we are sons in God's mind, and that He has given us the title to be sons, to take that place, but that He would have us to be in sonship, consciously, in the dignity of it., and here in the place of testimony, in the consciousness that we are, in fact, sons.

Well, now, the altar of incense as I have said that represents this great feature of prayer, taking place continually in the dwelling place of God in relation to the interests and testimony of God. And you will notice that in the first I read in Exodus, it says that the altar was placed “in front of the veil, which is before the ark of the

testimony, in front of the mercy seat, which is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee". See the stress on the testimony, and that the altar of incense is immediately connected with it. It is "in front of the veil, which is before the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat, which is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee". God is stressing this idea of meeting with us, that God is sitting as we have been saying upon the mercy seat. That is the position from which He speaks. He will assure us of His relations with us, and our relation to the mercy seat; He has accomplished righteousness in the death of Christ. So we can draw near with the greatest confidence and speak of every matter of our own concern in order to give God the pleasure of hearing us intercede with Him and supplicate Him in relation to the testimony here.

Well, now what is the testimony? It is an expression which we often use, and it may be that younger ones have no very clear idea as to what it means. But get this idea in your mind that when the Lord Jesus became man, there was here, in the Person of Jesus, a man whose whole thought was to do God's will, whatever it meant. Every other man in the world wants his will, and is independent of God, each of us is naturally. And it may be that even after we have received the Holy Spirit of God, it may be that

a considerable measure of self-will may still persist to some of us. All that has got to be set aside, we can never go to do with Christ with our will marking us. He shall have to be like Christ to see Him as He is, and the sooner we take character from Christ, the better. But the testimony is that God has had one Man in this world in the Person of Jesus who was wholly devoted to God's will, and He is going to secure hosts of men—women too, of course. He is going to secure hosts of men who are characterised by that same principle, delighting in God's will and set to carry it through. Well now if you have fifty persons in one town, in the midst of all the lawlessnesses that are about, who are characterised by single-hearted devotion to the will of God, that is the positive testimony in the town, if the testimony that God has secured in that town where Satan's influence is undone and instead of men being here to do Satan's will, they are here to do God's will and to minister to His pleasure. Now that is the testimony. It may extend to other things, but that in principle is the testimony. Now we are to have our hearts engaged with prayer in relation to that, because we can rest assured that, if God has something before His mind that He is going to secure his ends here on earth the devil will be set against it. There is no question about that, and therefore there must be

unceasing prayer to God. It is not that God just could not express His pleasure in the saints without our prayers, He could. But He takes pleasure in bringing His saints into sympathy with His own thoughts and He finds great pleasure in their prayer that what God in mind will be fulfilled.

Well now, I read from the well-known chapter in John's gospel because we get a supreme example in the Lord Jesus Himself, in the prayer of which we have details in John 17. We have a supreme example of prayer that was in every way fragrant to God, prayer in relation to the interests of God. And we see how the Lord stands, unique and pre-eminent in this and in all else. His personal glory of course makes Him unique and His holy perfection makes Him unique and pre-eminent in all things. But what has been set out in Jesus is to be taken on by us in the Spirit's power by His saints. And what we find in John 17 is the Son in holy communion with the Father, devoting Himself to the needs of the testimony right down the whole time, from the time when the Lord could go on high and the Spirit comes to the time when the Lord takes them to be with Himself. The prayer really covers the whole of that period and in comparatively few words, pregnant with meaning, the Lord makes known what the needs of the testimony are and places

His saints in fragrance before the Father, and makes known those requests to Him. Why should it be placed on record? Evidently it is not intended to be simply a secret matter between Himself and the Father, He was apparently prayed in the hearing of the disciples. In any case by the Spirit it has been placed on record in order that we may take on, in the degree that is open to us in the liberty and power that the Spirit of God, something of the same spirit of intelligence and affectionate prayer in relation to the interests of God. It is as I have said to sustain us while yet here in the position of testimony, I believe the divine idea is that we should know something of what it is to be here in the place of testimony in the liberty and dignity of sonship and praying in relation to the testimony with the affection proper to sons.

Well now, I need not say that I cannot attempt to cover the whole prayer, but there are, first of all, two definite matters that come out in this chapter. One is the great thought that we should be preserved, preserved as in a world of evil. The Lord says, "I come to thee", He was leaving the scene, and He says, "these are in the world, and I come to thee". His great desire was that those who were to remain in the place of testimony should be preserved in an absolute way from the world in which they were. And when I say preserved, I mean preserved

morally, not necessarily preserved from the earth, they might have to suffer martyrdom. Stephen had to, but he was the victor, he was triumphant. When the Lord says that they should be preserved, he meant not necessarily say that they should be preserved as martyrdom, although of course if the testimony is to continue, they must be preserved in life. The Lord will see to it that the saints do go through, and go through with the testimony. But one great burden of His prayer was that they should be kept and not come under the power or influence of the world. Another great burden in His prayer is that they should be one. Now those are two very important matters, dear brethren, for us to carry in our minds, that on the one hand we are to be entirely kept from the world, the character of which is to given to us in John's epistle, where it says the whole world lies in the wicked one. Do not forget that: not only the world in its favourable features, not only the world in the features of it that are most elegantly wicked, but *the whole world*, the world in its more attractive feature, the world in features that may seem as it were alright. The whole world lies in the wicked one. The world in John's writings is a great system. It is designed by Satan and influenced by him in order to rob the saints of their liberty, and rob God of His portion. And so the Lord prays that

they might be kept. He prays as one who had already overcome Himself. He says at the end of chapter 16, “ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world”, v 33. He has gone through. He knows exactly what the world is, He knows the character of it, He understands its principle; He had to face it. He has refused it and, at this point the ruler of this world came and found nothing in Jesus. He could not get in anywhere, not by any means whatever could he find an inlet in Jesus. The Lord went through the world as an overcomer and therefore He is able to enter sympathetically into the exercises of His saints who are in the world, and who in God’s care have also got to overcome the world. And He can support them and direct them so they may not be overcome, because the truth of God is connected with them; and for God’ own sake, the Lord is prepared and the Spirit is prepared in divine power to help and support all those who desire to be faithful to him.

And so as I was saying, the Lord desires that they might be kept. He says, “I am no longer in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou have given me, that they may be one of we”. He wants us first of all to be kept and that we should be one. But now He makes much of the Father's name: “they name which thou

hast given me, a remarkable expression. The Lord is referring to all that He found in His Father, all that His Father was to Him. It had been His portion, His cherished portion as a man in this world. In a contrary scene, how regularly and constantly He turns to His Father. What liberty He has with His Father! At the grave of Lazarus, we read, "Jesus lifted up his eyes on high and said, Father, I thank thee thou hast heard me; but I knew that thou always hearest me", John 11: 41, 42. Think of that! The Lord Jesus passing through this very same world in which we are, yet having a constant resort to His Father. An understanding with His Father always there; His Father was always at hand. He says, "Ye shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me", John 16: 32. All that has been the cherished portion and the great support of the Lord Jesus in His pathway here. And now He says, keep the disciples in that Name: be to the disciples what you have been to me. That I believe is what has involved in it. Of course, when we are speaking of the Lord, in His relations with His Father, there is always that which is unique, we understand that. At the same time, He is asking that the Father should be known to the disciples in such a way as he had spoken to them, that this has had a definitely sanctifying and preservative effect. You remember that in John's epistle, he

said even to the little children, "I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father, 1 John 2: 13. They had a knowledge of the Father. When we received the Holy Spirit, He shed the love of God abroad in our hearts and, not only so He cries, Abba Father. A young believer may not know much about the Father, but he knows that the Father loves him, and the Spirit in him encourages him to take the name of Father upon his lips. So that from the outset of our spiritual history as believers we are intended to have relations with the Father and to know the Father. The young men in John's epistle are warned not to love the world nor the things that were in the world for this reason. All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, he says it is not of the Father, he writes it off in that way. If it is not of the Father, it is not worth going in for. It will certainly be a hindrance to you if it is not of the father and you go in for it. "All of it in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world and the world passes away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abides for eternity", 1 John 2: 16, 17.

Now we want to have the love of the Father in us. I believe that means that in a twofold way: I believe the love of the Father in us involves on the one hand that the Father's love for us is

known by us, and on the other hand that there is love for the father in our hearts. If we want to know what the Father loves, we have only got to look at Christ. You know we want to be preserved in the Father's name. You will find that in a family, in a family where things are what they should be, you will find that the children are affected by the father. If the father says he does not like so-and-so, the children don't like it, they take on their father's view of things, and the father's influence over them and his instructions, regulates and forms their lives. Now we are to see that the love of the Father is with us, that what the Father loves we love, and what the Father hates we hate. It is the way to be here for the pleasure of God, and if we want to learn what the Father loves, we have only got to fix our eyes on Christ. Remember how He caused the heavens to open upon Him and says "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight". And therefore if we study Christ, study Him a Luke's gospel presents Him to us, beginning from His earliest days, characterised by the dependence, and then at the age of twelve concerned to be about His Father's business, and at the same time subject to the parents. And then in full manhood, content to go on thirty years in secret until the moment came, content to work in the circumstances God had allotted to Him as a carpenter, and to live in

the home that the Father had appointed for Him, a carpenter's home; and then three and a half years of devoted un-tiring service. If we study these things, we should more and more become formed in the understanding of what the Father loves and what He would have characterise His people. The more we go into these things, dear brethren, the more we would be preserved from the world. It is a question of being kept in the Father's name.

And then another thing is that we are to be one. We are to move together in unity. If the saints are in disunity, it is a great dishonour to God, for God is one. You can never discern the slightest disunity between the Father and the Son and the Spirit. They set out a great idea of unity, absolute oneness in thought and purpose; indeed as more intimate than anything that we can express. But the idea is that the saints should be here at one in testimony to God. And so the Lord says, "Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou have given me, that they may be one as we. When I was with them", He said, "I kept them in thy name. Those thou hast given me, I have guarded, and not one of them has perished, but the Son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now", He said, "I come to thee. And these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in them". What was Christ's joy? I believe that,

notwithstanding all these sorrows, and the testing and the opposition of the pathway of Jesus in this world in testimony to God, He had unfailing joy in the sense that He was doing His Father's will and ministering to His pleasure, and had his approval: "my joy".

Is it not open to us in our measure, dear brethren, to take up our position in the world in the testimony of God in the same spirit? I believe that is what the Lord has in mind for us in this wonderful prayer, that we should be here in some sense in the wonderful liberty and dignity of sons before God, as sons here in their Father's interest and do their Father's will and come under His eye with His approval, if in a favoured position. He says, "that my joy may be fulfilled in them". That is not the Lord prayed for, that there might be the service of God. I mean, doing His will in the testimony here, serving God in gladness of heart, in the liberty and joy of conscious sonship. May the Lord help us in it more and more! The Spirit is here for that very purpose. I believe as the days draw near their close, the days of testimony, God will have in mind that there is to be what corresponds with Christ in His movement here in testimony, more and more among the saints.

And now the Lord said in verse 15, "I do not demand that thou shouldest take them out of the

world, but that thou should keep them out of evil. They are not of the world, as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by the truth, thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world". What a stranding it is, dear brethren. Are we afraid to take it up? You may say you come very far short of the standard; that may be, but that is no reason to lower the standard. Nor is there any reason to be content with being less than the standard. It is a question of the standard. The Spirit of God here is faithful to God's own God and faithful to Christ to secure that there should be some correspondence with the divine standard. And so the Lord says, "they not of the world, as I am not of the world". How could we be as born of God? Let us take account of ourselves according to what we are, born of God, as it says, in the first chapter of this gospel, to be "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God", John 1: 13. And as born of God we are certainly not of the world. There is no possible link, there is no possible affinity between the world and what is of God. And so the Lord says, "they are not of the world, as I am not of the world".

And then He goes on, "Sanctify them by the truth, thy word is truth". And He goes on to say, "for their sakes, I sanctify myself, that they might be sanctified in truth", or by truth. That

means, as I understand it, that the Lord was then about to do what He did do, and that is to depart from this world and take His place in the Father's presence. He did not mean, of course, that the Lord had to sanctify himself in any moral sense. Sanctified means set apart. For us it involves what is moral as well, because we are in a world of evil and because we carry the flesh with us. And therefore there has to be sanctification in a moral sense, sanctified in Christ Jesus. And the sanctification of the Spirit is spoken of, but when the Lord spoke of his sanctifying Himself, He simply meant that He set himself apart from the whole world system and took His place in the Father's presence, that we might learn in Him what our place is and understand that as He is, so are we in this world. May the Lord help us to carry it in our minds, so that we work it out in very real sanctification and separation. If there is one thing that Satan is always seeking to do, it is to entangle the saints in one way or another in some feature of the world. It may seem in a small way, but he is always trying to weaken things by introducing principles or features of the world among the saints. And there is to be the constant exercise on our part to refuse anything at that sort. And the best way to do it is to keep Christ Himself before our hearts as the standard of manhood and function under God's eye, and

we are to be brought into correspondence with it by the Spirit's work.

And so now the Lord goes on to this question of oneness. He says, "I do not demand for these only, but also for those who believe on me through their word, that they may be all one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me". The Father was in Christ, Christ was in the Father. The Father had His place in Christ's affections, Christ had His place in the Father's affections. There is absolute oneness between the Father and the Son. And now the Father and the Son are to be the commanding interest of the saints. The Father love we know in Christ, and we are here set apart for the testimony of God, and then this is to be the commanding interest of the saints. The more it is so, the more we shall be one. What makes people one is having one object, one thought before them. If we have diverse interests, we shall not be one. If we are all commanded by the same interest, then we shall be one. And the Lord said here, "as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou have sent me". Now of course the public testimony of the assembly in this world, alas, has been largely marked by disunity and what is sorrowful; but even in the small measure

in which the truth of God has been recovered, and is being recovered in these last days, there is something that can be seen in the way of unity among the saints, oneness, and it is a testimony of the world. Even in a few, it is there; there is nothing so undeniable that the testimony of life and unity among the saints. That is what we are to be concerned about. What comes into expression, as we have been saying today, works out in our local cities. It is there that we have seen in unity or in disunity, which every may be. It is there that we are seen in life or in moral deadness or weakness. The question is, what is accepted amongst us? Let us be concerned, dear brethren, that there should be this unity that flows from this cloud of incense being cherished and Christ being kept before the heart and love operating in our midst. Let us be concerned that real unity should be seen characterising us in our local setting. It will work out in testimony. It may be a weak testimony but it will be there, that the world may believe, as the Lord says, "that thou have sent me", and then He says, "that the glory which thou have given me, I have given them, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and thou in me". Christ is in the heart of the state, the Father is in Christ's heart. The Father has seen in expression in Christ, Christ seen an expression in the saints. That is how things are going to

work out. They will be worked out fully in the day to come. When the holy city comes down out of heaven from God, the saints will be seen in absolute unity, Christ seen in them and the Father seen in Christ. The world will know then that the Father sent Christ and has loved the saints as He has loved Christ. What a testament to God, that He loved men, the sons of the men, myriads of them, in the same way in which He has loved Christ. 10.16

Well now, these matters, dear brethren, our sanctification, preservation from the world, and unity, are very essential matters in the testimony. They are subject to the prayer of the Lord Jesus, and they may well become the subject to prayer on our part too. And of course, as we can enter into greater detail, we are privileged to take account of conditions, first in our own locality, and then in other localities as we see them, or hear of them, because we should all cultivate an assembly ear. The “ears of the assembly”, it says in the Acts of the apostles, meaning that the assembly has ears to hear what is going on in other parts of the world in relation to the testimony of God. And as we hear things, if they call for prayer, there is prayer about them. Nothing is so delightful to God as to see His saints drawing here to Him in relation to His interests in this world. He will answer the prayers, He will affect things

politically, if necessary, in view of the testimony, in answer to the prayers to the saints. There is no limit to what God will do, if needs be in relation to testimony, but He loves to bring the saints into it, that He may do it as answering their supplication and their intercession.

And so, I have mentioned these things, dear brethren, that we may get some idea of the scope of divine interest, which we can take up in our prayers to God continually, our personal private affairs, and then especially our assembly prayers. Let the prayer meeting on Monday night be filled out in a universal way, in an intelligent way, in relation to the interests of God, and as this is so in every place, we shall find that the testimony will prosper more and more.

And now the Lord concludes on a wonderful note. He says, "Father, as to those whom thou hast given me, I desire that where I am they also may be with me, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world". We have often said that there is glory that the Lord confers upon the saints, glory that is given to Him, that He confers upon the saints. But this is a glory conferred upon Christ, which is not conferred upon the saints, but a glory which we may behold, that we may be hold it with Him,

“I desire that they may be with me”, He says, “where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world”. I believe the Lord is referring to a distinctive glory, that belongs to Him alone, as being *the* One, who will come into manhood in order to effectuate all God's thoughts in regard of man. And in that position in manhood, He is loved. He has been loved from the foundation of the world, but now that love that subsisted between the Persons of the Godhead has now come into expression in this position, that it is no less than upon a man, a beloved man, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Think of it coming into a position, in which love known by a man, in glorious substance: I am speaking of Jesus, that He should be brought within our range, so that we should contemplate it. And we understand we are brought into a position of affection alongside Him, so He is pre-eminent in it. He is the One in whom these thoughts of divine love are set out so vividly.

Well now, as we contemplate that glory, as with Christ alongside of Him, beholding His glory, what shines before our eyes? I believe the whole thought of divine wisdom and grace and love shines before us. We get an impression of what we speak of as the economy. We get an impression of the Father, retaining the

supremacy that belongs to God in His wondrous supremacy as Father, known as the Father. We get an impression of the Son, equal in His Person with the Father, but known in glorious manhood, and loved in that position, in order we might be brought with Him, in His life, and having received His Spirit, into that position of love and response to the Father. And we already know the Spirit, He is with us all the time, and He operates in our souls, making these things intelligible to us, and promoting the response to God in the light of these things. And all this results in worship to God. It results in God Himself and His blessedness being before the hearts of the saints, and the response being called for in the Spirit's power.

Now the Lord is praying that this might be so. We might well pray that it might be so already in the assembly; why not? We have been filled even to all the fulness of God. May I ask, dear brothers and sisters, when we read these expressions in Ephesians, that we might be filled even to all the fulness of God, do you say to yourself, I do not know if I quite understand what it means. Well, you turn to the Father, you ask Him to tell you. You ask Him to open your understanding, that you may know these things. Paul brings these needs before the Father. The things are so great that God that he wanted the saints to come into, that he bowed his knees

before the Father, and tells us what he prays. Why should we not do the same? And ask the Father, and keep on asking, that the saints in our own localities, and in other localities too, should come into these things in greater power, and greater substance, and greater liberty, and greater joy, so that God, the blessed God, should be answered to in a way worthy of His name. Let us give ourselves to prayer in relation to these things. The time is well spent that we give to it, it will certainly produce results that God can take pleasure in, and He will be blessed in it too.

And so the Lord goes on to say, "I have made known to them thy name, and will make it known, that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them". A wonderful result of God being known in this glorious way, and of our having the Holy Spirit; that on the one hand, the Father's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, in the character of the Father's Spirit, can bring into our hearts something of the Father's delight in Christ. So that we can love Christ as the Father loves Him. You might say, how can that be? But it is so because the Father's Spirit, operates in our souls. You remember how when the Lord went up to the holy mount, and took with Him Peter, and James, and John; and they were with Jesus on the Holy Mount, and the Father spoke to Peter,

and James, and John. And the Father said, “this is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight”. Now why did He say that to Peter, and James, and John? Well, if we allow the tones of His voice to be heard—Peter said He heard such a voice when we were with Him on the holy mount—it is that the Father was bringing into the heart of Peter, and James, and John, something of His own feelings in regard of Christ, that they might be brought into complete affinity of thought and feeling with the Father Himself. And then on the other hand, the Spirit of God will take up the character in our hearts of the Spirit of God's Son, so we are capable of saying, Abba Father, of responding to the Father in the same character as response and affection which was found in perfection in Christ. And therefore the Father can see us in Him, “I in them”, the Lord says, a wonderful thing! We have no conception, it may be, until we begin to think of these things, how wonderfully near to God we are brought. And God desires it, that the Father's chief joy, His joy in Christ, is to be known by us; and the Son's chief joy, His joy in the Father, is also to be known by us. And therefore we brought into this most holy position.

Well, dear brethren, these are the thoughts that are in the heart of the Lord Jesus, and He has prayed to the Father in relation to them, and the

Father will find great pleasure in us, if in some degree we could take them up, and ask the Father in continual prayer—because it is a question of His thoughts being realised amongst men, both at the present time, in the presence of the evil, and then in view of the day of eternity, we can well take them up in prayer, and as we do so, we will find that we have the strength of divine approval. Indeed, the Lord in the 16th chapter of this gospel, urges on the disciples and on us to ask the Father in His Name. And He says, “the Father himself has affection for you, because he has affection for me, and have believed that I came out from God”. It is a question of God having been brought out, and the answer is to be secure for the pleasure of God in men. And if we give ourselves to prayer in relation to these things, we shall have the sense that the Father has affection for us, because we love Christ and are engaged with His interests.

Well, may the Lord promote amongst us the spirit of prayer in relation to divine interests more and more, for His Name’s sake.

COATBRIDGE

These three articles, and the following address in Linlithgow, are taken—unrevised—from 204

tapes on which no record of a date is given; it is believed the meetings were in the mid-1950s.

FEATURES OF SOUL HISTORY

Genesis 14: 17-20; 15: 7-18

Joshua 2: 1-10, 15-22

I wish to speak of certain features of soul history, which these scriptures present to us, because normally the life of the believer comprises a good deal of soul history. When I speak of soul history, I mean experiences and exercises by means of which we become led on in the truth.

Now, Abraham is taken up in scripture as a typical believer. He is said to be a father of us all, so that we do well to pay attention to the history of Abraham, just as children in a family naturally look to their fathers, for example, and guidance and instruction. And if the father does anything like what he is intended to be, they would regard him as a kind of model or pattern of what they in due time are to grow up to. So in spiritual things, we may well get gain by paying attention to Abraham and his history. We have, of course, to have Christ constantly before us as the great Model, the great standard of manhood according to God. On the one hand, He is the one in whom the light of God shines for us. On the other hand, He is the one in whom there is seen in manhood a perfect answer to that light. So on the amount of transfiguration, you will remember, according

to Matthew's gospel, it is said that the face of Jesus shone as the sun and His garments were quite as the light. That is, on the one hand, He was Himself the full light in which God was shining out, His face shone as the sun. On the other hand, He set forth in himself a perfect answer to that light in manhood, for it says that His garments were quite as the light. But while we are always to have Christ personally before us, we may also learn much from the history of Abraham. And in this 14th chapter of Genesis, he is presented as standing apart and indeed living apart from the course of the world that was all around him. Four kings had entered into conflict with the five kings, and the victory had been won by the four kings, and they had carried away Lot captive. But in the midst of those conditions, Abraham was dwelling apart from it, dwelling by the oaks of Mamre. He represents a believer who has in his soul the great stability of the purpose of God, for that is what Mamre, which is Hebron, represents. And as having the light of the purpose of God, he is not affected by changing and disturbing conditions all around him; not that he is unfeeling in regard of them, for having the Spirit of God, we should not be unfeeling, but we are not moved or disturbed by them. There is, of course, much that tends to be disturbing in conditions around, both in the international

sphere and closer at home in local and industrial conditions. And the believer cannot be entirely impervious to those things, but in his soul, he is stable as having his hopes and outlook connected with another world.

I would say to the youngest Christian here, be concerned to have in your mind the purpose of God. You might say, what is the purpose of God? Well, I will tell you one item in it at any rate: “whom He did foreknow”, scripture says—that means every one of us, who are believers, that God foreknew us, He knew us personally, before we had any being. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate”—that means mark out beforehand—“to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be first born among many brethren”, Rom 8: 29. For that is God's purpose, that He took account of us before we had any being, not in view of the life we ought to live down here during a short space of time, but in relation to eternal conditions in which we are to be like Christ before God in sonship, in the affection and the liberty and the dignity that such a position involves. The youngest Christian can take account of it, but that is God's purpose in regard of him.

Well, now Abraham, as I say, was dwelling in the life of God's purpose, and not only so, but

he had a household. We are told that he had three hundred and eighteen servants trained in his house, three hundred and eighteen of them, trained servants in his house. Now, most of the brethren here, most of the young people here, I suppose, have been brought up in connection with the truth. They know what it is to come under training. If they are subject, they benefit from that. They are instructed in principle for thought of God. It says that the kingdom of God is righteousness, that is what is right, what is practically right in the sight of God. The kingdom of God is “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit”, Rom 14: 17. And as brought up among the saints, you find that you are in a circle or a system of things where there is certain training, where there are certain principles that are of God laid down and maintained. And if I am subject and not rebellious, I get the good of it. I find that it results in prosperity and peace and joy, but not prosperity in relation to material circumstances, although that those who live piously and fear God often are prospered in their circumstances. But it is not prosperity in material circumstances that God has in mind for us. It is prosperity of soul and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. And so, as I say, Abraham had this system, a trained service. There they were, you might say a little world on their own, apart

altogether from the world around them. And that is exactly what the Christian circle is. It is a little world on its own, not taking character from the world that surrounds us, but taking character from God as known in Christ, and enjoying the peace and the joy that belong to the knowledge of God. Well now, in those conditions, Abraham is able to secure the salvation of his brother Lot. But as he returns from the victory, he is met by Melchisedec, a remarkable personage, one who typifies Christ, the Son of God. And I believe he represents Christ as known in the secret way in our souls. Melchisedec is an extraordinary character in scripture, for he is mentioned in this chapter without any introduction. Then we do not hear of him again for centuries. And then in the 110th Psalm, David speaks of him, “a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek”, then again we hear nothing more of him for centuries. And then when Paul, if it was Paul, wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, we find that his history is enlarged upon in that epistle. He is, as I say, intended to present Christ to us. But Christ known, you might say, in a kind of secret or mysterious way. And he is said to be priest of the Most High God, and he brings up bread and wine and says to Abraham, “blessed be Abraham of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth”. What a salutation for

Abraham. What a surprise it would be to Abraham to hear that he was blessed of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. We were speaking this afternoon of our names being written in heaven, and of the Father being the one of whom every family in heaven and earth is named. Do not think that the things of God are small, for they are not. They are very great. Soon we shall see them in their glory and the wonderful expansiveness of them. It is a great thing to get some sense that the Father with whom we have to do is one who names families, some in heaven, some heavenly and some earthly, and that He has given us a place in heaven. He has written our names there. You do not want any honour in this world. You do not want to belong to any worldly fellowship. You do not want to covet any recognition in this world, if you have the sense that your names are written in heaven. And Melchisedec comes to Abraham and says, "blessed be Abraham of the Most High God, possessor of heavens and earth". But then he adds something further. He says, "and blessed be the Most High God". As though to say to Abraham, now in the sense that you are yourself blessed by the Most High God, and possessor of heavens and earth, you are in turn to bless God. God wants to be served by the persons that He blesses. And Abraham is given that impression, that he is taken up in a

most remarkable way in order that he might serve the God who has taken him up. Now if we are to serve God acceptably, we must be entirely free of the world and its influences. That was what Melchisedec had in mind. He had in mind that Abraham should be preserved and not come under the influence of the king of Sodom. And his service to him was successful. It says that Abraham gave to Melchisedec the tenth of all. Melchisedec for the moment represented God, whose priest he was, and Abraham gave him the tenth of all, showing that Abraham was now recognising that he was to serve God. And then in the light of that, when the king of Sodom offers Abraham the property, Abraham says he would not take from a thread to a shoe's latchet, from a thread even to a sandal thong, "lest thou should say I have made Abraham rich". He was quite content to be enriched by God in relation to God's world, and he did not want to have any recognition or enrichment from this world.

Well now that is the first great feature in Christian history, that we should come to it, dear brethren. And this especially applies to us when we're young, because this was early in Abraham's history. He was, I know, a man of something like 86 years at this time, but that was not very old according to the reckoning of age in those days. And in any case, this is what

happened to Abraham early in his spiritual history. It is something really that applies to us when we are young, that God would give us the impression that we are blessed of Him and that, as blessed of Him, He looks that we should serve Him; and that if we are to serve Him, we must be entirely apart from and independent of the world in all its features.

But now in the next chapter, we find that God has told Abraham about what he is to inherit. And Abraham says, "how shall I know that I shall possess it?" How shall I know it? That is, now he is moving on in his soul. He is not content merely with the promises of God, blessed though they are. And one great idea in the thought of promise is that it is something that you can always fall back upon. Even in your darkest day, so to speak, you can fall back on the promise of God. But then Abraham said, "how shall I know that I shall possess it?" He was not content merely with the light of things, but he wanted the consciousness of things. And God is pleased, I may say, dear brethren, when this kind of exercise arises with us, that we are not content merely with having things in Scripture, however precious that may be, but we want the inward experience and consciousness of them. Not that we are to measure divine things by our experience of them, far be the thought, but on the other hand God intends that

we should have the actual experience and consciousness of them. And so he says, “how shall I know?” Well now, having expressed that desire, God passes him through an extraordinary experience, an experience which was not altogether happy while it was being experienced, but it was an experience that was to result in great enrichment to Abraham. So in answer to his enquiry as to how he should know, God tells him to take me, He says, “take me, a heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon”. Take me these things. You see, God is enforcing the thought of serving him. That is a great matter to keep in mind, that we are to serve God. The great thing to keep that in mind, dear brethren, when we come to the assembly, when we assemble ourselves, especially at the Supper, but other occasions also; all are intended to yield the pressure of God. It will greatly elevate our comings together if we can be helped to keep that in mind. But every occasion of our coming together is intended to yield something for the pressure of God. And so he says, take me these different creatures, a heifer of three years old, a ram, a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and so on. You can see what Abraham would do. He would go to his flocks, the substance that God had given

him, what he had in the way of substance. He would have to go to it. He would have to look for a heifer, and when he had found a heifer, he would have to make sure it was three years old, and then he would have to look for a she goat and make sure that it was three years old, and then look for a ram and make sure that it was three years old, and so on. That is, it would mean that he would have to examine carefully the substance that he had got, the substance that God had given him. And having done that, he was through to divide them, or rather, he did divide them. He did it without being told to do it. We read in the first verse of that chapter, "After these things, the word of Jehovah came to Abraham". And the word of God, if we allow it place, always has a dividing character with us. It's a good thing to submit to the dividing character of the word of God. It says the word of God is "living and operative, and sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the division of soul and spirit, both of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart". And there is not a creature unapparent before him, but all things are naked and laid bare to him with whom we have to do", Heb 4: 12, 13. That is the character of the word of God. It lays things bare. It makes the finest distinctions. And if we are to make progress in our souls, we must be prepared to submit

ourselves to the fine distinctions that the word of God makes as it applies itself to our consciences and hearts. And so we find that Abraham, as I say, had to examine carefully the substance that God had given him. And then we find that a horror falls upon him, a deep sleep and a horror. And he is told about his seed, being in a land that is not theirs, and having to serve there as bondmen, and being afflicted for four hundred years, and afterwards they should come out with great property. It all describes a certain experience that for the time being is dark and not far from a spirit of bondage, but which eventually results in coming out with great substance. Now that time gets answered in the spiritual experiences that we go through as depicted for us in the sense chapter of the epistle to Romans, the secret in which is that we begin to take account of what there is with us that is evidence of the work of God. You find in your own experience that you would like to do what is right, and you do not find the power for it. You want to live as a Christian ought to live, and you find yourself troubled with all sorts of propensities and all sorts of legal thoughts and all kinds of things of that sort which greet you all the more, and bring home to you your helplessness as in yourself. But then as you go through that chapter, you find that God begins to show you that the very fact that you have

these desires, even though you do not have the power to realise them, is an evidence that there is something there that is of God. The flesh, that is man in flesh apart from any work of God, has no desire after things of God at all. It is entirely unsubject to God, has no capacity to appreciate divine things; and so as you go through that chapter, you find that God shows us that the very fact that there are these desires, there are these exercises, is itself evidence that there is something in you that is the result of God having wrought in you, that there is something there that you can identify as I myself. As Paul says, "I myself with the mind serve God's law but with the flesh, sin's law", Rom 7: 25. But then somehow or other we are to arrive at it that we are to serve God, and not only with the mind but in actuality, in liberty and power. For the moment with Paul as he reached the end of that chapter, he says, it is just with my mind. And he longed for the power. He said, "who shall deliver me from this body of death?" But there it is. There was the thought with him of serving God.

And so we find that as the sun went down, it says that there was a smoking furnace and a frame of fire which passed between those pieces. And then Jehovah enters into a covenant with Abraham that he will get the whole extent of the territory. From the river Euphrates, it

says—"from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates", far beyond what they ever went into under Joshua, the whole extent of the territory, the whole extent of the inheritance was assured to Abraham as the consequence of this experience being gone through. I know that the flaming fire that passed between those pieces represents God Himself entering into the position. Our God, it says, is a consuming fire, Heb 12: 29. God is not going to lower the standards of His holiness to accommodate Himself to the flesh. What He has done is that, "having sent his own son in the likeness of flesh of sin and for sin, has condemned in the flesh, in order that the righteousness requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to flesh but according to Spirit", Rom 8: 3, 4. His answer to our hopelessness as in the flesh is in the gift of the Spirit. The Spirit of God will bring home to our hearts that God is not expecting us to be able to do anything in the flesh. He has condemned sin in the flesh. He has ended the history of the first man vicariously in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. But what He does do is that He gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him, and the Spirit of God will keep the heart engaged with a Man who does the light God, and that is Christ. And He will become the power in us to hold us in our

thoughts and affections in relation to the Man, Christ Jesus. God has brought in Christ, the Man who is entirely according to His heart in every particular; and that man loves you and me, and is prepared to direct us. He is prepared to be influence and wisdom and all that we need. Indeed the Spirit of God as received by us takes the form of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. He becomes the power of an entirely new life which takes its character from Christ and, as held in our hearts in relation to Christ, we find that we are able to fulfil the righteous requirement of the law.

Well that is an immense thing to arrive at that but even that is not the terminus. The ability to fulfil the righteous requirement of the law is not the terminus. It is an important matter, because God is not going to take us to heaven because we have been a failure here—do not think that. What He intends to show is that He has the ability through Christ and in the Spirit to make His people victorious here, so they do not just fail in their responsibilities but fulfil their responsibilities. It is not a people who cannot be trusted to be here that God is going to take to heaven. It is a people who can be trusted to be here and to fill out their responsibilities here and this is the pleasure of God here. It is such that God takes to heaven. Enoch walked with God for three hundred years, day by day, and had the

testimony that he pleased God before he was translated; and that should be our exercise now, dear brethren, because the moment of translation is drawing near, and we want to see to it that we walk with God and get the testimony that we please God. So that He takes us because He loves our company, not because we are failures here. And so that is what this section of Abraham's history illustrates. The way he arrives at the point typically of learning to repudiate the flesh and yield himself to the spirit of God and once that is arrived at there is no limit to what we may arrive at in the Spirit. He is the earnest of our inheritance. He is the power for life, so that responsibility is fulfilled, but He is more than that; He is the Earnest of our inheritance. So when this point is arrived at it serves that God spoke to Abraham that "unto thy seed will I give this land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river of Euphrates", and then He mentions no fewer than ten enemies, all of which would be overcome in the power of the Spirit of God. I am referring to it now in its typical bearing. He means then that, once this point is arrived at, there is no reason why there should not be complete victory and a full entrance into all the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.

Now that is how we are to know that we shall assess these things, dear brethren, by the Spirit,

and only by the Spirit. Romans 8 from which I have quoted has specially in mind our arriving at the point that we answer to every righteous requirement of the law; and not as under law but as in liberty and power in the Spirit. But the third of John, which is a companion passage, which alludes to the Son of man being lifted up, has in mind that we should receive eternal life. That means that in the power of the Spirit you enter into the inheritance.

Well now in Joshua we come to a further point, which in a sense is somewhat similar in character to what we have been speaking of in Genesis 15, in that there is the thought in it of identifying ourselves in mind with the work of God in us; only than it is in a more advanced way. They were now just on the point of passing over into the land. The land of God's purpose for us of course lies beyond death. I was saying at the beginning that the purpose of God involves that we are to be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He might be a firstborn among many brethren. That is what God has in mind, sons before him patterned after Christ, like Christ with His Spirit in their hearts, with intelligence derived from the Spirit of Christ. Wonderful conception, that that is what God has taken us up for. Well now that involves the other side of death. We are not like Christ as to our bodies down here, that is quite clear; but

God has in mind that we should be not only like Christ as to bodily condition but entirely free and that forever from every link with the flesh and all its features. What a prospect that will be. As we discover what we are now in our experience, what awful possibilities of evil that are in the flesh. What a joy it is to look forward to the moment when we shall be forever free of it, forever free of it, never to be troubled with it anymore. But, thank God, we can be in very large measure free of it now, though conscious of its presence, just in the measure in which we are yielded to the Holy Spirit.

Well now, as I say, the people were now on the point of passing over Jordan. They were to go into the land. They had passed the experience of the brazen serpent and typically had come, in singing to the well, to the appreciation of the Spirit of God as always available to them, available to them individually and collectively. I believe the well refers to the Spirit as available to us collectively, because it says, "Assemble the people and I will give them water", Num 21: 16. But before that, they had come to the appreciation of the Spirit individually, you might say, because it says that every one who was bitten who looked at the serpent lived; he lived, and that involves the Spirit of God known individually. Well now, they had come to the point where they were just about to go over

Jordan to get into the land, and the point was that how were they to get there, and before the third chapter comes in, which presents to us the ark as moving into Jordan and they themselves going into Jordan after it, we find that Joshua sends these two spies. That is, it is all part of the exercise as to getting over Jordan, getting into the land. He sends these two spies and when they get there, they find a harlot's house named Rahab, and they link on with this woman Rahab. She represents the work of God. You might say she had a disreputable history: perfectly true she had, and so have we all had, dear brethren. It is a good thing to come to it. It may be that your history and my history has not been disreputable publicly. It may be that there has been nothing particularly shameful about our conduct publicly as known by our families and our neighbours, and so on; but in the sight of God, it has been very shameful. There is not one of us but has not had a shameful history when we look at it in the light of God; and Rahab had had a shameful history, but she had come to repentance. She was no longer marked by sin. That is evident by the fact that she had stalks of flax laid out on the roof. That is to say she had laid them out under the sight of God. Whatever she had been in the past, she was now marked by righteousness. Flax is the base of linen, and linen is the type in scripture

of righteousness, practical righteousness; and there she was, the very beginnings of righteousness were there now in Rahab. Whatever she had been in the past, there she was now a righteous woman, and she was a righteous woman under the eye of God. She laid out these stalks of flax on the roof. And now these spies identify themselves with her. It is a good thing for us to identify ourselves in mind with the work of God in us, not now simply as a matter of how we are to get free from the domination of the flesh, but as reminding us that our portion is in Him, that we belong to Him. If God has wrought in us it is in a heavenly calling. He has not wrought in us in relation to a position down here on earth. We have a certain position provisionally on earth in the ways of God in connection with His testimony here. But at the same time if God has wrought in your soul and mine, He has wrought in our soul in reference to heaven. Let us never forget that that we belong to Him. Our names are written down. The place that Jesus filled in heaven is the place that belongs to us. He says, "I am coming again and will receive you to myself, that where I am ye also may be", John 14: 3. That is the place for us in divine purpose. And it has been committed to Christ to bring the purpose of God to pass and to secure us in relation to it.

And so it is a great incentive to us to desire to pass over, no longer to be detained by the things of earth or the things of nature, but to pass over in spirit in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a great incentive to us to move on these lines, to identify ourselves in our thoughts with the work of God in us, because that work of God connects us with the scene the other side of death. And that is what the spies did. When they got into the land, they found a woman there. The work of God was there showing itself. And they identify themselves with it. And she identifies herself with them. And it says that she recognises that both what God had done in drying up the Red Sea, in making a way through the Red Sea. And what they had done to Sihon and Og, which represents the power the believer proves when he comes to recognise the Spirit of God. Sihon, I believe, represents Satan's effort to overcome us by pressure of circumstances, pressure of certain things. You remember that the people of God simply asked Sihon to be allowed to go through. They asked for nothing else. They said we just want to go through the king's highway. We will go through on our feet. We will pay money for any water that we use, and so on. All we asked to do is to be allowed to get through. And Sihon came out with all his forces, as much as to say you shall not get through. And in the power typically of the

Spirit of God—it was after the brazen serpent and the springing well—they overcame him and took his territory. And that is what those who have the spirit of God know. That is whatever pressure of circumstances comes upon them. There is power in the spirit of God to sustain you above them. That is what Paul proved in prison. According to the epistle to the Philippians, there he was an old man. And when we get old we are not as capable of bearing things naturally as we are when we are younger. But there he was an old man, and in prison and wrongfully. And certain brethren added tribulation to his bonds by preaching Christ out of contention. What, you might say, an overwhelming combination of circumstances was brought to bear upon Paul. He asked the prayers of the saints, and he desired the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. His one thought was that Christ should be magnified in him whether by life or by death. And a man like that, supported by the grace of Christ and the power of the Spirit, could not be overcome. And he was not overcome. And so that is, I think, what Sihon represents. And Og on the other hand, possibly represent easier circumstances. But also represents I do not doubt that greater enemy, ‘the big *I*’, as we sometimes say, because of the man the size of whose bed is told us. It represents ‘*I*’, that

figures so largely in our thoughts and exercises; and the Spirit of God is the only power by which that can be overcome. But they had overcome Sihon and Og. So they had proved the power that they had in the Spirit of God. And they had no thought about it.

And now we read that she let them go, and they tell her that she is to bind the scarlet line that she let them down by in the window. It is called a cord, and it is called a scarlet thread, and then it is called a scarlet line. The thread, I think it has been suggested, conveys the idea of a certain texture, a moral or spiritual texture in that woman as a result of the work of God in her, which has its own distinctiveness; it is a scarlet thread.

Well, all that I have in my mind is this dear version that the spies linked on with that and she linked on with them. They wanted to get over into the land, for the people have got to get over. And when they got there, as a kind of advance guard to speak, they found this woman there; the work of God was there already and they identify themselves with it. Now I think if you will just work it out in your minds, you will find that that will help greatly in the exercise of passing over. We ought to pass over and I have no doubt we do. We ought to pass over every Lord's day morning. We come together as in

the wilderness. We come together as in the scene of Christ's rejection, that is the wilderness. And we pass over under the influence of the love of Christ and in the power of the Spirit, to find our part with Christ the other side of death; and to have our happy portion in all those things—those wondrous thoughts—of divine love which the Father has counselled for us.

But it is a great item in our passing over to learn to identify ourselves with the work of God in it. It does in the epistle to the Colossians, “And you, being dead in offences and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he has quickened together with him”, Col 2: 13. It is when ye *were* dead, that is to say no pulsation of life there, and then God has quickened us. The very fact that we love Christ is evidence of it. He has made us to live and that is the work of God in us. But the work of God, as I say, does not have in view our finding our life in things here, but has in view are being able to enter upon the things that lie in His purpose that are connected with Christ the other side of death, things that He has prepared for those who love Him.

Well, I trust I have been able to convey, dear brethren, something about the import is of these incidents we have read, indicating certain stages in soul history. And if we are able to take them

up, I believe they will be for our profit as enabling us in the first place to be separate entirely from this world and to have before us from the outset that we are to serve God as blessed of him; and then the way by which we even arrive at things experimentally, finding power for life in the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and then finally the power to move over on to the other side where Christ is. The only power for that also lies in the Spirit.

May the Lord bless the word.

LINLITHGOW

FAITH

Hebrews 11: 1-40

When God brought Abel into this world, and as the details of his life developed, all was under God's hand with you and me in view. It is a good thing to take account of that, and all that followed that we have read of in the history of Enoch, and of Noah and of Abraham and of Sarah, of Isaac and Jacob, and then of many others in this chapter, of which we have not read: all this was being divinely ordered and arranged with a view to you and me. It is a very impressive thing to think of, that those who live in this day were of such importance in the mind of God, because He is doing such great things in this day in which we live, this day that commenced (I speak of a day as God speaks of days) with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and will finish with the coming of the Lord. I say God is working out such great things in this day that centuries and centuries before, He took up men and women and worked out in their lives certain principles which He intended in due time to bring to bear upon you and me. And therefore we should be sober - the young ones who have their Bibles and have the privilege of being brought up in Christian homes where they are taught the Scriptures, they should not treat these things lightly: remember that God has given us the Scriptures, and that He has given us the Scriptures because He wants us to be

affected by the truth; and impressed by this wonderful fact, which, to my mind, is excessively wonderful, that He should, hundreds of years ago, and over a long period of centuries, worked out certain things in the lives of certain people in order that they might become instruction for us.

But now this history begins with Abel. Abel was a sinner. He was under the penalty of death. All have sinned, as scripture says, and all come short of the glory of God (Rom 3: 23), and Abel was no exception. But what marked Abel was that he obeyed the light which God had given to his parents which doubtless they had passed on to him. And again, let me say to the young people here, whatever you do, obey the light that God has given to you through your parents - and through others who may instruct you in the things of God, for the Scriptures show that disaster follows those who disobey light given from God.

And so Abel would know under the teaching of his parents about when his parents, Adam and Eve, sinned and discovered in the presence of God that they were naked; and naked in Scripture has a moral meaning. It does not mean simply unclothed. It means that things are exposed exactly as they are in the sight of God; and Adam and Eve found, in regard of themselves, that though they had done their best to clothe themselves in a way that they thought met the

situation, as soon as they were conscious of the presence of God, by virtue of His voice being heard, they became aware that all things were naked and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom they had to do, and they therefore went and hid themselves.

But then God called them out and spoke with them. I do not go into all the detail. The history is well known, but God spoke with them. He asked Adam a question, and then he asked Adam a second question, and then He asked Eve a question. Let me put it to all here, old and young: if God raises questions with you, do not fail to face them, because when God raises questions, He has blessing in mind for those whom He raises questions with. As you pursue that history, you find He does not raise any question with the devil, with the serpent. He says, "Because thou hast done this, be thou cursed", Gen 3: 14. He raised no question with the serpent, but He raised two questions with the man and one question with the woman, because, as I say, He had in mind that they should face the truth and then discover that, though they had no hope in themselves, they had to do with a Saviour God. And that is what anyone here may find, even today, even now.

If there should be someone here whose sins are not forgiven, who is not in peace towards God, who has not received the Holy Spirit, then I say

all these blessings are available to you now on the principle of repentance towards God and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This chapter is a chapter of faith, and we are living in a day of faith. Scripture says that “the just shall live by faith”, Rom 1: 17. It is the principle upon which men can live at the present time, in relation to God, we are in a dispensation of faith. Faith looks on to a coming day and the coming world. Do not think that this world is of any attractiveness to God, for it is not. It is characterised by being the world, the scene and the system in which the Son of God has been murdered and cast out. Do not forget that. And not only that, but the present day is characterised not only by the rejection of Christ, but by the rejection also of the Holy Spirit; that is a very serious matter. The position in the Christian world at the present time is excessively serious. I am not extravagant in my language. I would that everybody would get a sense of it, that as to the present world, its position is that the Son of God has been cast out and the Spirit of God has been refused.

Well, now that is the serious position, but then God has another world in view. He is not going to build up anything in connection with this world. He has another world in view, and the gospel is preached so that by reception of the glad tidings, on the principle of faith, you might receive a part in that world.

The Lord, in chapter of Luke 20: 35 speaks of “they who are worthy of **that** world, and of the resurrection from among the dead”. Are you worthy of *that* world? You may say, Well, I have no worthiness in myself - quite true, but you can be accounted worthy of that world, and of the resurrection from among the dead, by obedience to the glad tidings. You will find that God justifies you of every charge through faith in Christ and seals you with His Holy Spirit, and that constitutes you worthy of that world, and of the resurrection from among the dead.

Well now, Abel was, as I say, a sinner. I was saying how his parents found themselves naked in the presence of the God with whom they had to do. But then God, it says, clothed them with coats of skin. I know these things have been said many a time before, but they are the truth of God and will bear repetition. He clothed them with coats of skin. To obtain those coats of skin, some animal had to be slain, blood had to be shed, some substitute for Adam and Eve, who were under the penalty of death, had to be found. God Himself found the substitute. He Himself provided the coats of skin, and as clothed with those coats of skin, they were accounted righteous before God. There was not a word of condemnation for them. They were there before God in the virtue of the righteousness that would be accomplished through the death of Christ in

due time. God knew it would come to pass. He knew there would be no breakdown with Jesus. He knew that He himself would not turn from His thoughts. He knew that in due time, Christ would die “the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Pet 3: 18), and therefore, in the light of that, He provided for these two sinners coats of skin and clothed them. And in those coats of skin, they were accounted righteous before God, so that they could stand before God now without a tremor. They would say, God himself has clothed us. He will never find fault with what he Himself has provided, and God will never find fault with anyone who puts his trust in Christ, because the righteousness affected for men through the precious death of Christ is divinely provided and is according to divine standards. Indeed, God sets Him forth in testimony as a mercy-seat, that is to say a ground from which in righteousness God can speak to men in mercy and deal with them in mercy. God Himself sets Him forth in that light to make known His righteousness in the remission of sins. That is the position God is taking up at this present time,

Well now, Abel embraced that light and he drew near to God. I have just quoted the scripture that says that “Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God”. That is what God has in mind, not that we should just be saved from perdition, and then go on as far from

God as we can. God wants us brought to Himself. Christ suffered for sins, as the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. You all know the parable of what we call the prodigal son, how when the younger son came to himself, he said, "I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants", Luke 15: 18, 19. That was as far as his thoughts went.

But God's thoughts, the father's thoughts, went far beyond that. It says, "his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell upon his neck, and covered him with kisses", v 20. That is what God through the death of Christ has in view, that we should be brought to God and received by God in that wonderful light. The father fell upon his neck, and covered him with kisses. And then the son makes his statement, leaving out what he had proposed to say about "make me as one of thy hired servants". And the father says to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and clothe him in it, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry", v 22, 23. For that is how God receives; that is the way God receives those who come to Him in the faith of Jesus.

And so Abel, as I say, “brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of their fat”, Gen 4: 4. The firstlings of his flock, that is to say he recognised that God must be considered *first*. That is what it means. God must be considered first. Let me ask every young person here, do you consider for God first? Have you considered for God? Have you faced God? Because you stand in relation to Him. He has rights over you as Creator. He has rights over you as Redeemer. I say, have you faced God? Have you considered for God first? That is what Abel did. He brought up the firstlings of his flock and of the fat and it says “Jehovah looked upon Abel, and on his offering”.

And so it says here in these verses that we have read that, “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained testimony of being righteous, God bearing testimony to his gifts, and by it, having died, he yet speaks”. That is to say, if there is someone here who is not yet accounted righteous by God, Abel would speak to you. He being dead, yet speaks. Abel would say, I took the right way. You can take that way. You can come to God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in virtue of his precious death. You need nothing else. You can come that way, and you will find that God will look upon you and receive you and bless you.

Well, then the next thing is that, if we are thus received by God, justified from every charge and embraced in His love, He wants us to walk with Him. That is what Enoch did by faith. It says, "Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he has the testimony that he had pleased God". According to the account given us in Genesis 5, he *walked with God*, and he continued in it perseveringly for 300 years, 300 years measured in days. Notice that if you read Genesis 5, you will find that the lives of those men in that chapter were measured in days. God takes account of our days. If the Lord leaves us here tomorrow, it will be Monday. How are you going to spend Monday? And how are you going to spend Tuesday? Are you going to walk with God? If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and receive forgiveness in His name, God will give you the gift of the Holy Spirit. That means that God Himself takes up His abode in you. Are you going to walk with God? Are you going to grieve Him? Are you going on day by day, grieving the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit of God who dwells in you, or are you going to provide conditions that are congenial to Him so that you can walk with God? That is what Enoch did. He received testimony that he had pleased God, and God allowed him to go on for 300 years. Multiply 365 by 300 - you boys and girls of school age -

multiply 365 by 300 and find out how many days Enoch walked with God. How precious those days must have been to God, and how blessed those days must have been to Enoch.

And he went on, on that principle, walking with God, day by day. And one day God intervened and took him. It says "Enoch was translated that he should not see death", as though God would say, 'This man is so pleasing to me, I will take him to be with Myself without his dying. Why should I not?' He could look forward to the death of Christ, the precious basis on which He can act in mercy and sovereignty of blessing to whosoever embraces it. Why should He not? And so in order to show that He had the right to do away with the penalty of death for those who believe, He took Enoch to Himself without Enoch dying. And a day is near when many believers are going to be taken to be with Christ without dying: remember that the day of translation is near. It is a very real thing. The day is drawing near. The day of translation is near. And God will address these things to us, in order that if we have not been concerned about it before, we may be concerned from now on as to whether or not we walk with God,

But then there is Noah, and God warned Noah of impending judgment. That is something that should be mentioned in the preaching, for judgment is near. There is wrath to come. The

testimony is to flee from the coming wrath. There is wrath to come. It says that the Lord Jesus shall be revealed “from heaven, with the angels of his power, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God, and those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”, 2 Thess 1: 7, 8. These are things that Scripture speaks of, and they have a present bearing upon us. And therefore I say that there is judgment to come.

Well, now, Noah was warned of God of this, and he “prepared an ark for the saving of his house”. That is what the Lord is doing now. He has furnished the assembly as a place of salvation for the houses of the saints, believing houses. And parents who understand the mind of God, conduct their families on the principle upon which Noah built this ark, he built an ark for the saving of his house. He pitched it within and without with pitch. All around was moral death. He was greatly concerned that nothing of that character should have place inside the ark that he built. And inside that ark, there was every kind of variety of life, and there was life from heaven, and there was abundance of food. Those are the things that you find in the assembly. The assembly is what the Lord has established here on earth as the place where you may find real salvation from the world around, which is characterised by moral death. I know that we

have to go through the world. I know that we have to earn our living in the world, and the young people have to go to school in the world. I know that it is a question now of yielding yourself unreservedly to the Lord. He is set to be the Saviour of all those who commit themselves to Him, not only the Saviour in the initial way, as meeting the question of your soul need in relation to God, but then in a practical way. "The same Lord over all is rich", it says, "towards all that call upon him" (Rom 10: 12), and "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved", v 13. So that He is set for the salvation in a practical way of all those who own Him as Lord and call upon Him.

So now this ark that Noah built is just a picture of the assembly from one point of view. Of course, the Lord has built it from another point of view. Christian parents have to bring up their children on the principles that are set up in this ark, see that they hold them in relation to the assembly. It is there that you will find light from God. It is there that you will find among the saints, every feature of life according to God. And it is there that you will find food, true food, and you won't find it anywhere else.

Well, now the state of things in this world is not yet quite as bad as it was in Noah's day, though it is rapidly becoming as bad. But when Noah and his wife and his three sons and their wives went

into the ark, they were just eight persons, and they were the only godly persons alive on the earth at that time. The scripture says that the flood that God brought in upon the world of the ungodly, and “few, that is, eight souls, were saved”, 1 Pet 3: 20. That is, the conditions that were arrived at in Noah's day were such that there were by that time only eight godly persons left upon the earth.

Well, things are not as bad as that, yet, thank God. You may say, well, the days are difficult, and it is very difficult to follow the truth in all the detail of it and be faithful to it. But the days are not so difficult as they were in Noah's day, and the Lord is faithful, and the Lord will certainly prove faithful in the support of all those who are prepared to obey the truth. And so it says that Noah prepared an ark, “oracularly warned concerning things not yet seen, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world”. He condemned it. You say it is testing to keep up separation. That is quite true, but it is essential that those who fear God should be separate from evil. It is essential, and by maintaining separation, you *condemn the world*. You are serving God in that respect. You are bringing to the notice of men that they are going on with that with which you, as fearing God, can have no part in whatever. You are thus being used by God to convince the

world, or at any rate, to condemn the world, so that God will be justified in bringing in judgment on the world because it will have had abundant testimony rendered to it by the saints - and you may be among them - that is characterised by that which calls for the judgment of God. You remember what the Lord, on one occasion, said to His brethren, before they had been brought to believe on Him, He said to them, "The world cannot hate you", John 7: 7. But, He says, "me it hates because I bear witness concerning it that its works are evil". But then later on, He says to the disciples, he says that "if ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you", John 15: 19. And therefore I would say affectionately to believers here, and young believers especially, do not take on any ways of the world, in speech or otherwise that would mark you out as one of the world's own. You do not want to be recognisable as one of the world's own. "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own". You do not want to be recognisable as one of those because ye are not of the world. The Lord says, "but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you".

And so following on this as to Noah, it brings in Abraham, and Abraham is the first one in which

real, definite separation to God is set out. It is an essential principle. Separation to God is essential. God set it out at the very outset of His operations. It says that God said, "Let there be light. And there was light ... and God divided between the light and the darkness, and he called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night", Gen 1: 3, 4. You can see that God instituted the principle of separation from the very start, the very beginning of His operations, He introduced this principle and he called the light Day and darkness He called Night. There was no similarity between those two. If you say day, you say day, if you say night, you say night, and you cannot possibly confuse the two. And that is the idea, that there is no mixing of light and darkness. And so God separated. He divided the light and the darkness, and "he called the light Day and the darkness he called Night".

Well now, Abraham, it says, "being called, obeyed". Abraham is called the father, a father of us all. That is he is the father of believers, one from whom believers should learn. "Abraham, being called, obeyed to go out into the place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and went out not knowing where he was going". That is faith. We are told in the second epistle to Timothy that we are to pursue righteousness. That is the first thing: righteousness is what is right in the sight of God. It applies in every

sphere of life. Pursue what is right in the sight of God, what is right in regard to the religious world around us, what is right in your business world, right in the sight of God, what is right in your family life, your relations as a father to your children, or your relations as children to your parents. Pursue what is right. Pursue righteousness. That is the first principle with God. Then the next principle is faith. Pursue faith. Now it says "Abraham, being called, obeyed to go out into the place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and went out not knowing where he was going". It is a question of obedience. Sometimes people say, I have not the faith, but that is not the point. You are not called upon to produce the faith that is required. You are called upon to obey: the question is the obedience of faith. You will find support for the path as you obey, and not until you do obey. Mr Raven said that God gives us light for the next step, He does not give us light for the whole path. He gives us light for the next step. That is to say, He maintains us on the principle of living and walking in faith.

Now this was set out in Abraham. He was called to go out. His nephew, Lot, did not go out. He did at first, he went out with Abraham, and then he parted from him, and eventually was found settling down in Sodom, the inhabitants of whom were wicked and sinners before Jehovah

exceedingly. Think of a godly man like Lot being content to live in a wicked city. And there was Abraham, his uncle. He went out, he separated himself. That is the principle that obtains and governs the life of those who know God, that they separate themselves from evil. And so it says, "he sojourned as a stranger in the land of promise as a foreign country, having dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise". Abraham was not concerned about making a fortune or making a name for himself in the world, which was so evil the sight of God, he was concerned about going out, separating from it, and not only so, but impressing that character upon his son and his grandson. He dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. And so I say to the young people here again, if you find that your parents are not encouraging you in worldly ambition, if you find that they are setting before you that the great thing to govern us is this, that we have been redeemed, that we belong absolutely to God and to Christ, and that we are here for God's will and to support his testimony and for nothing else; if you find that your parents are putting these things before you, do not resist it. Do not resent it, they are putting before you divine principles, and as you allow yourself to be governed by them, you will be blessed. You will rest assured that if you consider for God, God will consider for you. He never accrues Himself

unfaithful. He will always consider for those who consider for Him. The point is that we are to be here as those who do not belong to this world, because Jesus is not here. That is why everything is dependent on the position in which Jesus stands in relation to things, and He is not here. And therefore Christians are not expected to find their life or their range of interests in connection with this world. What they are here for is to fill out their part in life as governed by the will of God and ministering to His pleasure, and finding their real interests in the assembly of God.

So, now Abraham set that out, and he “dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations of which God is the artificer and constructor”. God has got a city in mind. The assembly is, in fact, the city of the living God. But He has a real, glorious city in mind, which is coming into display before long. And every believer in the Lord Jesus, sealed with the Holy Spirit, is an essential part in that city. It is not only that you belong to it, but you are an essential part of it. It is composed of those who are brought to Christ during this period, this dispensation, and every believer, as say, is a constituent part of that glorious city.

Well now men in the world like to belong to a city. The freedom of the City of London is

regarded as a great honour to be conferred on the person. Even Paul, on one occasion, speaking as a man, said that he was a citizen of no mean city, referring to Tarsus, understanding that people like the idea of being connected with a city. But now God says, 'I have got a city for you which is great and glorious enough to eclipse the greatest of the cities of men'. Their city, their cities have no foundation, no moral foundation. They are just built up on the will and pride of man. That is what they are built up on. Make no mistake, I am just speaking soberly. That is what the cities of this world are built up of, the pride and will of man, and it is inevitable that they shall come down. In fact, Scripture says that they will, in the book of Revelation, it says in the visions given to John in Patmos that "the cities of the nations fell" (Rev 16: 19), and that is what they will do. But God has a city, to which He invites every one of us. In fact, He tells every one of us here that as coming to Christ, receiving the glad tidings, being sealed by God with his Holy Spirit, you are an essential constituent part of that city. And it has foundations. It is founded in righteousness, established in the blood of Christ. And it is founded, it will never pass away.

And then it brings in the thought of Sarah, that she had faith. She represents, as we often say, what we call the subjective side of the truth. And that is then what comes about through faith. God

looks for what is substantial in every one of us, but it is not produced by our looking at ourselves or our being occupied with what is going to be produced in us. It is arrived at by having an object outside of ourselves, and that is Christ. It says, “by faith also Sarah receives strength for the conception of seed”. That is to say, what was produced in Sarah was result of Sarah's faith that she had in her heart, by faith she had the light of Isaac, the promised seed, the seed that God promised her. And as a result, this came about in her.

Well, one ought not to pursue the subject, because our time is going. But I would just end by referring to this last paragraph that we read. It says, “All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them from afar off and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth”. And now it says, “if they had called to mind that from whence they went out, they had had opportunity to have returned; but now they seek a better, that is a heavenly”. And what is the result? “God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city”. And now, I would urge myself, and all those who are here, all the believers here, young and old, alike - and young ones especially who have got, as people say, life before them. You look at things as God looks at them, and not as men look at them. If

you are still at school, you have probably got a master or mistress whose business it is to advise the pupils as to careers and all that sort of thing. Well, take account of things as God looks at them. That is what I would say. Take account of them as God looks at them, and remember that you have been redeemed, that God and Christ have got an absolute right over you, and that the only reason why you are here in this world is to fill out your days according to the will of God and minister to His pleasure. And do not be captivated by the world that is so shortly going to be set aside, but set yourself to have a living interest in the world that is going to abide; and you will find that God is not ashamed of you to be called your God.

May the Lord bless the word to you.

LONDONDERRY

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MANHOOD ACCORDING TO GOD

1 Timothy 2: 5-7

Numbers 12: 1-8

Esther 9: 3, 4

I desire to speak about the Man Christ Jesus, the man Moses and the man Mordecai. It is remarkable how the Spirit of God speaks about these men, each of them as ‘the man’. Of course, in the case of the Lord Jesus it is unique. Moses and Mordecai, great men though they were, were but men; men in whom God had wrought, and in whom wonderful results for God appeared. But the Lord Jesus is infinitely more than man, though we thank God that He is truly Man, and retains manhood eternally. So we must always think of Christ as distinct and unique, and that needs to be preserved in our minds. It says here that “God is one, and the mediator of God and men one, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all”. That marks out His distinctness in an outstanding way; there is not only the distinctness of His Person, but the distinctness of what He has done. He has done what no one else could have done; He “gave himself a ransom for all”. That helps us to hold the personal distinction and moral excellence of Christ in a special way in our minds.

So we have first of all the Man Christ Jesus; He is the “mediator of God and men”. A mediator is one who can, as Scripture says, lay his hand upon both, Job 9: 33. He can represent God, and he can represent man, and he can in that sense so to speak, bring the two together, that is the great value of a mediator. We do not have to do with God direct. “No one has seen God at any time”, John 1: 18. He dwells in unapproachable light whom no man has seen nor is able to see, and therefore, when we have to do with God, there is the need of a mediator. And so we have a mediator in the Person of Christ and He becomes commended to us by the fact that He “gave himself a ransom for all”. Not simply that He was willing to give Himself, that is wonderful, but that He was competent to do it. There is no one else in the universe competent to do it, and hence we always need to keep in our minds the personal uniqueness of Christ.

God’s pleasure from the beginning has been in men; that is the matter of His sovereignty. I do not think we could say why, save that it is according to the good pleasure of His will. Wisdom’s delights “were with the sons of men”, Prov 8: 31. God has nothing less in mind for men than that they should be sons. We do not know anything about the creation of angels, but a time came when God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen

1:26); showing clearly that He had the thought of men before Him. Angels had been created long before, but when man was created, they were there, as subsidiary, you might say, to man. And they serve to bring out the greatness of Christ; because when God brings in the first-born into the habitable world He says, "And let all God's angels worship him." (Heb 1:6)—all of them. I suppose that refers to the coming day, when He brings Him into the world, in the world to come. It has been connected with the birth of Christ, and the celebration of it by a multitude of the heavenly host, but I think the real allusion is to His bringing Him in, in the day of His glory, in the world to come, according to Psalm 97, and in that day all God's angels are to worship Him.

So we have the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all; what a wonderful thing that is. You can see that on the one hand God has been pleased to approach us in a Man, and He has in mind that man should approach Him, and both the approach and the answer to it are before us in Christ. When the Lord first appeared in human condition, it was not as a full grown man, it was as a babe. Wonderful thing when you think of it; who would be afraid of a babe? God dispels all fear at the outset. Of course, He had to grow up to full manhood before there could be the full expression in a

Man, of what God's thoughts are towards men, but still that is how God proceeded; He approached us in a babe, one lying in a manger too; wonderful thing. If He had lain in a palace, you might have said we cannot approach, so God said, He shall be laid in a manger. No one could be afraid to approach a manger. Well now, that is some indication to us of what God is like, how He would approach us in a way intended to dispel all fear. Yet on the other hand we are never to forget that He is God, and that holiness becomes His house for ever. It says, "Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thy house, O Jehovah, for ever", Ps 93: 5. Whatever form the house of God took at any time, whether it was the tabernacle, or the temple, or whether, as now, it is the church, whatever form it took, "holiness becometh thy house, O Jehovah, for ever". So holiness befits us in our relations with God. Peter discerned that Jesus was the "holy one of God". You will remember how the Lord said to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Peter says, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast words of life eternal; and we have believed and known that thou art the holy one of God", John 6: 68-69. That is what Peter discerned in Jesus as he took account of Him in His relations with God; as he took account of Him in His relations too with themselves, they got the sense that He was "the

holy one of God”. Now that is a wonderful thing, because that means that He is the One in whom all that God looks for in man is perfectly found. There is nothing at all incongruous, nothing out of keeping with what God is in His nature, and in His desires, nothing out of keeping with that in Jesus. And so the Lord presents Himself in that light to Philadelphia; He presents Himself as “the holy, the true”, Rev 3: 7. I might say that what we have said as to the holy One of God comes in the sixth chapter of John’s gospel. In the seventh chapter of John’s gospel, we get “the true”. The Lord says, “He that speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but he that seeks the glory of him that has sent him, he is true, and unrighteousness is not in him”, John 7: 18. And so you have the ‘Holy’ in chapter six and the ‘True’ in chapter seven. The ‘Holy’ is what He is in His manhood Godward, the ‘True’ is what He is in His manhood in testimony manward, and in both you have perfection. The Lord presents Himself to Philadelphia as “the Holy, the True”, showing that the intention is not that we should be affected so much by the official positions and titles of Christ, but rather by what He is morally, so that we might learn God. God is said to be “the Father of compassions, and God of all encouragement”, 2 Cor 1: 3. That is how Paul presents God to us in the second epistle to the

Corinthians. How often in the gospels we read that the Lord had compassion; think of God coming out in that way, evincing His compassions as Christ moved amongst men in His creation.

So as I say God has approached us in a Man. You have the two sides in Jesus, first of all the One in whom God has approached us, and then on the other hand the answer to that, you might say, in a Man; that is the Lord sets out in Himself, as Man perfectly, all that God looks for in man. You can understand therefore at His baptism how the heavens opened to Him and there was a voice from heaven saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I have found my delight", Luke 3: 22. That was just when He accepted baptism before entering on His service. Then at the end of His service practically, when "he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9: 51), again we get the voice from heaven, on the mount of transfiguration, expressing the Father's delight in Jesus. Between the time of the baptism of Jesus and the time of the transfiguration, there had been the three and a half years, in which the Lord was here in public testimony, and again, at the end of that time, you get a voice out of the cloud saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight", Matt 17: 5. On the one hand God has approached us perfectly

in Man, in Christ; on the other hand, in Christ, He sets out perfectly all that He looks for in man, all that answers to His heart. We can rest in this with deep satisfaction in the sense that in Christ, God has before Him now, in His immediate presence, a Man who in every way has answered, and does answer, to all that He desires in men. If then we have that apprehension of Christ surely it will have the effect of promoting a desire in us to learn from Him and take character from Him too. To learn from Him, as the Lord says in the gospel of Matthew, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls", Matt 11: 29.

Is any one of us meek naturally, is any one of us lowly naturally? I do not think so. If we take on any features of meekness at all, if we take on any features of lowliness at all, lowliness of mind, we can only do so as learning from Christ. So the Lord says, "Take my yoke upon you". That is to be a definite thing with us. Are any of the dear brethren restless, not knowing what rest of soul is, not knowing what contentment with present circumstances is? If so the Lord says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls". Paul says that he had learned, it had not come to him naturally, "*I* have learnt in those circumstances in which I

am, to be satisfied in myself" (Phil 4: 11); not exactly to be content with the circumstances, that is not the point, but in whatever circumstances he was, he had learnt to be content in himself. Now what is the secret of that? I believe the secret of that is what the Lord speaks of in John 4, "the water which I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into eternal life", John 4: 14. Paul says he had learnt to be content in himself; it was what he had in himself that provided him with contentment; it was what the Spirit was to him as springing up in him unto eternal life, holding him in his thoughts and affections in relation to Christ, and in relation to the saints and that as a present reality.

There is immense gain for us in the fact that Christ has become Man, and that you have perfection there. He has all the sympathies and affections of a man. He is there before us now as pattern; we have not to strive after something; He is simply there as pattern, and the Lord says, "learn from me". The more we do so the more we shall come up to what God intends which is to secure His pleasure in men. The church, the body of Christ, is to be the full expression of it. The church is a wonderful thing, and it is nearly complete now; it has been in the process of formation for nearly two thousand years. How many believers compose

it? I suppose no one but God knows, but a wonderful thing the body of Christ will be. A vessel composed of creatures, those who are only creatures, a creature vessel, but able to express Christ, without anything being lacking; that is what the body of Christ will be, a marvel of divine workmanship. We can understand, if God has wrought for nearly two thousand years, the Spirit having been active all that time, what a vessel is going to be the result of it. We shall see it soon; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye we shall see it. Even the Lord has not seen it yet (I speak reverently), but in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, it will come into view, the church, the body of Christ. And then, in due course, it will come down out of heaven from God having the glory of God. What great things we are connected with! How important this time of formation is. We should see that we do not waste time, do not allow things to distract us from the things of the Lord.

The Man “Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all”, is the subject of testimony. “He ... has also ascended up above all the heavens, that he might fill all things”. It is the descending One who has gone up above all the heavens: it says, “But that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens, that he

might fill all things”, Eph 4: 9-10. It is the descending One who has gone up above all heavens. If there is any desire with us to exalt ourselves, any tendency in that direction in our thoughts, let us always remember that it is the descending One who has gone up above all heavens, that He might fill all things. He is going to fill all things with the descending spirit. So that when the saints come down out of heaven they descend; they are not said to be sent, they descend; it is a wonderful movement, so to speak, that they have learned and taken on from Christ; they come down in the spirit and power of His movements.

Well, one need not say more about the Man Christ Jesus, although I am conscious that I have said very little really. But that is the great standard of ‘Manhood’; the “Man Christ Jesus”, and what Scripture says about Him is that He gave Himself a ransom for all, the testimony to be rendered in its own times. What that means only God knows. “A ransom for all”. Think of the accumulation of guilt that attached to all; think of the power of death as having dominion over all; He gave Himself a ransom for all.

Well now we come to Moses, and Moses is a remarkable and most encouraging man. In this chapter 12, he is being spoken against by his own sister and brother, his sister apparently

taking the lead. Miriam and Aaron “spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had taken”, and they say, “Has Jehovah indeed spoken only to Moses?” and it says “Jehovah heard it”. That is a very significant statement; let us remember it; “Jehovah heard it”. He is taking very serious notice of it. It says, “Then Jehovah spoke suddenly to Moses, and to Aaron, and to Miriam”; He puts them in their proper order. “Miriam and Aaron” it says at the beginning of the chapter, “spoke against Moses”; that is the wrong order. God puts them in the right order. He is putting Miriam in her place, and He is, so to speak, reminding Aaron that he is the man, and that he is responsible to take the lead. The Lord knows how to adjust us in all these things. “Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses ... they said, Has Jehovah indeed spoken only to Moses? has he not spoken also to us? And Jehovah heard it”. Then it says, “the man Moses was very meek”, (or ‘lowly’, ‘humble’) “above all men that were upon the face of the earth”. How did Moses become meek? He certainly was not born meek; none of us is born meek, I am quite sure we could say that. But Moses was “very meek”, it says, “very meek above all men that were upon the face of the earth”. And what God says about him as He takes up his cause is “my servant Moses ... is

faithful in all my house”. What a commendation that was, what an encouragement to us to seek to be faithful in relation to the Lord’s interests. When Moses is spoken against God enters into the lists, you might say, in support of him, and He says, “Moses ... is faithful in all My house”. I am inclined to think that refers not only, but very largely, to his faithfulness in the construction and ordering of the tabernacle: because Exodus 40 goes over the ordering of the tabernacle in great detail, and time after time it says, “as Jehovah had commanded Moses”. I believe the faithfulness on the part of Moses in all God’s house refers largely to his faithfulness in the construction and ordering of the tabernacle. The tabernacle, of course, was God’s house; it was His dwelling place amongst the people, and Moses was particularly careful to see that every detail of what God required in His house was provided for. So that it is a matter for all of us in our local companies to see that things are according to the mind of God. Moses was faithful in all His house. Of course, he was particularly faithful too, in the matter of the golden calf as we know. He stood in the gate of the camp, and he said, “He that is for Jehovah, let him come to me”, Exod 32: 26. But my impression is, that when God says, “he is faithful in all my house”, He is especially

referring to the faithfulness with which every detail connected with the tabernacle was cared for by Moses. All that God required in His habitation was maintained by Moses. Faithfulness in God's house is something that God approves of; we may all covet to be characterised by it.

So He says "the man Moses was very meek". What made him meek? I asked that question a few minutes ago. Well I have often thought of it, and I have ventured to think it was because he had, on two occasions, forty days and forty nights on the mountain with God, Exod 24: 18; 34: 28. God showed him the pattern of the tabernacle, Exod 25: 9; 39: 32. He would no doubt explain it all to him; He would show him what the ark was to be; He would tell him what the ark was going to typify; He would tell him it was going to typify Jesus. He would say to Moses, 'Jesus will not be the kind of man that you are, Moses, He will be meek, He will be lowly, He will be obedient, He will not have any of the features that are natural to you'. I do not think I am imaginative or speculative in suggesting that God would show Moses with great interest all the detail of the tabernacle. Moses records it by the Spirit of God in Exodus, and I have no doubt He would tell Moses what it all meant; and when He came to speak about the ark, He would tell Moses what kind of man

the ark typified. I have no doubt Moses would feel, 'if that kind of man is the centre of God's system, then the sooner I take on the features of that man the better'. Anything out of keeping with it, would be out of keeping with that system. And so Moses, I feel sure, would become meek because he had spent so long with God, and because God would show him what He thought of Christ. So it says, "the man Moses was very meek, above all men that were upon the face of the earth".

"Then Jehovah spoke suddenly to Moses, and to Aaron, and to Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tent of meeting. And they went out, they three". It is remarkable how the Spirit of God records it. Miriam moved first at the beginning of the chapter, and she was all wrong, and Aaron apparently allowed himself to be influenced by her, and he was all wrong and now God is putting them right, "come out ye three", Moses and Aaron and Miriam. "And Jehovah came down in the pillar of the cloud ... and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known to him in a vision, I will speak to him in a dream. Not so my servant Moses: he is faithful in all my house. Mouth to mouth do I speak to him openly, and not in riddles; and the form of Jehovah doth he behold.

Why then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?" That is how God vindicates Moses. In the previous chapter Moses had been marked by a certain measure of weakness; he had expressed doubts as to whether God could feed the six hundred thousand men that were amongst Israel at that time, and keep them fed. "And Jehovah said to Moses, Hath Jehovah's hand become short?", Num 11: 23. If God asks us a question like that it is just to subdue us and to make us feel how small and foolish we are. "Now", He said, "shalt thou see whether my word will come to pass unto thee or not". But then while Moses is marked by a measure of weakness in chapter 11, God is not going to allow Miriam and Aaron to speak against him in chapter 12. He says 'No, he is My servant', "he is faithful in all my house". 'I will stand by him'. But it says, "the man Moses was very meek, above all men that were upon the face of the earth". Well that was a great feature that marked Moses, 'meekness'. Of course, every feature of moral perfection is seen in Jesus. Meekness is there peculiarly, and many other things too, faithfulness too, but meekness particularly, "I am meek and lowly in heart;" but every feature of moral excellence of course is found in Jesus.

Now we come to Esther, and we have the man Mordecai—"the man"; we have the Man Christ

Jesus, that is unique; and the man Moses, his meekness is the thing which the Spirit of God enlarges upon, and his faithfulness to God in all His house. These are the features of real manhood, meekness and faithfulness to God, two features of moral excellence which can be found in men, and these things are put before us, so that we should desire to take them on. Well now, in the book of Esther we have this man Mordecai. And it says in chapter 9 that he became continually greater; “the man Mordecai became continually greater”. Now what was the feature about Mordecai? The feature about him was that he would not bow to Amalek. He would not bow to Haman; Haman was an Amalekite, and God had said that He would have war with Amalek from generation to generation. God has no respect for Amalek; He is not going to tolerate Amalek. Amalek typifies sin working in the flesh. The flesh is that which Satan can work on, and God is not going to tolerate it; He says He will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

Mordecai was true to that; Haman was an Agagite, an Amalekite, and the king had raised him to a position of great honour, and the king had commanded that every one should bow to Haman; and Haman was very keen to see that every one did bow before him too, for that was the character of the man. In the presence of

these things Mordecai simply refuses to bow to him; he maintains God's judgment of the flesh. Now that is an important thing, dear brethren. I am saying this as much to myself as to you all, but I am sure we have all recognised that that is an important thing, that we do not allow the flesh, that we do not make provision for it. It says, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not take forethought for the flesh to fulfil its lusts", Rom 13: 14. That is what Scripture says, "put on the Lord Jesus Christ", it is a deliberate action of mind on your part, that we "put on the Lord Jesus Christ". His Lordship implies His authority; Jesus Christ is the kind of Man that He is, and we take it on; it is for us to take it on. Now Mordecai was one such; he would not bow at any price to Haman. Haman was the Amalekite and Mordecai was of a definite mind that cost what it might he would not bow to Haman.

Well now, we know the history of Mordecai; we know how the Lord supported him; we know how near the enemy got to him. We know that Haman got the length of actually having a gallows fifty cubits high constructed and made ready to hang Mordecai on it; it got as near as that, a gallows actually prepared on which Mordecai was to be hanged, but it got no further. In the end Haman was hanged on it, and Mordecai was exalted. It says the "man

Mordecai”; he just represents that feature of true manhood, that would not under any circumstances surrender to the flesh.

It is a constant exercise to us all, while we are here, because the flesh is with us all the time. The Spirit is against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit. But God has given us His Holy Spirit and therefore why should we make provision for the flesh to satisfy its lusts? The great thing is that in the power of the Holy Spirit we have liberty to move toward God at any moment, at any time; we have ability to appreciate Christ; we have ability to appreciate the things of God. Wonderful things are open to us in the Spirit of God, and therefore we want to be careful that we do not in any way grieve the Holy Spirit. It says, “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which ye have been sealed for the day of redemption”, Eph 4: 30. And so true manhood for a believer lies in this among other things at any rate, that he does not allow the flesh, and that is what Mordecai stands for pre-eminently, and it says, “the man Mordecai became continually greater”.

Well, that is all I have to say; it is a question of manhood, learnt first of all, and supremely, in Christ, but then we get these other examples; “the man Moses”, and “the man Mordecai”, and if it is put that way, it is intended to impress us

with the features of *manhood* which shine in those persons.

May the Lord bless His word to us.

This address is taken from a periodical, 'Living Waters', in which the place and date when it was delivered are not given.

NAMES

Luke 10: 19, 20

Revelation 2: 17

1 John 1: 1, 11, 12

2 Timothy 1: 1-15

I read these scriptures with the desire to express a few thoughts on the subject of names, having in mind that every believer has a name according to divine purpose and grace by which he is known and loved, but also bearing in mind that each of us may, and I suppose each does, in greater or less degree, acquire a name in connection with our relation to the testimony here, a name that may be honourable or that may be the reverse; but each of us will acquire a name of some sort.

Now the idea of names appears early in Scripture and goes right through. You will remember that at the outset when darkness covered the face of the deep, God said, "Let there be light". And there was light. And God saw the light that it was good; and God divided between the light and the darkness. Then He gives names. It says, "God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night", thus indicating at the outset that He intended that things should be well defined, that there should be no mingling of things that are morally different, which is one great idea connected

with a name. A name is that by which the person or thing named is known, and can be identified. In the thought of God a name is descriptive of a person or thing, so that our names according to God not only designate us, but will be descriptive of us. It is well to bear in mind that God loves distinctiveness and we should be concerned as to distinctiveness, for many of us are apt to be very indefinite in our thoughts of divine things, and in our exercises, but God loves definiteness and distinctiveness, and that is one great thought connected with names.

Even God Himself has been pleased to take various names in order that His people should get distinct apprehensions of His glory. I suppose the greatest name is that which is characteristic of the present moment, The Name (one Name) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. A very blessed name that is? Involving in its meaning, the way that divine Persons have moved with thoughts of love which They have Themselves conceived; the way They have moved, taking up relative positions and relationships with a view to God being known in the character and relationship of Father, and with a view to ourselves, the sons of men, being brought into the knowledge and enjoyment of this relationship, and given ability to respond to it with the affections and

intelligence that are proper to it. A marvellous conception of the blessed God! A conception, the only explanation of which is that God is love, absolutely; and hence divine Persons having conceived such a thought, have moved out, each taking His own relative place and position in the scheme of divine revelation, and in so doing, showing that love was active, love moving divine Persons in perfect unity of mind and thought. So that one divine Person became a Man, and as such took up the relationship of Son to His Father, and having accomplished redemption secures the ground on which sonship may be given to the sons of men; another divine Person comes in as the Spirit, to indwell those whom God takes up, to bring home to their souls the blessedness of the light in which God is revealed, and to cause them to respond to that light according to the desire of the blessed God. So the more we dwell on this precious name of God, as it is said, “baptising them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”, the more we are impressed with how really and blessedly God is love, and God intends that it should be known by us. He desires that we should be “rooted and founded in love”; and again it says, “he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him”. God has nothing less in His mind than that His people should be brought so

consciously into the knowledge of Himself that they dwell there in a fixed, immovable way. Now that is just a little of the blessedness connected with that Name; one of the many names which God has taken, but I think you will see that it illustrates the idea of definiteness connected with the thought of names, and God desires that our knowledge of Him should be definite in accordance with the thought of His own heart, and that we should be brought into that knowledge with ability to respond to it suitably.

Now coming to the scripture I read in Luke 10, the Lord says to the seventy who returned with joy because the demons were subject to them through His name, "I give you the power of treading upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall in anywise injure you. Yet in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subjected to you, but rejoice that your names are written in the heavens". The Lord would have us rejoice in this. He says to the disciples, You are known in heaven, you are known there by name, "rejoice that your names are written in the heavens". Indeed we know each one of His own is known personally by name, as it says, "he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out", and further that the names of His people are borne before God upon the shoulders of our great High Priest—the names according to their birth, but here the Lord

says, “your names are written in the heavens”, and He would have us rejoice in it.

And then as though He would set out the idea, we immediately read, “In the same hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit”. What did He rejoice in? He rejoiced in the sovereign will of His Father. He says, “I praise thee, Father ... for thus has it been well-pleasing in thy sight”. He would indicate that first of all, above everything, He would have His people here rejoicing in the sovereign thoughts of love of the blessed God. This is a word for us, surely, because this section of Luke’s gospel, chapters 10 and 11, has in view what the Lord is going to secure in places—in “every city and place where he himself was about to come”. It has in view what is to be secured in places where the ministry comes—what there is to be for God in London, and in every place where the testimony has come and how it is to be cared for, enriched, and prayed for. And here the Lord indicates that whereas we might be inclined to rejoice at success in service, at blessing in the gospel, or anything connected with the power of the Lord’s name, we are rather to rejoice that our names are written in heaven. He would have the saints preserved in their assembly exercises and service, in the place where they are, in the light and joy of their heavenly portion according to divine purpose, and so He speaks of the

wondrous revelation which has come to light in His own Person. He says, "All things have been delivered to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is but the Father, indicating who He is in His Person, and there is that in His Person which is inscrutable, but He says "no one knows who the Son is but the Father and who the Father is but the Son and "he to whomsoever the Son is pleased to reveal him". He is speaking there in manhood, and speaking of the wondrous revelation that has now come out in His own Person according to divine purpose, and as regards ourselves as taken up in relation to it, our name are written in heaven. It is purely according to divine purpose and grace, but He would have us rejoice in it. "In the same hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit". He would set the example for the assemblies; they are to be formed as a result of the ministry, and to be characterised by a rejoicing which has as its spring the light in our souls of the blessedness of God. This is one side of the truth connected with names.

The subject of names is a very extensive one in Scripture, but I wanted particularly to speak of another side connected more with our responsibility, or how we are conducting ourselves in relation to the truth of God here on earth. The fact that the testimony of God is here, and that it is here in conditions of reproach

and testing, becomes the great test, the great touchstone, so to speak, of all those who are brought into contact with it. We stand or fall, if one may say, from this standpoint, the standpoint of responsibility, by reference to the way we move in relation to the testimony of God here, and in that connection we acquire a name, either a name that is honourable, or a name that may be the reverse.

When one speaks on the line of a name that is acquired, I need hardly remind you, dear brethren, that there is one Name that is above every name. It is put in that way in Philippians 2, as given, granted, to Jesus. You remember the passage, it says, "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but emptied himself, taking a bondman's form, taking his place in the likeness of men; and having been found in figure as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross", and it goes on to say "Wherefore", that is to say, on which account, "also God highly exalted him, and granted him a name, that which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly and earthly and infernal beings". Now it is put in that way,

beloved, that the name there given to Jesus is

not taken by Him of personal right, nor exactly is it connected with the height of exaltation according to divine purpose as we have in Ephesians I, where it says, “he set him down at his right hand in the heavenlies, above every principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name named”. It is not put in that way in Philippians. It is put as being the divine answer to the exceeding moral excellence set out in Jesus, and it is put that way in order that the impress of it might rest upon our spirits, and might become rooted in our minds, in order that, as the apostle says, “ye may judge of and approve the things that are more excellent”.

It has been said by one who was honoured in the testimony of the Lord that the scriptures that are most familiar to us are those that yield the most, and this scripture is very familiar to us. Let us think it over, and dwell on the power of that word “Wherefore”. Think of the immensity of the position, every heavenly, and earthly and infernal being is going to bow at the name of Jesus, in order that it may be demonstrated publicly throughout the whole of creation that the mind which is in Christ Jesus is a mind of such moral excellence that God has decreed He must have the highest place in the universe. It is

intended to have a present formative effect upon us in our coming already to delight in it as excellent.

In the remainder of the chapter we get two names, Timotheus and Epaphroditus—names of brothers who had come under the impress of the mind which was in Christ Jesus, and were moving somewhat in the same spirit, and hence they could be named; named as marked by those features that God records as so excellent that He has decreed that even infernal beings shall bow to that Name. Those who have figured largely in the history of man's world, who may have acquired empires by might and conquest, by bloodshed, even they will bow to the name of the One who "humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross". Now the light of this is intended to have its effect upon us. If we have in our souls the light, as in Jesus where He is, of what is morally excellent, it will preserve us from any kind of self-seeking, either in the world or in the assembly. We shall come to recognise that what is morally excellent in the sight of God, is the mind that has been delineated in Christ.

I now turn to the other scriptures. What I had in mind in the passage in Revelation 2 is that before there can be any acquiring of a name that is approved of God in connection with the testimony here publicly, there must be the

acquiring of a name that is connected with secret and private overcoming. That is what comes out in Revelation 2; the great value and importance of what is secret and what is hidden as underlying all that is public if this is to stand. Now the address to Pergamos, from which this verse which I read is taken, is a very important section of Revelation 2 and 3. It is true it refers historically to a phase in the assembly's history that is past, but we are to listen to the Spirit's voice to the assemblies, i.e., the Spirit has always a present living voice and can always take up and apply that which may have had its bearing primarily years ago; and the address to Pergamos is of great importance because it contemplates that phase in the assembly's history when worldliness began to come in, for God says to Pergamos, "thou hast there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a snare before the sons of Israel ... and commit fornication". It was not as yet openly taught. In the next assembly, Thyatira, it was openly taught, but at this stage it was just held by some; the seed was there in the hearts of some of God's people, that friendliness with the world was permissible, and possibly even desirable, because that was the doctrine of Balaam, and Satan was behind Balaam's action. He taught Balak to place a stumbling block before the people of God. Satan was behind this

doctrine; it came from a prophet, from one who had a standing publicly as having the mind of God, but he became the tool to introduce elements of corruption among the people of God. It may be there are some among us who secretly hold such a doctrine, who would not perhaps publicly proclaim it, but hold it. If there are such, the Lord would open your eyes to understand that Satan is behind that thought. Satan is behind it with the desire to corrupt the people of God. Balaam had been compelled by the Spirit of God previously to say in regard of God's people that they should dwell alone. God, who separated light from darkness, intends that His people should be separated completely from the world in all its phases, and anything contrary to that is the suggestion of the enemy.

Now where these things were obtaining, the Lord finds an overcomer, and one would remark that there is a man named in the letter to this assembly, "Antipas my faithful witness". It is remarkable that he should come in in an address to an assembly at a time which was not specially marked by persecution—for the world was beginning to patronise the church. I suppose it shows that however the world may outwardly change its attitude towards the saints, however it may take on a fresh garb of friendliness, its attitude is really unchanged, so that where there

was an overcomer at Pergamos, the real attitude of the world as hostile came into evidence, and it is well for us to understand that. We live in days when the world is very appealing and when Christianity may appear comparatively easy, yet the world is just as much opposed to the saints of God as it was when they were persecuted. This faithful witness comes to light in Pergamos. Now to the overcomer the Lord says, "To him that overcomes, to him will I give of the hidden manna; and I will give to him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows but he that receives it".

The Lord would encourage us to cultivate that which is secret and hidden, that which has its springs in what is solely between the Lord and ourselves; that which is hidden and secret must underlie anything that is public, if it is to stand. So the Lord speaks of the overcomer that he should be given to eat of the hidden manna; that is, Christ appreciated and cherished in the soul in a private way, appreciated in that way in the grace and lowliness, and dependence, in which He moved through this scene in which we are, uncorrupted by it, living daily by the word of God and glorifying God in His dependence and obedience. Now the Lord sees the overcomer, and that one shall be fed with the hidden manna, and not only so, He will give him a new name,

“and I will give to him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows but he that receives it”. What is there to be more coveted, dear brethren, than to have the sense in secret of the Lord’s approval, “a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows but he that receives it”. The outcome of going on in. private and personal appreciation of Christ, feeding on Him who has been here wholly for the pleasure of God, in the very scene in which we move, is not only that one becomes an overcomer but such an one will have that which is greatly to be cherished, the secret sense of the Lord’s own approval.

In the other scriptures we come to that which is more public, and I read 2 Timothy 4 because that epistle shows that individuals come into evidence and are taken account of by reference to their relation to the testimony of our Lord. The apostle urges energy. He says to Timothy, “Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me”. In the closing days of the testimony here he would urge diligence on every one of us.

While on the subject of diligence I would remark that Peter, too, in his closing epistle, when days were darkening, emphasises the thought of diligence. Here the apostle says, “Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this

present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica". What a name to have, beloved! I suppose Demas was a true saint, having his name according to divine purpose, having his own place in the heart of Christ; but what sorrow he would cause to Christ! "Demas hath forsaken me". Not that he had done anything outwardly wrong, but he judged the path to be too narrow, and gave up the distinctive feature of Paul's ministry, the heavenly calling of the assembly. He had ceased to rejoice that his name was written in heaven. "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world". Is there anyone here possibly thinking that the path is too narrow? God forbid that you should come under such a designation as this—"Demas hath forsaken me". Is it not better to covet that we should acquire, through divine grace, a name that meets with divine approval?

Notice the names that follow. The apostle says, "Only Luke is with me", and then, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry". It is remarkable that these two men should be brought together. Four gospels were written, two by apostles and two by servants who were not apostles, and these two are found with Paul at the close. They are men who have been feeding on Christ, for only by feeding on Christ would they be qualified under the Spirit's hand to write gospels to

present Christ according to the light in which they had apprehended Him. Only one who had closely followed Christ could write a gospel; and what a man Luke was! I think we may safely assert that Luke was a man who would pray. He speaks of Jesus praying, more than anyone else; he tells us that Jesus withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed, Luke 5: 16, and on another occasion that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God, chap 6: 13. In chapter 9 he tells us "he went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed the fashion of his countenance became different". It is only Luke who tells us that it was as Jesus was praying that He was transfigured, and he had doubtless received by the Spirit a distinctive impression of the kingdom of God. The Lord had said to the disciples that there were some standing there who should not taste death until they had seen the kingdom of God, and as Peter and James and John went up the mount of transfiguration they would expect to see the kingdom of God, and they saw Him praying, and would receive the impression that the power of the kingdom of God would connect itself with a praying man. Luke records it for us, and Paul in his service insists on the necessity for prayer, and I have no doubt he found in Luke a man who went through right to the end in the intelligent

appreciation of the truth of the heavenly calling, and supported the apostle in unceasing prayer.

Now as to Mark. He was, I believe, one who had learned in Jesus absolute purity of motive. He had had to judge in himself impurity of motive; he had, alas, failed, he turned back from the work and had going back to Jerusalem. He had not been marked by purity of motive when he started out. His uncle, too, had not been marked by purity of motive when he went to Cyprus and took him with him. But Mark writes his gospel. He does not tell us Jesus was praying on the holy mount. He gives us the feature that impressed him, and he tells us, "his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them". He was impressed with the exceeding purity of Jesus, the absolute singleness and purity of heart in all His movements, and as judging what was contrary to this in himself, he became profitable to Paul. It is well for us to covet names like these. Luke is named in an honourable way here, in connection with continuing with the testimony right to the end, and Mark is named, and Tychicus is named, and then another man is named Alexander the coppersmith. The apostle said, He did me much evil. How terrible to think of it. How challenging the testimony of our Lord is, and it tests us where we are, as to whether we are

single-hearted or whether, alas, we may even be opposed. Anyone who is not single-hearted who like Demas turns aside, gets a name accordingly. He becomes known by that name, a name that must cause grief to the heart of Christ. The name of Alexander the coppersmith has been handed down century after century, that all the saints may understand that the names of those who oppose the testimony of our Lord are recorded.

In the epistle of John it is not so much the testimony publicly in connection with the truth of the heavenly calling of the assembly as given to Paul, but here it is a question of the truth of the children of God here on earth, and the affections proper to them as here expressive of God, and in this epistle, too, we get names. Gaius is named in an honourable way, but he was not, so far as we can gather, a prominent servant, but one who was walking in the truth, not only stating or teaching it, but walking in it. The truth as to God, that He is love, had taken hold of Gaius, and he was walking in it. He was receiving without partiality the servants who came along, showing them hospitality and sending them on their way worthily of God. He was one who supported the truth in that way, and he is named in an honourable way by the Spirit of God in order that we may see that the presence here of the truth of God involves a

challenge to us, as to the extent to which we ourselves are walking in it. Then the apostle makes mention of another man—Diotrephes. It would be a sad thing for any of us to have a name like that. His name is placed on record that we may be warned against the tendency with us to seek a place of dominance among the people of God, when the One in whom the light of God has come to us is One who made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him a bondman's form. But Diotrephes acquired a name that was the very opposite of that way of love.

But then, what is our attitude to be? The apostle's word to Gaius is very encouraging. He says, do not allow his action to make you resentful in your spirit, do not let it raise in your spirit a kind of condemning spirit. He says, "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good". With the light of God as it has come to us in Christ, let it be that which we follow after, that is what is good; that which is evil will be exposed, but the apostle's word to Gaius was to—go after that which is good. "He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God". Then he brings forward another name, "Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true". He does not give us much as to

Demetrius, but he was so in keeping with the truth that he not only had a good report of all men, but also of the truth itself. He was a brother who in his movements was expressive of God.

That is all I had to say: it is only touching the fringe of this great subject of names, but I hope it is enough to induce a desire with us to have a name that God can approve. There is no thought in these names of ourselves being glorified. You remember in Revelation, the twenty-four elders each have a crown, which they cast before the throne and bow before Him that sits upon it. Whatever distinction the saints may acquire from fidelity in the testimony, all is made contributory to the glory of Christ, and so when the Lord Himself comes He will come to be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe. Any distinction that is of God that may be secured by anyone of us is a part of that in which the Lord Himself will be glorified when He comes, and at the same time a part of that in which God Himself will be expressed when the holy city comes down from heaven having the glory of God.

This address is taken from a pamphlet in which the place and date when it was delivered are not given.

SHARING THE FATHER'S DELIGHT IN CHRIST

Luke 3: 21, 22

2 Peter 1: 16-18

I think these scriptures would give us an impression, dear brethren, first of all of the positive delight which the Father has in Christ, and then how He would share that with us. That is a wonderful thing to contemplate, how the Father is prepared to share with us the pleasure that He Himself finds in Jesus. So we find in this third chapter of Luke's gospel that Jesus was baptised, "baptised and praying". It says, "all the people having been baptised and Jesus having been baptised and praying". Well now, these are simple statements but they mean a good deal; "Jesus having been baptised", it is a wonderful thing that Jesus should be baptised. There was no necessity for it from a personal point of view, but the people had come in a spirit of repentance and had accepted baptism as the expression of that repentance, and Jesus in wondrous grace identifies Himself with them, so that He Himself was baptised. It says, "and Jesus having been baptised"; and then it adds, "and praying". Jesus having been baptised in identifying Himself in wonderful grace with the repentance that marked the people who had come to be baptised, and then it says, "and

praying”: “Jesus having been baptised and praying”.

Well now, prayer, if it is genuine prayer, is the expression of dependence on God; but where do you get the most complete expression of dependence on God? I believe you get the most complete expression of dependence on God when Jesus came into the world as a newborn Babe. That has impressed me greatly, dear brethren: I doubt if you can find anywhere any greater expression of dependence on God than you see in a newborn babe. A newborn babe is dependent on others for everything, everything, and hence a newborn babe is the absolute expression of dependence; and when One of the Godhead came into human condition He came in in that way: not in self-confidence, not in self-sufficiency or self-assertiveness but as a newborn Babe. Now that should impress us, dear brethren; if any of us tend naturally to be self-sufficient, self-reliant, self-assertive, let us recognise that the way that Christ came into the world was as a newborn Babe; and that means that dependence, I think I am right in saying, is the first feature of moral excellence in the human condition. You might say, ‘Well, surely obedience would be the first expression’. Well, I would not quarrel with that, but you do not expect a newborn babe to be obedient. You cannot look for obedience in a newborn babe; it

is not capable of it; it needs to be developed a little before the sense of responsibility is there. But a newborn babe is essentially an expression of absolute dependence; and that shows that dependence is the first feature of moral excellence in the human condition that God looks for. What a contrast to the world around where men are self-assertive and self-reliant, and what God loves to see is dependence.

Well now, let us just allow that to sink in, dear brethren. I realise that as I say these things you may say to me, ‘Well, are you dependent?’. And that is the normal result of having these things brought before us; they present a challenge to us, and we seek grace to accept the challenge; because if God sets out that a certain feature of things is morally excellent in His sight in manhood, then it is for us as His creatures taken up in infinite grace to see to it that the Spirit is allowed liberty to develop those features in us. So it says here, “Jesus having been baptised and praying, that the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form as a dove upon him; and a voice came out of heaven. Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I have found my delight”. But now, that is a positive statement on the part of God that He found in Jesus positive delight, and it was in Jesus in human condition and as praying; notice that, as praying. “Jesus having been baptised”,

that is He identified Himself in baptism with the repentant people. A wonderful thing—He has done that in the most absolute way when He gave Himself for us, and bore those sins that repentance expresses acceptance of, a wonderful thing, and so Christ has gone that way. And then it says, “a voice came out of heaven, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I have found my delight”.

But then Peter, in his epistle, carries us somewhat further; he says, “he received from God the Father honour and glory, such a voice”, such a voice; not merely a voice, but such a voice, as though on the holy mount Peter and James and John were privileged to hear the very tones of the voice in which the Father spoke to Jesus; “such a voice being uttered to him by the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son”. At the baptism of Jesus the voice says “Thou”, but now on the holy mount the voice says “This”; that is to say, the Father is addressing Peter, and James, and John; He is, if I may so say, addressing us and calling our attention, calling the attention of others, Peter, and James, and John, to the pleasure which He Himself found in Jesus, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight”. So Peter says, “this voice we heard uttered from heaven, being with him on the holy mountain”. Before that he says, “such a voice”. When we think of what actually

happened on the holy mountain, we can see the change that has come over Peter. What actually happened on the holy mountain was that Peter said, “it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said” (Luke 9: 33); that is what scripture says, “not knowing what he said”. But Peter rejects all that, he lets all that sink into oblivion, and so we do not want to bring it back again from that point of view; what we want to concentrate on is the exceeding moral glory of what actually happened when it is divested of all the wrong thoughts that Peter at one time attached to it. We are allowed now to see that Jesus “received from God the Father honour and glory, such a voice”—such a voice, the Father’s own voice and the Father’s own tones of voice, “being uttered to him by the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight; and this voice we heard uttered from heaven, being with him on the holy mountain”. Well, we have not been literally with Him on the holy mountain, but I think in this day of the Spirit we are privileged to have some entrance into what Peter, and James, and John were given entrance into. We can get some impression by the Spirit of what that voice was—“such a voice”, and of what it said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my

delight". It means that the Father is willing to share His own pleasure, His own joy in Christ; He is willing to share it with us. He wants to share it with us. That is the wonderful thing; that is what is possible in virtue of the indwelling Holy Spirit; wonderful thing.

The more we touch of these things, dear brethren, the more we increase in our appreciation of the Holy Spirit Himself, that He has taken His abode in us in order that these holy things of God might be known by us in actuality. Well, that is our portion through grace. We can well rejoice in it, and God grant that we may increase in our appreciation of it. We do not want to be occupied with things that are not worth being occupied with. Christ has already gone "up above all the heavens, that He might fill all things", Eph 4: 10. That day is not far distant, and there is not going to be room for anything that is not of Christ. Let us bear that in mind. Let the younger brethren here bear that in mind that it may regulate their outlook that there is not going to be anything remaining that is not of Christ. He has gone up already "above all the heavens, that he might fill all things".

So let it be that He obtains the place in our hearts that the Father intends that He should obtain, and as He does obtain that we shall find that we are more and more at home in the

Father's presence because we are being given to share by the Holy Spirit that in which the Father Himself finds His full delight.

ABERDEEN

September 1969

Books of A J Gardiner's ministry

Books published by Stow Hill Bible and Tract Depot

Piety and Other Addresses—*New Zealand, 1946/47*

Christianity as Characterised by Mystery—*Australia, 1947*

Christianity a System of Glory—*Birmingham, 1948*

Education in View of the Assembly—*Barbados, 1949/50*

Eternal Life—*Dorking and Portsmouth, 1951*

The Worship of God—*London, July 1953*

The Substantiality of Christianity—*London, July 1954*

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Part 7—*articles from November 1954 to November 1957*

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Part 9—*articles from March 1962 to September 1969*

Part 10—*notes of three-day meetings in—*

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