

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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Contents

ENTRANCE INTO THE TRUTH

THE BELIEVER'S BODY

THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND

ENTRANCE INTO THE TRUTH

Matthew 17: 22, 23; 18: 1-5; 20: 17-28

W.D. One thought the Lord would give us some indication as to how we can help one another into the truth. In our time it is largely a matter of helping each other into the truth and in these passages the Lord would set out the spirit in which we can do so. They involve the most momentous teaching, in fact teaching which as to its scope and meaning could hardly be exceeded, the matter of the Lord's suffering, His death and rising again. There was inability on the part of the disciples to take in the import of the very profound teaching that the Lord gave, yet in His patience He brings out the features which will enable us to take on that teaching. The outstanding one which the Lord emphasises is the need to be marked by humility. I think that humility as we approach such profound matters as the Lord's own teaching as to His sufferings, His death and resurrection provides the avenue for the Spirit by which the teaching can be extended and developed.

C.F.D. In the seventeenth chapter the Lord had just come down from the mount where the glory of His greatness and majesty was shining out and yet He takes this humble approach, calling Himself the Son of man. Do you think it would show, speaking reverently, the bent of the Lord's mind in taking His place as Son of man? In the way He refers to it here He does not even speak of raising Himself up but of being raised up. Does that fit with your thought?

W.D. Yes, it is momentous teaching, and coming in as it does in the assembly gospel, the assembly being the background to Matthew's teaching, it brings out that the Lord is working on an entirely different principle from that which is current in the world. So as we gather tomorrow (God willing) it is with a sense that we are not there in any spirit of human selfsufficiency but we are there in a spirit of humility.

What comes out in the intervening incident with Peter as to the payment of the tribute money is an object lesson that, despite the

fact that the sons were free, in all humility the Lord Jesus paid the tribute money.

J.A.P. When the people came up to David Amasai says "Thine are we, David... And peace be to thy helpers! For thy God helps thee", 1 Chron 12: 8. It was a kind of blessing on the occasion. Is that what you mean?

W.D. Yes. That scripture also brings out what the apostle exhorted the Galatian saints: "by love serve one another", Gal 5: 13. We are in days when the Spirit is emphasising the value of one another in the working out of the truth. The Spirit is saying to us, Have we the Spirit of Christ in love to serve one another? "In that hour the disciples came to Jesus saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of the heavens?" That was so contrary to the spirit in which He had indicated He was to suffer and die, yet the Lord in His grace does not rebuke them out sets before them the great principle of humility.

B.J. Do you think the contrast to their aspirations would be seen in that they abode in Galilee? Is that suggestive to us of the realm in which we should be abiding?

W.D. The Lord was on a journey and He was at Galilee at this particular juncture when He gave this teaching. Are you suggesting that it provides an environment in which the teaching can be taken on?

B.J. Yes. I think we have been well taught that the Galilee position is distinctive from our being in this world.

W.D. That is right. In the next scripture they were going up to Jerusalem which was an advance on this position. But it does seem - and I think the Lord would help us at this time to understand it - that divine things are so great and holy and come to us at such tremendous cost that in speaking of them and in our dealings with one another in the expounding of them, humility is what the Spirit of God would emphasise. I think that if we were together in a humble spirit there would be a restraint on everything that would hinder the free flow of the truth.

R.G.J. Do we get the spirit of what you are speaking of with Aquila and Priscilla in taking Apollos to them and instructing him in the way of God more exactly (see Acts 18: 26)?

W.D. Yes, by love they served him. That scripture in Galatians 5: 13 indicates that the service is that of a bondman. A bondman's service is a humble service. The Lord gives us much ministry, and to any exercised person it must be a real challenge as to the extent to which the ministry that the Lord gives is assimilated and practised.

As thinking over it, one wonders whether the spirit the Lord indicates in these passages is sufficiently with us in a preparatory sense. Would you say that?

R.G.J. I am sure what you are saying is very helpful, and searching too. It is something that I have to take to myself, not only what is past but what is current, what the Spirit of God would bring in.

W.D. It says they were greatly grieved. Why should they be grieved? You could understand them being grieved at the prospect of His sufferings and His death, but why should they be grieved when He spoke of His resurrection? The fact that He said He was going to rise again, instead of grieving them should have promoted in their hearts a thrill of joy. As the Lord indicates in the passage in chapter 18, the receptive spirit of a child was not with them.

G.H. In Peter's first epistle he says "Likewise ye younger, be subject to the elder, and all of you bind on humility towards one another; for God sets himself against the proud, but to the humble gives grace", chap 5: 5. It does not say, put on humility but "bind on humility".

Would that suggest that it is to stay with us all the time? And would "towards one another" suggest that the thing is workable?

W.D. That is interesting. We were saying elsewhere that much that Peter teaches in his two epistles is the fruit of an experience he had with the Lord as outlined in the gospels. It is my own impression that, when Peter said "bind on humility", his mind was going back to this incident when he saw the humble way in which the Lord met that situation when these ones approached Him (see Matt 17: 25-27).

H.H. You are setting before us the need for humility; that they were greatly grieved would show that they never took it on. We know that they did not take it on until after the resurrection. I am not naturally humble; how do I get it?

W.D. Scripture tells you; "Unless ye are converted".

H.H. So it is the work of God.

W.D. "Unless ye are converted": I think that is the point. I cannot see that the great things the Lord is unfolding can be taken on by us unless we are converted and that the humble spirit, the receptive spirit of a little child, marks us. Conversion means that you have come to a realisation that the man of the first order cannot take in divine things, and you have to approach them in the humble spirit of a little child.

T.E.D. So did Paul always move in the line of his conversion? The Lord said "I will shew to him how much he must suffer for my name", Acts 9: 16. Would that be the experience needed with us in view of being available to one another?

W.D. The great matters which are involved in the teaching of the assembly require the activity of the Spirit amongst the brethren in a right state. As to the light of the assembly, the brethren are very well versed in it. What you come back to is this, that the arriving at it is in the degree in which the Spirit is free amongst us.

R.N H. Would you say that we will not be very receptive as we are together if we do not esteem the brethren greater than ourselves?

W.D. That is what comes out in the passage in chapter 20.

C.F.D. What you are emphasising as to being converted is I think an area where we need a lot of help. Is a moral process a necessity in order to arrive at this little child condition?

W.D. Think of how profitable every occasion would be if we all came together as persons who had been converted and had our minds disabused of any thought as to who should be the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens!

H.H. In Corinthians it says "and some unbeliever or simple person come in", 1 Cor 14: 24. We all want the simplicity of heart that is found in a little child so that persons can own that "Go: I is indeed amongst you". Unless we have that spirit we will never arrive at that.

W.D. What we need in our meetings now is power. There is no lack of knowledge amongst the brethren; you can go anywhere and sit down with the brethren and have an intelligent and instructive reading on the truth of the assembly. But the need amongst the brethren today is power, and power comes not from an exhibition of the man who was ended on the cross of Christ but from the expression of the spirit that the Lord set out in this chapter.

H.H. So it would require dependence. It behoves every one of us to be asking for that power; the need for that power is seen everywhere.

H.J.G. In Galatians Paul speaks of "biting and devouring one another" (see Gal 5: 15), but in chapter 6 Paul brings in the antidote: "ye who are spiritual restore such a one" (v 1); that is, there should be that ability. But then he adds "considering yourselves". Do you think that fits in?

W.D. Yes. It seems that in Galatians 6 they had reached something. What is a spiritual person? I think a spiritual person is one who has absorbed the lesson of these chapters that we have read from; he has a true estimate of himself and he has a true estimate of God's thoughts for His people.

R.G.J. Would the basis of it all be love? "By love serve one another", Gal 5: 13. Then the Lord indicates that to Peter at the end of John. So he is successful in his ministry inasmuch as the saints had returned "to the shepherd and overseer of your souls", 1 Pet 2: 25.

W.D. I think so. So our gatherings should give us wonderful opportunities by love to serve one another. You have to do it in the Spirit, and do you not think it would give us to weigh everything one might seek to introduce into a meeting? You would say, Is it going to serve the brethren? Is it going to help them? Is the Spirit going to be

with us so that there will be expansion in the greatness of divine thoughts?

G.D.P. I think what you say as to helping one another in this spirit is very salient. We often quote the scripture, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit", Zech 4: 6. That is not setting aside what you said about power, but it is the real moral power, is it not?

W.D. Yes. It says "And Jesus having called a little child to him, set it in their midst". Now I do not think that that was the only little child present.

G.D.P. Do you think the captive maid in Syria set this out in some sense?

W.D. Yes, that is helpful. What it brings out, I think, is that there is something in the circle of the saints normally that expresses the truth as it is in the Scriptures. If you only look to the Scriptures for the truth (of course one must be guarded in saying that, as the Scriptures are the truth and the Spirit is the truth) - but in every local company as the result of the Lord's operations there is that which is representative of what is in the Scriptures, and this little child is the expression of it. Do you think so?

G.D.P. Yes, very good. The gospel begins with "the little child", that is Jesus, and now there is "a little child", one like Him.

W.D. And He set it in their midst; it was for the observation of all. The Lord gives us more lessons in spirituality by example amongst us than sometimes He gives by ministry.

J.A.P. I think your suggestion is very helpful that there is something among the brethren answering to the little child. Even in Galatians that has been referred to, "ye who are spiritual"; there were some there. That is all encouraging, is it not?

W.D. Yes. It could be a sister, could it not?

J.A.P. That is very good. We are reading Luke and we noticed that Anna was used.

W.D. Why I say that it could be a sister is that I am thinking of the sister not only in a physical sense but as the subjective thought, and what we would labour for is the subjective result.

J.P.H. The scope for the exercise of what you are saying is very large and I wondered if you would just bring in a word as to the sisters in that connection. I suppose Phoebe would be an outstanding example of one who was a helper of many. It brings out a point that is needed very much amongst us at the present time, that help is not just one way; it says "assist her", Rom 16: 2. She had been a helper of many but "assist her"; so help is a two way matter, is it not?

W.D. That is good. If you link that with what was called attention to as to the service of Aquila and Priscilla your mind immediately goes to Ephesians where it speaks about "joint of supply", chap 4: 16. The force of "joint of supply" is not a gift. A joint of supply in a local company involves the sisters, as you say, and it is operating amongst the brethren.

C.W.F. The importance of this is emphasised by the fact that Jesus prefaced what He said by "Verily I say to you". In the previous incident there had been a lack of power, they were unable to cast out the demon. The Lord says, It is because of your unbelief; "But this kind does not go out but by prayer and fasting" (v 21). Would prayer and fasting help us to come to this state which you are speaking of?

W.D. I think so. Perhaps there is not enough fasting with us. There may be abundant prayer but how would you fast?

J.A.P. I need help on it; it is wider than just food. But you have something in mind.

W.D. I want help, I want the joint of supply.

R.N.H. In the things of God does fasting involve receiving something from God? It is connected with prayer, involving that you are totally dependent on the answer coming from heaven; it is not from ourselves.

W.D. The first thing is that not only do we pray for the Spirit's help in a meeting but fasting is the exercise that no darkening influence is going to affect your judgment or appreciation of what the Lord is giving. That is how I see it, that fasting brings you to the judgment of any influence that might be darkening your mind. We need to fast so that every darkening influence, natural or otherwise, is out of our minds and there is a state of absolute transparency leaving the Spirit free to bring out things.

H.J.G. I was thinking of what the Lord says in Matthew 6 about praying "to thy Father who is in secret" (v 18). It means that there is nothing to interfere with the communication.

C.F.D. Would you help us a little more as to the form fasting takes.

W.D. I think it means, as I have said, the judgment and removal of every darkening influence. Prejudice could be an example; the effect of natural ties could be another instance of it. It may be that the mind is being conditioned by a certain line of ministry and is not free for the current flow that the Spirit is giving. You will not get the gain of divine instruction unless you fast - not only prayer but fasting and seeking the Lord's help that there may be no darkening influence in your mind in your approach to the truth.

C.F.D. The spirit of a little child would represent that, do you think? It is receptive, it is without guile, it is unaffected by things around as we might be, it comes into a line of just simple transparency in which it would be very receptive. Therefore the Lord says "Unless ye are converted and become as little children.

W.D. "Whoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens": that is not easy to come by. Think of the Lord's estimate as to what greatness is! It brings out that in the assembly we have to do with moral things and with moral values and it is moral weight, moral power, that counts in the assembly.

J.P.H. Is one outstanding feature of fasting that it brings matters into perspective? How out of perspective some things become, even viewing men as trees walking, but fasting would bring the divine

shining in to give us a true perspective of everything in the sight of God.

W.D. Yes, and it would enable you to come to a judgment of things.

The moral process has to be gone through, as you come to a meeting, if you want to get the benefit of the Lord's instruction. You have to get your mind clear from any influence that would hinder.

G.H. With regard to fasting, in Acts 13 it says "Now there were in Antioch, in the assembly which was there, prophets and teachers...

And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me now Barnabas and Saul" (vv 1, 2). Could you open up this matter of ministering to the Lord and fasting?

W.D. I gather it was a priestly service. That scripture is helpful. It just brings out what we were saying, that they were free in that local assembly by the Spirit's help from every darkening influence. For example, there could have been colour prejudice - I only say that going by the detail of the scripture - there could have been a social prejudice, there were persons of high distinction and persons of low degree there. All these things were present in the gathering at Antioch. But in virtue of the fact that they fasted, every darkening influence in that locality was judged, leaving them free for the Spirit's indication as to these men.

T.E.D. Is fasting in principle death? I put to death the deeds of the body in view of life (see Rom 8: 13).

W.D. That is right; and it involves the whole man, your mind particularly according to Romans 7. Many things would become clear to us if our minds and thoughts were constantly under the direction of the Spirit in this way and free from darkening influences. Paul said, Ye are light in the Lord (see Eph 5: 8) and I think that meant that in that locality there was no darkness. The crown of the apostle's ministry as to the mystery as it came out in Ephesus was due to the fact that they were light in the Lord; in other words, there was no darkening influence present to hinder that ministry. So it is very instructive in Acts 20 that when he calls over the elders of Ephesus to Miletus what he draws attention to is the humility with

which he ministered amongst them. The structure that Paul built in Ephesus was not built by the intellect of man naturally; it was built because in lowliness and humility Paul served in the spirit of a little child.

B.J. So what we are speaking about makes the right background for being bondmen as in chapter 20.

W.D. Yes, I think that is what it leads on to; chapter 20 is very instructive in that way. The Lord is going up to Jerusalem, the language is pretty much the same, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee, with her sons, comes to ask something of Him. In the first scripture they were striving as to who was the greatest, but here it is the mother. They apparently never thought about Peter. It shows the need for prayer and fasting. The Lord says "First, Simon who is called Peter, Matt 10: 2.

J.A.P. I was at a meal with Mr Taylor and some other brethren and a current exercise was discussed at the table; most present were in agreement with the general thought, and Mr Taylor said to them, Be careful we are not a party. That is, he was fasting; that was priestly, was it not?

W.D. That was priestly. Well, do you see two parties in this chapter? There are three and ten. There is a party with three persons in it, a mother and two sons, and then there is another one, the ten.

J.A.P. They were no better than the three in that sense, do you mean?

W.D. That is right. That is why the Lord brings in the instruction. They were not indignant about the mother but they were indignant about the two brothers. They had not arrived at the lesson the Lord taught them in chapter 18 about the little child. If they had absorbed that teaching they would not have been indignant but would have left the matter with the Lord. There is not enough, brethren, of leaving matters with the Lord.

J.A.P. What do you mean by leaving matters with the Lord? Is it a question of the disposition of His servants?

W.D. Yes, exactly. These are matters of divine disposition; it does not matter how you feel about them, the Lord will order them. You might say there is a maladministration or a failure somewhere. The will of the Lord orders in all these matters.

C.F.D. Therefore as we look at things in the sphere in which divine Persons are operating, the Lord has never given up control; the Father has committed everything into His hands and that has never been rescinded. He is in charge and the Lord is doing things and it is His assembly.

W.D. The incidents in these two chapters, if observed and understood, would give us a spirit of tranquillity. In our circumstances we recognise the divine wisdom and the divine hand in everything. In that way having the spirit of a little child and the spirit of bondmanship we reap the fullest spiritual wealth out of that circumstance.

J.A.P. Joseph's comment about God's ways with him was "Fear not: am I then in the place of God? Ye indeed meant evil against me: God meant it for good, in order that he might do as it is this day, to save a great people alive", Gen 50: 19,20.

W.D. Is that not wonderful? The Lord seems to indicate that a spirit like this is true greatness. He says "Ye know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship over them, and the great exercise authority over them. It shall not be thus amongst you, but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your servant; and whosoever will be first among you, let him be your bondman; as indeed the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many". Now it is not often that the Lord speaks of the extent of His sacrificial work like that passage. And He adds "and to give his life a ransom for many". What it brings out is that the Lord brought home to His disciples that in bondmanship you have to have very extended thoughts in your mind. We are perhaps too limited as to the value of the light we hold. In the spirit of bondmanship that the Lord teaches

do we hold things in the way He says 'many'? We are responsible in regard to the whole sphere of the Lord's interests in every place and should seek to help each other in that spirit.

T.E.D. Does John show the gain of that in his epistle when he says of the Lord: "he has laid down his life for us; and we ought for the brethren to lay down our lives", 1 John 3: 16?

W.D. Yes; laying down our lives is a continuous thing.

PLAINFIELD

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Key to initials

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THE BELIEVER'S BODY

T.E.Druckenmiller

Exodus 21: 2-6; 1 Corinthians 6: 15 (first section), 19, 20; Mark 14: 50-52; 16: 2-7

One desires, beloved brethren and friends, to speak about the believer's body. We have been engaged with the thought of service, and one is impressed with the value of our bodies in view of serving God. In thinking of it what has come home to one is the way the Lord Jesus held His body for the will of God. We would remember the reference in Romans 12 to the presentation of the believer's body "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your intelligent service" (v 1). I believe that means putting our body on the altar without recall. One feels the need for drawing attention to that, because in most of our lives there may have been committal but with some measure of recall. As times of pressure and testing have come in there has been unpreparedness perhaps and we have drawn back from the work. But the Lord would help us, I believe, to be more committed to His interests, and to see that He in all things has the preeminence. As we look in Exodus at these words as to the Hebrew bondman we may get some fresh touch, as we often do in reading this section, of the perfection of the pathway of Jesus, how He held His body for the will of God as a Man here. Think of the preciousness of Jesus coming in and touching humanity in infancy, as a babe in Bethlehem's manger! The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, came into this world that way: "the holy thing... which shall be born", Luke 1: 35. Oh, think of the message of the angel to Mary, and then His incoming, and how Scripture presents it! May some fresh impression come into all our hearts of the preciousness of the movements of Jesus in this scene.

One thinks often of the words of Luke, what "Jesus began both to do and to teach" (Acts 1: 1), His activities in love, how He met that man in Luke 8, how He came near to the woman in John 4, how He spat on the ground and made mud of the spittle and anointed the

eyes of the man in John 9. These were activities of the love of Jesus. And, too, the words that He spoke, what He said to each of these persons. But, dear hearers, there is what He is saying to us today. In the gospel we need to realise more that the Lord is speaking still from heaven; from the time of the outshining of the Lord of glory to the beloved apostle Paul, speaking has been from heaven, and we continue in the preciousness of that. It may be through human vessels which the Lord would use, and I believe the appeal today is that He wants to use you and He wants to use me.

In His grace He has come near and He wants us to be in His service day by day. Are you prepared to take up in committal the offering of your body? Am I prepared for the offering of my body without recall? It was so with Jesus. As we look at the precious words here: "If thou buy a Hebrew bondman, six years shall he serve; and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing", we think of the way the Lord served. Then it goes on: "if he had a wife, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out alone". We note the reference to 'alone' in this section; it says or 'with his body'.

But then it says - and we want to come to these words in verse 5 - "But if the bondman shall say distinctly, I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go free". The Lord Jesus Christ is the only One who fulfilled this scripture because what motivated Him in all that He did was love for His God and Father. Think of the perfection of love in Jesus! As it says here: "if the bondman shall say distinctly, I love my master, my wife and my children". The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, said that: I love My master, I love My wife, I love My children. His preparedness to serve His God and Father: "I do always the things that are pleasing to him", John 8: 29! And how He served in love for His assembly! He "delivered himself up for it", Eph 5: 25. Oh the preciousness of the love of Jesus and how He served in relation to the lambs! Think of His appeal to Peter in John 21 as to the lambs and the sheep - the individuals, you and me, in our need for food, in our need for shelter, our need for care and protection.

The Lord has served in that way. We think of that hymn: 'O what a Saviour is Jesus the Lord!' (No.169). May we be appealed to today, in this precious time of the outshining of the glad tidings, to commit ourselves afresh to the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who served in this way, the One who said distinctly, I love my master, I love my wife, I love my children.

You will recall that scene presented by John in his gospel, where Jesus from the cross looked and said to John "Behold thy mother", and to His mother "behold thy son", chap 19: 26,27. The Lord would awaken feelings of affection in our hearts for one another. I believe if we understood the value of affection for one another more we would be more effective in our service to one another. In this section love is the motive behind these words. What is the motive behind what I say and what I do? That is a challenge to us. Whatever I say and whatever I do, I am tested by my motives: Luke speaks of what Jesus began both to *do* and to *teach*. We can see clearly in this section the feelings of the Lord and how He was brought before the judges: "shall bring him to the door, or to the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall be his bondman for ever". I suppose in a sense Isaiah 53 brings out how the Lord was taken to the door-post. One does not understand exactly how it would work out, but I believe, as we think through scripture, we get touches of how the Lord moved, His submission. to His master, and what it would be to have His ear bored through with an awl. It says prophetically in Isaiah 50: "morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear" (v 4). Think of the life of Jesus, morning by morning, what that was in the sight of the Father, to see the Son in dependent manhood walking in this scene, and His ear opened morning by morning to have a word for instruction, to teach one that is weary. Have you not known what it was to be weary, heavy laden? The Lamb of God wants to give us rest. Will we allow Him to come near and speak a word to us, in our weariness, in our need, whatever it may be? He is just as available today from the glory above as He was when He was in proximity to men physically. We want to get hold of it, each of us, young and old,

how near the Lord Jesus Christ is to us. This One who served for these wages of love is in readiness to serve you and to serve me.

Will we trust Him? Much has come in as a result of sin, and the need of mankind is great. How the enemy has done it we are told in the parable, where the wheat was growing up and the tares grew with it, and the master says "A man that is an enemy has done this", Matt 13: 28. Oh the sorrows we know so well! An enemy hath done it, the enemy of our souls; he would hinder our progress in the things of God, and he *has* hindered us. May we understand what it is to move in this world as those who are committed to going forward in dependence upon our God and in confidence in Him in the holding of our body in relation to the will of God as our Lord has done.

In Corinthians we come on to that thought of the believer's body, in two touches there. Firstly it is "Do ye not know that your bodies are members of Christ?". I do not know whether all have committed themselves here - we preach the word of God with the feeling of yearning and urgency of heart - most if not all have committed themselves to the Lord Jesus, confessed His name, committed themselves to the pathway of the will of God. Most have committed themselves to the Lord's supper: what a precious occasion that is! We might say more of that later, but one just refers to the need to think about our bodies as members of the Christ. Paul asked these two questions here: "Do ye not know that your bodies are members of Christ?", and then "Do ye not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God; and ye are not your own?". The believer's body is a member of Christ. Think of the world, its memberships, its associations, the kinds of things that men have done to try and combine to meet the power and the effects of sin upon the human race. One thinks just for a moment of Daniel; when he was tested, when he prayed three times a day with his window open toward Jerusalem, those men opposing him "came in a body", chap 6: 6. There is pressure upon one and another through the combines of men. I believe the Lord would give us a sense of confidence in Him, how He will help us through as we realise the preciousness of being members of the

body of Christ, those who are His, those who are called by divine calling, those who have presented their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to Him. May we realise the value of yielding ourselves to Jesus, owning Him as Lord, being committed to Him in a fresh way today.

Then, too, "Do ye not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit... ?". I believe we would rightly draw attention to the power of the Holy Spirit here in the believer. Have you desired His presence? Have you sought His company, the company of a divine Person in your walk and in your pathway here? We think of our bodies, what they are, and the Holy Spirit: has He a way in you? Do you commune with Him? One would be asking these questions of oneself, feeling the urgency of the need for it in the days in which we walk. One was thinking, too, of that precious little song we used to sing as children as to our bodies. A lot of these things that we used to say we may have forgotten but it comes to one's mind afresh:

'Two little eyes to look to God,
Two little ears to hear His word,
One little mouth to sing His praise,
Two little feet to walk in His ways,
Two little hands to do His will,
One little heart to love Him still'

Do we hold our bodies in that way for the will of God, in preparedness to serve our Lord Jesus Christ, in preparedness to look to Him and to hear His word and to have part in the singing of His praise? The Lord loves to hear the praise of even the very youngest. Think of when He came into Jerusalem "mounted upon... a colt the foal of an ass", and they strewed their garments in the way; and the Hosannas of the little children, and how the Lord said "If these shall be silent, the stones will cry out", Luke 19: 40! The Lord is looking for an answer from every heart; that would include everyone from the youngest to the oldest. Let us give our hearts to Jesus. Let us submit ourselves to Him. He is worthy of our trust.

It goes on in this section to refer to the word that you are not your own, "ye have been bought with a price". Oh, the price! Let us speak about the price. What it has cost the Lord Jesus Christ to secure you and me for eternal blessing with Him! He went the way of the cross, where He was made sin, "that we might become God's righteousness in him", 2 Cor 5: 21. He shed His precious blood.

Think of what the wicked hands of man have done, and yet He went that way in submission to the will of God: "not my will, but thine be done", Luke 22: 42. What words they were as spoken from the lips of Jesus the Son of God! Let us allow these precious thoughts to come into our hearts afresh, and may they affect us so that our bodies are held for the will of God. I think that is what Paul must have had in mind. Then he says "glorify now then God in your body". What a precious thought that is! How will you or I glorify God in our body? The Lord Jesus spoke to Peter about that - "by what death he should glorify God", John 21: 19. Think of what the beloved apostles went through! They stood in relation to their Saviour, we are told that they each went through martyrdom. Then we think of the awakening in the dark ages and how many went through martyrdom, how they held their bodies for the will of God. At home we have recently been encouraged to read a little in Miller's Church History; there are some excellent portions there to read.

One man confessed his Saviour and then in the torment and the torture of his captors he submitted to them, renounced his submission to Jesus because of the way his body had been put through pressure; but then in the mercy of God he re-awakened in his conscience and heart and again stood true to his Lord, and when they placed the fire behind him he said, No, put the fire in front of me. He was prepared in that way to go forward in answer to the will of God.

These are the realities of the sufferings of the present time that many have endured. If you or I were called to have such a part in the close of the dispensation will we yield our bodies, will we submit them as a living sacrifice? What an intelligent service it is! Oh, may the Lord help us to understand these precious scriptures and be in

the gain of them by the Spirit's power. The Lord said of the Spirit: "he shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you", John 16: 14. Do you want to see, do I want to see, these precious things? It may be that in the sorrows of the testimony we have been hindered, or maybe we have hindered ourselves. Whatever the case may be, it does not have to be that way any more; we can go on in the sense of confidence in God as those who are prepared to offer ourselves. It is like the Nazarite's vow; if he was defiled there is the opportunity to be recovered.

Well, that brings us to Mark, that beloved servant. Paul, in writing to Timothy, says "Take Mark, and bring him with thyself, for he is serviceable to me for ministry", 2 Tim 4: 11. That comes out in this gospel. One has not thought sufficiently about the references at the end of the gospel to the young man. I believe it should be an encouragement to us, though, to enquire why there are these two references to "a young man". In the first it says "And all left him and fled". That is a reference, beloved, to even the disciples leaving Jesus and fleeing. And then it says "a certain young man followed him with a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men seize him; but he, leaving the linen cloth behind him, fled from them naked". I think others who have taught us indicate that Mark has some reference to himself here as to the desire to follow. There was the desire with the disciples to follow, in fact they all said they were prepared to go even to death, and the Lord said "The spirit... is willing, but the flesh weak", Mark 14: 38. We feel our weakness and we would be conscious of it, and here it comes into expression, this young man followed, but then when he was seized he fled, leaving the linen cloth behind him - "fled from them naked".

When we think of the history of Mark our thoughts would go to Acts. In chapter 15: 26 it says, Barnabas and Paul, men who have given up their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. But then over the page it says in verse 37: "Barnabas proposed to take with them John also, called Mark; but Paul thought it not well to take with them him who had abandoned them, going back from... the work".

There was the desire to go forward, even with Barnabas, one who

had given up his life for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It shows how near we come to these holy precious things, and how Nazariteship may be defiled. But the Lord in the gospel today would encourage our hearts that it is a day of recovery, and a day of blessing, and that you and I can have part in it, in the preciousness of the carrying forward of the testimony of Jesus. I believe that is what these occasions would stimulate our hearts to do, to be in the service of our God, to be committed to the pathway of the will of God.

To come on to the young man in chapter 16, it says they saw a young man "sitting on the right, clothed in a white robe, and they were amazed and alarmed". What a different picture here! Here is a young man within the tomb, the tomb of Jesus. Would that we would go there by the Spirit's power today to view this scene. In the opening of this chapter it says of the women: "very early on the first day of the week they come to the sepulchre, the sun having risen.

And they said to one another, Who shall roll us away the stone out of the door of the sepulchre?". Matthew tells us that there was an earthquake, and there was an angel descending from heaven - think of the earth affected, and heaven affected! - and the stone was rolled away and the angel sat upon it. Oh, the victory of Christ risen! Let it be in our hearts today that the Saviour Jesus, the One who served in lowliness, who yielded Himself to the will of God and went into death, that He has come out in victory, glorious Saviour, wondrous Saviour, as we sing! Is He your Saviour? Do you know Him? Have you confessed His name? Have you put your trust in Him? We would be urgent, dear brethren, dear friends, in the need to yield ourselves like this young man. It says he was clothed in white. Our thoughts turn to Revelation where persons, it says, made their clothing "white in the blood of the Lamb", chap 7: 14. You and I must be in the good of it. Let us maintain ourselves in that way, garments made white in the blood of the Lamb. It is available to us, and one just commends these few words to us all with the desire that we should have our part as those who are committed, who would hold ourselves - "Out of Egypt have I called my son", Matt 2: 15 - in view of being here for

the service of our God. May we be encouraged to be committed to the interests of Christ. How He loves His own! We want to encourage one another to move in relation to them. We do not draw attention to any in particular, but it is committal to the Lord, and He will help you to find where He is. In Luke there is another touch; it says "they found not the body of the Lord Jesus", chap 24: 3. But in this section in Mark it goes on to this young man, and he says "go, tell his disciples and Peter, he goes before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said to you". It is in the company of His own that you will find the presence of the Lord. One would commend it to us all, and we need to be more committed to it, for His name's sake.

TORONTO

11 October 1981

THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND

You will say at once 'that is Jesus' and even the very young ones will know that He is 'a Friend for little children' as the hymn says. In His lifetime here He proved this when He took even infants into His arms for blessing and bade the little ones come to Him. In those days it might have meant a journey to find Jesus, but now that He is 'above the bright blue sky' all can come to Him in thought and in spirit. At His ascension He passed majestically through the heavens, first the region of the birds of the air, then through the angels' dwelling and the seat of the various heavenly powers. Then He went above all heavens to God the Father at whose right hand He sat down, the perfect work of redemption having been completed. The believer has the privilege of seeing Him there by faith.

A beautiful, descriptive touch in the Proverbs is that "The friend loveth at all times", and surely we can say this of our Lord Jesus by personal experience! If He loved us so as to deliver Himself up to be crucified for us we can have no doubt that He will love His own through everything. How often heavenly truths are illustrated by earthly incidents. I remember reading of a family man who was

called up by the casting of lots to fight in the American Civil War. He was unable to find a substitute but on the morning of the day on which he had to report for duty a young man whom he knew came to him offering to go in his place as he himself was unmarried and had no dependants. In one of the battles the young man was dangerously wounded, died and was buried close by the battlefield. Just a board with the simple words 'He died for me' marked the grave later on.

Another gem from the Proverbs is "Faithful are the wounds of a friend". It is not easy to write about these words except that we must always remember that a friend means one who loves. I expect that this explains why the Lord sometimes allows in the lives even of young believers things that vex and are hard to bear. His love will bring the grace for needed help and His word tries us as to whether we have the affections of a friend towards Him. So the question arises, does our love for Him lead us to serve Him here? At the time when He had just instituted the Lord's supper He asked His lovers to prove their love by keeping His word. Do you respond to His longing?

J.C.Evershed