

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

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ASSEMBLY LIGHT

John 14: 2,3; 20: 22,23; Genesis 24: 53, 61-67

R.T. We often say, and rightly, that we seek in our time to walk in the light of the assembly. The day we are in makes it increasingly necessary, I think, that we should speak often about what that light is. We are so prone to revert to something less, and to walk below what that light is. Not that we could compass it in this time, yet we could maybe get an impression of some of the glory of that light.

One prominent element would be the heavenly feature that marks the assembly. Other scriptures were in mind and maybe Paul's ministry would be predominantly what we should be thinking of - maybe it would be covered in the scripture in Genesis - but Peter got the impression about it in that sheet in Acts 10. It says it came from heaven and went back to heaven: it took place thrice as if to leave an indelible impression with him that the dispensation that was coming in was heavenly.

The Lord refers in John to many abodes, but there seems something distinctive about this place that He has prepared. He says, "I go to prepare you a place". I think that speaking of these things would have a practical effect on us in the way things are done and the power in which things are done. The Lord breathing into them, I think, would produce something internally in the way of character, something of His own power, His own life, that would come out in character through the dispensation, so that we would do things as heavenly persons, the heavenly stamp and the grace and wealth of the dispensation would come into all that is done. What confidence the Lord has in these persons! He says "whosoever sins ye remit" - that is final - "they are remitted". So there are resources and power in the Spirit as we see in Genesis, to maintain in a practical, substantial way the light that has come in in our day.

Every family will have its own distinctiveness, but the assembly is in it now. The other families await their glory. I understand that the place is prepared as He has gone in: it has established our place

and it is fine at times just to look in and see our place. Mr Wells says in his hymn (hymn 83)

"Every circle gathered round Thee
Yields of Christ some beauteous ray"

There will be those many families that Paul speaks of but here is this family that is in it now. Israel awaits it, that would come into Genesis 24, too, that Rebecca goes into Sarah's tent, the place that was empty, she is filling it now. We are to have something of the glory and freshness of all these things that Israel is yet going to come into, in our souls now.

E.C.B. While the assembly is not formally taken up in John's gospel, does it help in what you are saying that it was written after the light of the assembly had been given, so that the reference to 'you' - "I go to prepare you a place" - would be looked at in the light of what the Lord had given through Paul before John wrote this.

R.T. Yes, I thought of that. I thought in John that we had the Lord addressing the concentration of the thing, as it were. He says "you"; He is not speaking to the world. This section in John is a private section, is it not, so that it is the personnel that form the assembly. I think He is leaving an impression on them that while they were going to be left here, their place really was up there. Do not you think that as we speak about our place, we will fill out our place down here far better?

E.C.B. When He says "and shall receive you to myself", that is something that belongs only to the assembly, is it not? It must imply the rapture which the Lord does not dwell on in the synoptic gospels, but John brings it in here.

R.T. Yes. It is something that we would always be looking for, is it not? "Shall receive you" brings out the substantiality, that what He is going to receive is entirely suited to the place. Is not that what is being worked out now, that the place is prepared? I think we do well at times to abstract ourselves and look at the glory of the place.

Hebrews would expand it, the great Priest that has gone in: that word is very affecting that He has gone into heaven for us, "into

heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us", Heb 9: 24. What a lift it gives to our souls in the breakdown that we are in, to look in and see that we have a place there that nothing can ever touch.

J.C.E. Do you think the great importance of having the light of the thing, and as you are saying now, the light of the assembly, is that we can grow up to it? I wondered if this chapter showed in its detail as it goes on in the enquiries that the apostles make, that they were gradually growing up to the truth that the Lord was bringing in.

R.T. Yes, I think in the beginning of Acts we see that how these men moved. "Silver and gold" he says: "I have not; but what I have this give I to thee", Acts 3: 6. He had some sense of his place in Christ, had he not? And they could move down here amidst all the confusion and the pressures that were against them in the light and the joy of what their true place is.

H.A.H. In regard to the reference to the breakdown, is it right to think that John brings in the life in which the light is answered to in such a day as ours?

R.T. He does indeed. The scripture in John 20 would give us the power for that life, would it not? "He breathed into them". It is the life of an ascended Man, is it not? He is ascending in John 20 and He gives them the power from that position, that they may fill out the details of that light in the power of life.

A.J.E.W. I was thinking of the force of this word, "were it not so, I had told you". That suggests the immediate import of what the Lord has in His mind. It was necessary for them to know it immediately.

That would reinforce what you are saying as to looking in now and seeing what our place is. It is an essential ingredient, so to say, in the continuance of the work of God in the saints.

R.T. Yes. He says "there are many abodes". So that we are to have some impression that God is looking after everything. The whole climax of divine operations will be treasured in the Father's house, will it not? As you say, "were it not so, I had told you". So He is inducing confidence. He is trying to wean them from the

pressures of the testimony and the sorrows that may come in, to fix their gaze on something that is settled, that He has told them about.

So in the joy and light of that place we can tread our path here.

C.R.B. Does this stand related to the Son of man being glorified and God glorifying Him immediately? It all seems to flow out of the Lord viewing the great work on the cross as completed, and God glorifying Him immediately is really the assembly brought in, is it not? There is an area in which Christ is glorified and yet God is glorified too.

R.T. So that gives the assembly some peculiar glory, does it not? I was thinking of the whole chapter in Genesis 24, "bring not my son thither again". As soon as Isaac in his glory comes into view, Rebecca comes into view as entirely suited to the glory of that man? What a privilege to have a place like that. I think the joy of that - as we say we walk in the light of it and the joy of it is to come to bear on us in the circumstances in which we are.

E.P. Do you think the expression "receive you to myself" would imply that what is received is altogether suitable and pleasurable to the One who receives it?

R.T. Yes, I am sure that is right. It is very substantial. It would be like Rebecca, that what is received is entirely suited, indeed, it adds some lustre, some glory and comfort, and joy to the position. If we could just be established that our place is prepared! It is said that every other family awaits its day, every other family awaits something else happening, but our place is already secured, is it not? And in the joy of it we will fill out our place here all the better.

E.M.W. It seems that the recovery in which we are privileged to have part was given a tremendous impetus by the light of the fact that Christ's place is the assembly's place. You are thinking the Spirit would maintain that in its power and reality in our souls. The effect the light of this had on Mr Stoney struck me "Yon heaven is our home", (hymn 7). It affected him and the Spirit would affect us by this light, would it not?

R.T. We used to sing that more often than we do. I think the fact of it should be more in our souls, "yon heaven". But the Lord in the intimacy which He brings in in John, would not put it very far away.

In times like this we can speak together, reminding ourselves of how' near that place is, of something of the glory of the place. As we speak of it, something of it rubs off on us, does it not?

D.J.H. The fact that He says "I am coming again" in the present, not 'I will come again' emphasises that, does it not, that the place is already there now and we can enjoy it together?

R.T. Yes. I think it is very important to lay hold of that, that everything has been done. To say again, every other family awaits something else to be done, but as far as the assembly is concerned, everything has been done; it awaits the rapture, as we know, for the actuality of it, but this is the Lord's attitude throughout the whole dispensation, "I am coming again and shall receive you to myself".

He does not say, 'I am coming to adjust things', He does not say, 'I am coming to start up the prophetic calendar', He just says "I am coming... and shall receive you to myself". The expectancy of that would give some colour to us down here, would it not?

E.C.B. Would you think that when at the end of the long chapter 6 Jesus says "If then ye see the Son of man ascending up where he was before", He might have had in mind to go on to open out this area of things. As He says later "I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now". It is clear that at the end of chapter 6 they could not bear more - "this word is hard". I was thinking of the reference to the Son of man being glorified; does not the Son of man ascending up where He was before open the way for the assembly to be brought to light?

R.T. Yes. I was thinking of Stephen too. He sees that, does he not, and the very next chapter is Paul coming in, for the expanding of it. The assembly comes in as His complement, it is suited to that glory. I think we will see that as we speak of Rebecca, that as soon as Isaac in his glory comes into view, she is mentioned. Something

comes in that is formed by the Spirit that is entirely suited to that place.

A.A.B. It is interesting that when Moses had pitched the tent outside the camp, and he says "Let me... see thy glory", Exod 33 :18, the Lord says, "There is a place by me", (v 21). Would that fit at all, do you think? You spoke of intimacy just now: that is the assembly's place, is it not?

R.T. The breathing in John 20 is a very intimate thing, "He breathed into them". I think it emphasises the nearness of this family. Every family will have some feature of Christ; whatever has been worked out of Christ in that dispensation, will be substantiated in that family, but there is a fulness about this because of the glory, as we have said, of the Son of man, is there not ?

A.A.B. And in that sense there is the present fulfilment of divine purpose, "The place... that thy hands have prepared", (Exod 15: 17) agrees with this verse.

R.T. Yes, I think that is something to speak of that brings us to Ephesians which is really the light of the assembly, and that was that He chose us before the world's foundation. The assembly is not an afterthought, it is not something that has come in as an emergency measure, but it was planned before the world's foundation. It has come to light in our day, dear brethren, the light of it has come in this day in which we are. How we should value and cherish the distinctiveness of that light.

A.J.E.W. Does it help to compare this thought of receiving "you to myself" with the Ephesian touch, "present the assembly to himself glorious", Eph 5: 27? There you have the matter as the ultimate fruit of the Lord's own service in love in the course of this present time. Here the great end in its excellence is presented to us. Paul shows us the end in a different respect, does he not, but maintaining still the unique place of the Person in reference to it all.

R.T. You can understand the hope that this must have stirred in the breasts of these disciples, "shall receive you to myself". Whatever day you care to think of in the dispensation the Lord's attitude is "I

am coming again and shall receive you to myself". What a history is covered in that, but what a climax, "shall receive you to myself".

A.E.B. Would that represent the many dispensations then?

R.T. Yes, I think it refers to the families that Paul speaks of in heaven and earth, all blessed of the Father. These abodes would all come in to the Father's house. The Father's house, I understand it, is a great universal idea, it includes the universe, I think Mr Raven said. In that house there will be every family, everything will be housed, suited to God. But in the midst of all that, you may say at the very centre of that, is this "I go to prepare you a place". I think that that place should be very attractive to us.

C.R.B. The Supper is the unique privilege of the assembly, is it not? Is that where we particularly touch this in current experience?

R.T. I think that is very interesting to speak of. Certain things are distinctive about the assembly; that is one of them, as you say, and that antedates this verse, does it not? "Shall receive you to myself". Do we not get a touch there, the Supper like a gateway into being received to Himself, would you say?

C.R.B. The working out of the light of the assembly primarily involves the maintenance of the Supper, does it not ?

R.T. I think so. So that there are many who are of the assembly and yet the light of the assembly is not attractive to them. They have given up some of these things. I thought that speaking of it would revive this kind of thing in our hearts in the breakdown. As you say the Supper lies at the centre of Christian experience.

E.M.W. It is interesting that in a way it was breakdown here. Judas had gone out and Peter was about to deny Him and they were all about to forsake Him and flee; there is that side of it, and yet this is so stabilising to the soul, is it not? The Lord speaks with absolute certainty, no 'ifs' or 'buts'.

R.T. I thought that was very comforting, because the Lord was looking, you may say, down the dispensation of time and He knew what was going to come in in the Acts and in all these years that

have come in between. But I think He left this word for us that we may, as you say, come to stability - "a place". Now who could affect this place? Can my history affect it? Can anything that has come in in the ways of me n affect this place? No. He says "I go to prepare you a place". The Person that has prepared it has given colour to it. It is a glorified Man that has prepared the place, a Man, who, as it says "has been received up in glory", 1 Tim 3: 16. He has prepared the place. It has not been left to angels, it has not depended on our state, it has depended on nothing of man, He Himself, a glorified Man, has prepared the place. No breakdown can ever reach it or ever upset it. But then the Spirit is here, I think, to bring the lustre, the glory of that place to be resident in our hearts.

E.C.M. It is there the Lord says "Let not your heart be troubled". There is no trouble if we get through to this area where He is.

R.T. No. Many of our loved ones even say that the light of the assembly is not workable today. And many others may even profess the light of it and walk in ways that are foreign to a heavenly dispensation. But I think the distinctiveness of the assembly as a heavenly family - we may say, the heavenly family, as Paul says "such as the heavenly one, such also the heavenly ones", 1 Cor 15: 48 - should lay hold of us more.

D.E.B. The question that Thomas asks, "how can we know the way?" remains a current question, does it not, for all of us?

R.T. I think if we know the Person, we will know the way. I think that the question comes up in our day. Whom is our confidence in? Many have made so much of the recovery depending on men, but the recovery has not depended on men, it has been carried through in the power of the Spirit and the recovery depends on Christ where He is and the Spirit here. Nothing can upset that, can it? Why should not we know the way? If we know the Man who has gone in and what He has done and the place He has prepared, I think we will know the way. I do not think we are ever left without guidance and I think this should be our guide that there is a Man in the glory, in the worth and majesty of His own Person gone in, and the fact that He

has gone in has given me a place up there: not only me, but He has established a family who belong there. The present time is provisional - I think that Mr Taylor taught that - but to fill out our place rightly in the provisional time I think we should know what our eternal portion is.

J.C.E. Do you think we probably know more instinctively than we know in detail? The Lord said distinctly of these that they knew the way, they knew where He was going and they knew the way, which must be an absolute thing, it was in their consciousnesses but they had to be taught the detail of it.

R.T. I think what tests us is whom our confidence is in. How often it has been in men! But if our confidence is in this One who has prepared a place there and has given resources here we are maintained in the joy of that place now.

E.C.M. It would involve, too, our knowledge of the Father. I was thinking of Mr Stoney again, how he emphasised the importance of knowing the owner of the house. The Lord immediately goes on to speak about the Father.

R.T. It is something we may speak of in Genesis 24; it was the Father's desire that there should be someone like this. What an answer to the manhood of Jesus, that there is one who is suited to be alongside of Him in the glory where He is!

E.C.B. Is it of some interest that in Mark's gospel Jesus institutes the Supper in what He calls "my guest-chamber", Mark 14: 14, as if He has in mind the place into which He will be able to receive others.

R.T. Yes: it is prepared, you mean.

E.C.B. Yes, but the Lord defines it as already His own, He is going to have the passover but in that same setting, in "my guest-chamber", He has the Supper, as if to carry our thoughts easily into the area in which He is able to receive persons for His own enjoyment.

R.T. It is fine to think that nothing can obstruct that. It is like the absolute rights of love that has prepared this, and nothing can upset

it. It would give us desires to enter into it. I was speaking to someone the other day and he said he considered himself a practising Christian, yet the Supper is just a foreign idea to him.

What is the centre of Christian life if it is not as Paul has placed it in the assembly, if it is not that we are together in that occasion? I think, as we have proved in our experience, it is a gateway into tasting something of being received to Himself.

E.C.B. Such practical matters as have been recovered as that the Supper takes place at the beginning of the meeting, all bear on that, do they not? It is not as in some services held at the end as if that is what you have worked up to or you go home with, but it is the beginning of things.

R.T. Yes. It is the area that commandment leads us to, is it not? Paul makes much of the Lord in Corinthians, the idea of commandment. I think the commandment leads us to the area where the Supper takes place. But then something private comes in, does it not? "I shall receive you to myself".

J.A.H. Then He goes on to say "that where I am ye also may be". Is not the Lord's objective that we should be with Him in His own circumstances?

R.T. That is what will make heaven so attractive is it not? "That where I am". For the moment we may be where He is absent, but our hope and our home is where He is. What colour He has given to heaven as He has gone in.

R.L. Does it add a glory to His service in chapter 13 which precedes this, in speaking of going to the Father? He serves them in view of part with Him.

R.T. He would have them suited, would He not, "part with me". You wonder what was in the Lord's mind, and how slow, perhaps, the disciples were to take it on. He has far more in His mind for us than we are ready to enter into, has He not? I thought Genesis 24 would provide an area for expanding our thoughts. In John 20 He breathed into them and it may connect with something of the character that is seen in Rebecca, that she comes out as entirely suited. What grace

marked her! What dignity! It is something that we need to think of, that as belonging to this family a certain dignity should mark us. So that questions come up as to whether things are right whether they are proper - well, the test would always be, are they suited to the dignity that belongs to the assembly. So that in the provisional time, the eternal and what is suited to our home should be what regulates us.

A.A.B. Paul gives commandment in the Corinthian epistles. That would be one side, but the inbreathing of His Spirit really covers what you have in mind in the way everything is done.

R.T. Yes, I was thinking of Philippians, Paul uses the word "let" more than once there. If that in-breathing has come to us, there will be some expression. He does not give them commandment in Philippians, he just says 'let', "Let this mind be in you", (ch 2: 5), "Let your gentleness be known" (ch 4: 5). So that there is capacity and character in the assembly, that we need to 'let' come into expression, I think.

A.A.B. Is it what is priestly? I am just asking for help, feeling the importance not only of things done being right but the way they are done. There is an inimitable touch, is there not, sometimes, in the way a thing is done, that carries confidence.

R.T. I think that is what peculiarly should mark the assembly, the way things are done. And the way certain truths are in the assembly. For example, Israel will have certain things, as Paul says, "whose is the adoption... the covenants... the fathers" Rom 9: 4,5. Israel will have certain glories, but the assembly will have these same glories in a far greater lustre, will she not? Does it not say that angels and principalities are learning now how things are done? (Eph 3: 10). I think what you say is right, it should be an exercise to us that not only right things are done but they are done in a right way.

E.P. Do you think that that would touch the matter of the answer to the light? We speak about the light of the assembly, but the walking

in that light would be the way things are done. Is that what you have in mind?

R.T. Yes. What I primarily was feeling was that unless we have the light of it, we will not be walking in the light of it. The thing is not reached legally, I think the thing is reached through the light of it being attractive to us and the light of it regulates us so that it comes in to practical expression. So that the predominant thing is that it is heavenly, it is a heavenly light; it is not a legal light that is to be seen. There is to be an impress left on what is done that it is heavenly.

A.J.E.W. Do you think if we speak of revival, which is right, we really have to come back to this inbreathing? It is the character that the Lord imparted at the beginning and if revival is true, it must be back to this inbreathing.

R.T. Yes. I thought that what was seen with Rebecca was the character. All sorts of influences come in to bear on her that may have been right. We might have said, well, it was natural, but the character that comes out in her is the character of a heavenly nature is it not? So that the inbreathing is there, I think. It is not as He was, it is the ascending Man in John 20. "He breathed into them", that breath. So that as we take that in we are bound to have an expression of the heavenly Man, are we not?

Ques. Do you think as the servant brought forth silver vessels and gold articles and clothing and gave them to Rebecca, she was worthy of those gifts, morally worthy of them?

R.T. Yes, the earlier part of the chapter shows that. The particular thought was that having received them she had to go. I think as the light of the thing comes to us and we receive it, we have to make a step, we have to move. It says that he brought them forth "and he gave them to Rebecca". Could she have worn those silver articles in Laban's house? Could she have worn those garments anywhere else? I think as we take some impress of the heavenly character that is ours, it involves movements toward Christ where He is.

C.C.I. The footnote to "the last Adam a quickening spirit", (1 Cor 15: 45) is 'making alive'. Do you think all this enters into the Spirit's

service and how the Lord is speaking even at the present moment?

R.T. Yes. I think these things the servant brings forth are calculated to make us alive - silver articles and gold articles and clothing. It says he gave the others precious things, but I think what the Spirit has brought to us is calculated to make us alive. Think of the value of redemption, the power of divine love, the clothing that He has brought to the assembly, these things are calculated to make us alive, I think, and they produce a movement in us that is marked by heavenly steps.

W.J.W. Would the verse in Acts 2 where "they persevered in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, in breaking of bread and prayers" be something like an outline of the light that should govern us?

R.T. Yes, I think that is how it would find external expression. They continued in it, it found an external expression there. I think the inbreathing as we have spoken of it would be the internal thing. I think as the light comes into us it finds expression externally, as you said.

C.A.B. "He gave to her brother".

R.T. Yes, well that comes in by the bye.

C.A.B. The brotherly element comes in, does it?

R.T. Yes, I think there is an extension of the blessing; there is an extension of the blessing that has come into our day, but the prime thing is what Rebecca received, is it not? There is detail about it, silver articles and gold articles and clothing. I think that is the light of the thing. The Spirit has brought something within our range of the glory of a glorified Man and He has clothed us in it, He says it is yours. 'I have brought this from the glorified Man and it belongs to you'. Well, are we going to wear it? As taking it I think we must move in the light that is ours. That involves the Supper, as we said; I think it involves sonship and the liberty that marks those that are of the assembly.

D.J.H. So are there two sides in John 20, He breathed into them, but then the word is "Receive the Holy Spirit", that is that they are actively taking things on.

R.T. Yes. I think that the Lord was anticipating what was coming in in Acts 2, where there would be the external power and expression of things. But what intimacy came in to John 20, "He breathed into them". Something of that Man that was no longer governed by the limitations of flesh and blood, something of the glory of that Man who was going to "my Father and your Father, my God and your God".

What a link they had with Him! He would leave that with them that they had a link no matter where He went, whatever glory He went into, they had a link with Him that He had breathed into them.

C.R.B. Union would be the private side of joy, would it not? Sharing in headship would be more related to display. Is the Spirit seen here as preparing Rebecca for both.

R.T. Yes. Well, which comes first?

C.R.B. Union must come first, must it not?

R.T. Yes. Mr Taylor has a very fine touch on the end of Revelation.

He says in Revelation 21 that historically the millennium comes before the eternal day but John puts the eternal day first. He says John, being the lover that he is, has the private side as the predominant thing. Administration is a secondary matter, is it not?

The coming out in display, that will be all right. He says what John is at is the internal thing. Something of that should burn in our hearts, should it not, the private joy of union and it is a heavenly bride. Rebecca is not trammelled with these things, she shows how she is walking in the light of things, the way she is prepared to leave everything, that the joy of union may be known.

T.B. Is it interesting to note how the Spirit delights in bringing Rebecca forward, and then when the Spirit comes and sees Isaac "That is my master!". Is not that a delightful way in which the Spirit so graciously stands?

R.T. Yes, you can well understand what a bond had been formed between Rebecca and the Spirit in this journey. Is not that what is sustaining us now? But think of a divine Person coming here to sustain us in that light. We say we walk in the light of the assembly, but that is sustained in our communion with the Spirit. What exercises have come in through the dispensation but the light of the assembly has been maintained in the power of the Spirit. It is not angels that have come in to maintain it - the law as given by angels - but the light of the assembly is maintained in the power of the Spirit.

A.J.E.W. Referring to Mr Byng's point, it is very interesting that in the first presentation of the city John is said to have seen it, in the second presentation he was shown it. John was at home in respect of what he saw, was he not? What he is shown is a matter of, could I say, the necessities of his prophetic service.

R.T. That is very good. It puts administration in the right focus, does it not, that what is prime is that "I... prepare you a place... and shall receive you to myself". Would that the internal thing was burning more in our hearts. As you think of the exercises of past times, how we missed the heavenly side of the thing. Galatians is that, that there is a tendency to revert to a lower level as Mr Bellamy said, in the way things are done. We may carry on formal doing of things, even the Supper, but it is the way it is done. "When ye come together in assembly", 1 Cor 11: 18.

E.C.B. So the way things are done in the assembly would be the way they should be done in the universe. Is not that right?

R.T. Yes, go on.

E.C.B. I was thinking of Isaiah 60 that is quoted in Ephesians 5, "Arise, shine! for thy light is come", but "the nations shall walk by thy light", (vv 1 and 3). It rather suggests, although the immediate setting there is millennial, that what is done in the city is the way things should be done in the universe.

R.T. Yes. That chapter is very beautiful, is it not, the way that the whole earth, the very ships and the seas and children are all going to be affected by persons coming into the light. And that word in verse

- "the house of my magnificence". Think of what we have come into, "the house of my magnificence". We did not prepare it; it is the things that God prepared. That is what Rebecca came into, the very clothing that she went into Isaac's presence with, she did not sew it, no earthly hands went into its preparation, but there were articles that found their source in divine purpose and divine workmanship.

So that is the light that is to govern us, is it not? We speak about divine principles, but they are not man-made, they are divine principles. They found their source, and formulation in God.

S.G.S. Had you anything more to say about the father in this chapter?

R.T. Not really, except that it connects us with Ephesians 1, it brings the idea of our repose into it, does it not?

S.G.S. I was trying to follow through what you said earlier as to the father in Genesis 24.

R.T. He is insistent, he says "bring not my son thither again". Think of the Father's consideration, that there is going to be a bride. It reminds us of the Father's pleasure in the Son that there is going to be an answer that is entirely suited to Him in every way. The servant brings up that she may not be willing, but in our day how willing are we? In our day the light has come within our range; are we willing to take it on and make the journey and be regulated by the glory that Christ is in?

W.T.A. You have been speaking as to the way things are done and it says here that he "led her". How did he do that?

R.T. Well, the first thing is that Rebecca arose, that is the way things are done; she arose. How are we going to do things? Things come up, exercises come up, how are we going to do them? Well, rise up. As Mr Burr has quoted "Arise, shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee". That is the day we are in, the light has come. Let us rise up. As you say, he led her. I suppose there is a touch of intimacy about that. It would bring up what we have been speaking of - at the Supper, there is something

of the leading of the Spirit; it is also true in the wilderness, the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God.

W.T.A. Yes, I was looking at the reference in Song of Songs 2: 6, "His left hand is under my head, And his right hand doth embrace me".

R.T. Well, that is the area the Spirit would bring us into, to know the embrace of Christ.

F.M.K. Rebecca gets a real link with the servant from the start. When they first met she lets down her pitcher on her hand. She did it in a dignified way although a small matter perhaps? She is held by the power of the servant.

R.T. She is true to her origin, is she not? Is not that something that always tests us. Our origin is that we are "born, not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God", John 1: 13. The origin of the saint is heavenly, is it not? I think our exercise would be to be true to our origin so that things would be done in a right way.

E.H.W. Is there a suggestion here of the committal to the Spirit? "Wilt thou go with this man?", she says "I will go". And then later on she "followed the man", in view of committal to Christ.

R.T. Yes, that is heavenly light, is it not? "I will go". I think the light involves movement. As was said, the light has come in in our day and many are not prepared to move, indeed, some have moved backward, but Rebecca is prepared for the journey as she takes these things that the servant brings her.

E.H.W. I was only thinking that for us we need to be committed to the Spirit to be brought into the light and the joy of these things, do we not?

R.T. Yes, indeed. It brings up the reverence we have for the Spirit. I think what was said earlier is right, that the Spirit has carried the thing through. He will never stoop below what is heavenly. Mr Taylor laid very great emphasis on the fact that the Spirit is not in the world. He says He is here, but He is in the assembly, He is not exactly on earth, but He is in the assembly. So that a divine Person

has come within our range. He has brought with Him the glories of the heavenly Man and He is conducting us so that we are suited to the presence of the glorified Man.

E.H.W. The Lord said "whom the world cannot receive", (John 14: 17) indicating that we can and do receive Him.

R.T. It brings up how we respect Him and how we respect the things that He has brought within our range, the things of Christ.

C.G.H. What you have brought before us, is extensive. We have spoken of the light, or the truth, as to the assembly, and then we have thought of the expression of it, which involves, of course, that it is light in our souls, and then there is the power of it in the Spirit.

What has been touched on also involves history, because we have spoken about the breakdown. When there is state and when the Spirit is relied on, to what extent is there, we might say, a lack of approximation in our experience to the assembly itself and what is here because of breakdown as, I do not like to use the word 'mere', but as an expression of it.

R.T. I think the light of the thing needs to govern us. We may own the weakness, but there is no weakness in the Spirit, is there? The way through things is that we are prepared to suffer. Rebecca shows that but I think the way that we will enjoy the light of the assembly is that there is a preparedness to sacrifice. So many have brought their own wills into things, but I think as the light of the thing comes to us, formation comes by suffering. As you said, it is very extensive, and I think we should get the impression that it is extensive. It is heavenly, and who could compass it. But I think the glory of what we have been called into should lay hold of us and if there is preparedness with us to suffer, I think we will be in the joy of it.

C.G.H. That is most interesting because it comes back to an earlier remark of yours about the Lord personally. You said, if we know Him we should know the way. The disciples were questioning this, as you mentioned but then He brings before them, I take it, the fact that

He is it and that brings in what you have spoken about, suffering; because who suffered as He did?

R.T. I think we should say that there is no point in the history where we are left without guidance. The people of old had the tabernacle system and they could look day and night, they could see a centre in that system as to how they should move. I think equally we are never left without guidance. It was said here on Wednesday night, "the firm foundation of God stands" , 2 Tim 2: 19. That stands. So I think the light of the assembly will always be. The Spirit has come here to maintain the light of the assembly. My exercise for myself is that I may have the fulness of that light before me. I may come into it in part, but may the impress be left on my spirit that what marks the assembly distinctively is that she is heavenly and she has a link with the Spirit that no other family will ever have; the assembly has a link with Christ that no family will ever have and she has it now. Now these things are to be enjoyed.

D.E.R. Do we need to be established in the fact that the assembly in its aspect as the body of Christ has not broken down?

R.T. Yes , that is right. My exercise is to be in it and filling out my part in it. So that we should not be looking on the breakdown. "I go to prepare you a place". That is my place. He has gone "into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us", Heb. 9:24. He went in there with my name on Him, did He not? So I think if I could get in my soul a sense that my place is there, it puts the other things in their proper perspective.

L.A.B. Do you think the encouragement of these scriptures is that as the light is appropriated, the experience is presented as a very near thing?

R.T. Yes, I think so. I think as we obey the light the experience is very real. So that it is not abstract. So many people today say that is all abstract; it is concrete. Christ gone into heaven to appear before the face of God for us. Is that abstract? It is concrete.

Unless I realise it is concrete, I will never move here in my true dignity or in any measure of joy, shall I?

L.A.B. So that it is walking in the light, not exactly talking in the light, do you think?

R.T. That is very good "as He is in the light".

L.A.B. I am impressed with the blessedness of these things and you realise as you appropriate that there is a glorified Man in the presence of the Father, surrounded with all the affections of the Father, that that is my place. What else can I desire?

R.T. Yes. When we come together, maybe very few, but when we come together, say for the Supper, for the prayer meeting, for the reading, the ministry meeting; is there not some experience of the working out of what our place is? Do not we have some fore taste of what our eternal place will be?

E.P. In John 8 the Lord speaks about "the light of life", (v 12) and it is in a setting of walking, is it not? Do you think the experience is the life, because that is what life is, is it not?

R.T. Yes, Rebecca became his wife, I think it has been remarked that there is no wedding referred to with Isaac and Rebecca. It is not a question of the bride; the present time is the wife. The bride will come into display, as we have referred to, but what Mr Barlow refers to is the experience, it is the wife side, is it not? We are here in faithfulness, we are here knowing divine support, we are here, too, knowing intimacy, especially as we come together. We know something of what it is to be in this tent, filling out a place that other families will yet come into, but we are having the joys of it now.

E.H.W. Having the joys of love in the tent, it says "she became his wife, and he loved her".

R.T. Yes, I think that we should remark that this is very precious to Christ. It is not only precious to us, but it is precious to Christ. It says, he was comforted. The Lord felt Israel's despisal, the Lord felt the fact that He did not have the nation, Israel, but it says, he was comforted. Think of it, that the few walking in the light of the assembly, the few in South Africa, the few in New Zealand, some

parts of America, too, a few walking in the light of the assembly; the Lord is comforted. I think that side should affect us.

E.C.B. Does what transpires at the end of the chapter bear on what was remarked earlier in the reading? She says "Who is the man?", he says "That is my master!", which is in principle an administrative idea; but immediately she took the veil and covered herself, as if on that journey she had learned that something else must precede the administrative side. She covered herself and he loved her. That is union, is it not?

R.T. Yes. How do you say this is the administrative side?

E.C.B. "That is my master!" involves dominion, does it not, operations and the exercise of authority and so on. It is like the millennial scene. I wondered if the Spirit's education of Rebecca on the way had led her to see that as soon as she knew who the man was, the first thing is to be for Him.

R.T. Yes, very good. So there is the official side of the economy is there not, that the Lord positionally has taken a place that is lower and so has the Spirit, but as we come into this, we come into the private side, into the joys of the union, the joy of His embrace. Think of the capacity of comforting the Lord, think of the capacity of meeting the grief that He has known and bringing in comfort. These things would encourage us to walk in the heavenly light, that as there are a few walking in it the Lord is comforted.

C.R.B. Does the Spirit have a very great place in the matter of our coming together in assembly, as you referred to earlier? I hoped you would enlarge on that. Coming together in assembly seems to be very important in relation to what you are saying.

R.T. Yes. I thought it was one of the distinctive features that we spoke a little about, when you come together in assembly. I think it is the practical expression of the light of the assembly, that however few - the light of the assembly does not require numbers, it requires persons. But 'when ye come together in assembly', I think is the way we gather, in dependence on the Spirit?

C.R.B. So that the Spirit being who He is means that Christ can have the portion He is looking for, regardless of the breakdown and regardless of numbers. It is a wonderful evidence, is it not, of the Spirit's present activity and power.

R.T. Is that not the whole point of the assembly, that there is something for Christ. We have spoken of what our side is, what light has come and what glory has come within our range, but the whole point of the assembly is that there is a vessel that is for Christ. So should not we consider this, she took the veil. We are for the Man, are we not? So when we come together in assembly, we are for the Man.

E.C.B. Does what is being said about the Spirit in relation to our coming together in assembly require both John 1: 33, "He it is who baptises with the Holy Spirit" and the inbreathing in chapter 20? The first is being baptised into one body, the inbreathing animates that and I wondered, therefore, if the Spirit Himself, but the Spirit of the ascended Man, does not enter into our coming together in assembly so that we are immediately ready for the heavenly Man.

R.T. Yes. I think it has been said in ministry that the Spirit leads us but there comes a point when the Lord can take over what has been led. That is what you have in Rebecca here, that the Spirit has been dominant, He has been preeminent but there is a time when He, as it were, recedes so that union is made way for, there is something for Christ. So we should consider that when we come together for all our occasions, as there is the heavenly light regulating us, there is something for Christ.

S.D.K.R. Would the coming together in assembly be an answer to those who say there is no collective position today?

R.T. You are sorry for hearing these statements, are you not? It just shows that some persons are not up to date with the Spirit. It is a slight. The first time I heard that I felt that it was a slight on the Person of the Holy Spirit to say that there is no collective position today. I think that is making everything of man. The continuance of the dispensation has not depended on man, the Spirit is carrying the

thing through and He is carrying it through at its own level. My exercise is to be with Him.

LONDON

19 April 1975

Key to initials

W.T.A. W.T.Abbott London: A.A.B. A.A.Bellamy Buckhurst Hill: A.E.B.
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ESPOUSAL AND PRESENTATION

C.Hammond

2 Corinthians 7: 11-12; 2 Corinthians 11: 1-3

What I am concerned to speak about at this time is the need of having a personal understanding with the Lord about our local assemblies. One marvels at the patience of Paul with the Corinthians, a patience which we are not always able to exhibit, especially if we regard as ominous something with which we disagree. Paul says in his first letter to the Corinthians, How would you like me to come, "with a rod; or in love and a spirit of meekness?" So he bears with them. There was enough to cause godly concern with the state in Corinth. They were allowing incest amongst them without really concerning themselves about it. They might have pleaded that their state was so low that they could not deal with the sin, but a low state is no reason for letting things go. Paul does not say 'Get your state right and then deal with it' , but "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ", which latter obviously involves the Spirit's presence amongst the saints. If there is any desire to deal with matters that affect the right representation of God in a place, or our relations with the Lord collectively, the Name is sufficient, for the authority is in the Name and the power is in the Spirit.

So the Corinthians had no real excuse for delaying action; they had authority to deal with the matter and they were urged to deal with it themselves; the apostle stayed away. Think of the patience of the apostle; he could have gone and asserted his authority, but instead he said "ye and my spirit being gathered together". Think of the spiritual personality that was there, and the help in having the spirit of a man like that to be gathered with them to give moral support to their dealing with what needed to be dealt with; but he was not with them in bodily presence. He says a remarkable thing in his second letter - "But I myself, Paul, entreat you by the meekness and gentleness of the Christ, who, as to appearance when present am mean among you, but absent am bold toward you; but I beseech

that present I may not be bold with the confidence with which I think to be daring towards some who think of us as walking according to flesh", 2 Cor. 10: 1-2. What he seems to be saying is - 'Do not provoke me to use my apostolic authority!' What a man he was, dear brethren, a man with God, who could urge the solution of matters by the Corinthians themselves. It is a great moral victory if local assemblies who are involved in anything of this kind are able to deal with it themselves as under conviction before God.

So the apostle waits, and in the section where I read in 2 Corinthians 7, he goes over the matter in a priestly way - "grief according to God works repentance to salvation, never to be regretted". The important thing is, by priestly representations, to encourage any to act under conviction for themselves. It will never be regretted if they arrive at a judgment before God. We know from our experience that when we have been in the presence of God we would not go back on our convictions. It is a desirable thing to promote that amongst the brethren. So the word is, "grief according to God works repentance to salvation, never to be regretted; but the grief of the world works death". "Grief according to God" has power in it; we may have to humble ourselves in the presence of God, but by such means moral power is acquired to deal with any matter according to God. The apostle refers to "how much diligence it wrought in you... in every way ye have proved yourselves to be pure in the matter". So often we may be concerned to prove ourselves to be *right*. Purity relates to holiness, and holiness relates to the truth striking inwardly, searching our motives in what we have said and done. To prove ourselves. To be pure is the result of being with God in any concerns which may arise.

What has impressed me in moving about in these parts is the need for being with God in anything which concerns the testimony of our Lord. The enemy is set against what may have been recovered for God, and the fact that he is using his malign methods to disrupt, if he can, only indicates that there is something there having a potential for God. Please God, may He preserve what is for Himself in this continent! We do not want any to lose their way. There was

no loss when Abigail by her movements persuaded David that what he had in mind he may have felt to be right, but was it wise? David was a military man, and naturally thought the first weapon to take hold of was a sword, and he told his men to gird on their swords.

But he was prevented by the spirit of a woman who said "Upon me, my lord, upon me let the iniquity be" (1 Sam 25: 24). In that section you will find that David and Abigail between them refer to Jehovah about ten times, so that they are both bringing God into their considerations. David had been intent on destroying the males, but if we destroy the males the responsible element will be eliminated.

But David is hindered from shedding blood by a woman, by something subjective in one who was connected with a churlish man. We are linked by the flesh with what is churlish, but we have another Husband who is infinite in His patience - the opposite of churlishness. We are to "be to another" - our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now what was the secret that was in Paul's mind in relation to the Corinthians? It was not only that God might be rightly represented in Corinth, but that Christ might get His place, and that the saints at Corinth would be a chaste virgin to Christ. Paul had determined as to them that, low as their state was, "I have espoused you unto one man". Paul would refer to chastity because of the fleshly conditions in Corinth; but they were to be to one Man, not to any of their leaders but to Christ. Mr Darby refused to belong to a party, even for the truth, for the simple reason that the truth is not partisan, for it applies to the whole, and either we have the whole in our minds or just a party. So often, when difficulties arise, we naturally turn to others for sympathy or support. We look to men, however worthy those men may be, when we should be considering matters in the presence of God. What an important thing it is, dear brethren, to find one or more persons in a locality who have an assembly outlook and assembly affections, whether the numbers are large or small. If the subjective state is pure, then you can reckon that the links with the Lord will be right. So Paul is completely in line with what the Lord is doing in relation to the assembly, His "washing of water by the word" (Eph 5). Mr Taylor said that the 'word' is

authoritative ministry which the Lord uses for the removal of imperfections from the personnel of the assembly - wrinkles, blemishes, and the like. So when the apostle wrote to the saints at Corinth he would have had Ephesian truth in his mind, for he indicates that they were enriched in everything in Him - Christ Jesus; that is an Ephesian reference.

So, dear brethren, do not let us approach difficult matters at the level of the difficulties themselves, but at the height of God's thoughts; then we are more likely to help. Paul in this section, refers to his being "jealous as to you with a jealousy which is of God, 'for I have espoused you unto one man, to present you a chaste virgin to Christ". There is a need for priestliness and persistence, of being with God, between the thought of espousal and presentation. That is where the travail comes, and Paul hints that the more he loved the less he might be loved. Paul had godly fear for them "test by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craft, so your thoughts should be corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ". The assembly, composed of persons, is intended to be to Another. We need to be sensitive as to what the Lord should have femininely in our local assemblies. Are we near enough to Him to know what He expects from her? The Corinthians were pure "in the matter", and now they are to be pure in relation to Christ and the truth as to His person. The serpent was "more crafty than any" (Gen 3: 1); but we cannot meet craft with craft nor flesh with flesh. We can only meet the enemy in the power of the Spirit, the Spirit of the ascended an; then we may find that God will grant us to see something that is for the glory of God and by which the Son of God is glorified, at the present time. May God bless the word.

TORONTO

26 April 1975

SUCCOURING THOSE WHO ARE WEARY

B.Taylor

Matthew 25: 34-40

Just a few thoughts to continue the flow of what has been before us. An administration is flowing here, though we may not realise the greatness and blessedness of being in it. But the Lord would have us understand how blessed it is to be available to serve His brethren, even one of the least of them. "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it to me". There are references to the curse which will fall on those who do not have right feelings, but we want to be occupied now with the blessing and the blessedness of being feelingly related to what is flowing in the word and owned of the Lord as His. There is what is flowing in this way, has been functioning continuously down through the history of the church; links have been established and worked out; persons have been visited, encouraged, refreshed and clothed.

Our brother mentioned in prayer that we want to get a word, whatever it may be, whether rebuke, encouragement, refreshment; whatever it might be we would be desirous of being in the flow of the word. There is what is flowing; and we desire to be in the current of it. David's exercise was to get to the water-course, (2 Sam 5: 8). Then the Philistine mind would stop the wells, or strive for them, as we have in Genesis 26; we can see that in ourselves, how natural the mind is and how it would interfere with what is flowing; that we might not be in relation to the prophetic word. But how wonderful it is to be in relation to what God would say to us, because we might be in such as these conditions mentioned in our passage. God would desire to relieve us and get us out of them so that we can be properly functioning as He would have us to do.

It is written: "The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of the instructed, that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary", Isa 50: 4. It is a great matter to be able to do that. Saints get weary; can we succour them? When David as exhausted and

the Philistine sought to smite him, Abishai succoured him, (2 Sam 21: 17). God has persons who are available when needed, to do these things. The Lord remembers and such persons are blessed.

How wonderful it is to know how to do that! You would desire to know how to do it; you could only do it by the Spirit. God knows how to do it; His compassions are new every morning, (Lam 3: 22). He is ready to succour us by a word every morning, if we are weary. It is a great thing to be succoured by a word, and God would see that we are. He has those whom He can use in that way; they are those whose ear is wakened morning by morning to hear as the instructed.

The pressures listed in our passage may be literal things; persons may be in hospitals or prisons, in these conditions literally, but then they may be in these conditions in their spirits. It is wonderful to be so in relation to the brethren that you can be available to encourage them when in such circumstances in their spirits, feeling their limitations or needing to be nourished or succoured. If we are able to do that, it establishes the brotherly link and it works for enlargement of soul. Paul was distressed and had no rest in his spirit when he came to Troas and did not find Titus, his brother, (2 Cor 2: 13). There are elements all round us that militate against us and would put us in prison, in effect. They would be against what is flowing, but how wonderful to be in the current of what would provide help for the brethren, to succour one another. In whatever way you may encourage, succour, refresh - all these things that are mentioned - you would realise how valuable it is to be able to do something in this way. It does not require gift, but it does involve that you are one of the brethren, that you have a brotherly link with the saints and that you are available as needed. How wonderful it is to be confirmed in those links as doing these things.

Then we have what is flowing in the ministry, what is flowing softly, like the waters of Shiloh. I suppose Hezekiah was in the good of that when he said he would walk softly; but when he showed the treasures of the house of God to the king of Babylon he was not walking softly, but rather in pride, so that what was precious was exposed. We can be thankful, therefore, for what keeps us humble,

for we want the precious things protected. What blessedness there is being conscious of doing these things that the Lord spoke about.

They are open for us to do. We want to encourage one another in this way, as it says, encouraging one another, and so much the more as ye see the day drawing near", Heb 10: 25. We want to encourage the work of God and strengthen it. Elisha poured water on the hands of Elijah; he was available to refresh the prophet. And we want to be available to do whatever we can in releasing our brethren who suffer restriction and other pressures, and continue in this flow of things.

As here tonight, I trust that we all are getting some succour and encouragement and refreshment from God Himself through His word which will result in worship to Him. May it be so.

BROOKLYN NY

8 January 1974

SOME FUNDAMENTALS - THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

In the execution of Pilate's commands the soldiers broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus; "but coming to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead they did not break his legs, but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water", John 19: 33,34. How magnificent that this final thrust of hatred from men was answered in marvellous grace by the flowing forth of God's love. The spear of the soldier drew out the blood and water from the side of the blessed Saviour who had bowed His head and delivered up His spirit. They were a dual witness to the grace which expiates the guilt and cleanses from sin. Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission, so it is understandable that the apostle John emphasises the facts by saying, "he who saw it bears witness, and his witness is true".

In Old Testament times the shelter of the children of Israel from judgment depended on the blood, for Jehovah had said, "When I see the blood I will pass over you", Exodus 12: 13. Later Jehovah showed His holiness required that the blood of the bullock and the goat should be sprinkled by the high priest every year upon and before the mercy-seat to make atonement. But the blood of bulls and goats can never take away sin. These sacrifices looked forward to the death and blood-shedding of Christ, a divine Person in manhood, whose blood alone could atone for sin. God's righteousness was fully maintained in the shedding of His blood, and God has set Him forth as a mercy-seat through faith in *His* blood, (see Romans 3: 25,26). God now has a righteous basis upon which He can justify the believer in Jesus. The blood of Christ sets the conscience perfectly free, and in virtue of that same blood the believer can boldly enter into the very presence of God as a worshipper (see Hebrews 9: 14; 10: 19).

If Christians walk in the light, they have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses them from every sin, (see 1 John 1: 7). The cup of blessing at the Lord's supper is the communion of the blood of Christ, and the Lord's own reference to "my blood which is poured out for you" is an affecting

stimulus to answer week by week to His loving request, "This do for a remembrance of me".

Our redemption by the precious blood of Christ means that we may be completely set free from Satan's power and fully committed to God. A vast throng will triumphantly acknowledge the worthiness of the Lamb in that glorious song of redemption, (see Rev 5: 9,10).

God has purchased the assembly with the blood of His own, and praise will arise eternally to Him by Whom the reconciliation of all things has been effected, He having made peace by the blood of His cross, (see Col 1: 20).

W.E.Ellis

THE CHILDREN'S PEACE

Many people in many countries enjoy the benefits of a river without knowing its source. It is a strange thing that in the case of the Thames, perhaps the best known of rivers, the source is to this day a matter of argument. But we do know that peace like a river comes from God Himself. Each writer in the New Testament, in every book but one, mentions peace as one of the believer's great blessings.

Indeed the epistle written to children, with their mother, tells us that it comes from the Father and the Son.

Peace has therefore been *provided* for us since it has been made by the blood of Jesus shed when on the cross at Calvary.

Sins give a bad conscience and in his way persons become enemies of God in their thoughts and minds. But the gospel tells us that the One against whom we have sinned has Himself made a way for us to be friends and not enemies.

Not only is this so, but peace is *proclaimed* just as a herald tells good news. Christ Himself first preached the glad tidings of peace to those who were afar off and also to those who were near - the Jews. One glory of the gospel is that it went out first to those who actually brought about the death of Jesus although it is God's power to salvation "to every one that believes", whoever it may be.

Peace with God is thus *possessed* by those who have faith. When we are given some priceless gift we naturally want to enjoy it as much as possible and find out all about it. There is therefore the teaching the gospel as well as the preaching. In olden times it was promised that even the children should be taught of God, "and great shall be the peace of thy children".

The scripture says of the Lord Jesus that "he is our peace" so that peace is also *personified* in Him. This is another glory of the gospel, that we not only believe the words of truth but believe in the Person who is the truth. Children sometimes have to suffer for the Lord's sake; they may also be troubled because of wrong things done or thought. But knowing Jesus as our peace keeps us near to

God where there can be nothing to disturb. Do you know a Saviour who has not only died for you but now lives for you?

J.C. Evershed