

A
WORD
IN ITS
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Contents

FULNESS

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SPIRIT

THE CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

FULNESS

John 3: 1-21; Ezekiel 36: 33-38; Luke 7: 36-50

J.A.G. I was thinking a little this week about fulness, and of the good ground in Luke's gospel. There is neither increase nor decrease in Luke, as the brethren well know; the ground brings forth fruit one hundred fold. John 3 shows us how the good ground is prepared in new birth, preparing for the reception of the glad tidings, causing us to be impressionable to the word of God. In Genesis 2 the mist comes up and moistens the whole surface of the ground. The Lord says here, Ye, that is the whole person, must be born anew. Ezekiel perhaps would show us the fulness of what is in mind on the line of privilege as on this line we come into the fulness of the prime thoughts of God. The reference in Ezekiel to Eden is very choice - "the garden of Eden"; and then the flocks of men in the cities, as it says, "As the flock of Jerusalem in her set feasts", in type all the privileges of the assembly are entered into and enjoyed in fulness.

Luke 7 is very precious to all our hearts and often used by us in the preaching. The woman, I think, shows the fulness of love and affection and response there is to be for the Lord's own heart in the sphere of testimony and rejection. Whilst externally He is invited into the house He is treated very coldly and without comfort. She has great appreciation in that sense of Christ as her Deliverer, the brazen serpent, the Son of man lifted up. She knows that the way into heaven is only by way of the cross. What love she has for Christ and what support and comfort He affords her as He approves of every single thing that she does, and she is able to go away in peace. That is a very blessed thing.

L.McF. That is very fine. The old having failed, Adam and those that are of him, God has begun with another Man. And in us this matter of what is new is involved, do you think?

J.A.G. Exactly. No matter who it is, to come to the knowledge of God begins with new birth. It is a vital necessity, to see the kingdom of God and to be born of water and Spirit in order that we should

enter into it. The woman has entered into the kingdom of God; she has seen the kingdom of God in Jesus and she has entered into it.

Nicodemus and those in Jerusalem had seen the signs which He wrought, but the Lord does not commit Himself to that line at all: He commits Himself to the woman, commits Himself to what develops out of the new birth, out of the Spirit's work.

L.McF. Perhaps you could develop for us this new source. It is entirely new, a new source of life.

J.A.G. Yes, it is a completely new concept, you might say. The old thing is completely broken down, it has collapsed. Did not F.E.R. say that it is like putting a pin in a balloon; it brings down the whole thing and then you become dependent like a new-born babe. You find instincts developing in you, that you desire earnestly, for instance, the pure mental milk of the word (1 Peter 2: 2). I think the Lord is very gracious and patient in the way that He goes over the teaching of the truth with Nicodemus.

L.McF. Well, the emphasis is on the fact that he is a very religious man.

J.A.G. Yes, and it must have shaken him to have this told to him. He thought he had it all and the Lord shows that he does not even have the Scriptures.

G.H. What do you understand by what Peter says, "the pure mental milk of the word" 1 Peter 2: 2?

J.A.G. I think it just means the scripture and the ministry as it comes. It is the pure mental milk of the word whereby you may grow up to salvation. Paul says to Timothy, for instance, that from a child he had known the sacred letters, which are able to make you wise unto salvation (2 Tim 3: 15). What do you say?

G.H. I was just asking about the expression "mental".

J.A.G. I think that is a fair question, because the result of new birth too is that the law is capable of being written in your mind and heart; your understanding is different. The Lord is going to do that. It says

of the coming day that Israel will inquire of Him about it - "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it unto them".

J.A.P. Maybe you would say what is meant by fulness. I notice that it is used in chapter 1, "of his fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace". John 1: 16.

J.A.G. I think in the context in which we were using it earlier in the week - the assembly as His fulness - it is the complement of Christ. His fulness in chapter 1 I suppose is the limitless supply of grace that comes toward us in Christ. It has been said that it is like the waves of the sea, wave after wave of grace. The law came by Moses; there was no grace in that system. The Lord is seeking now to instruct Nicodemus and to impart to him something of the fulness of the grace that is in Himself.

S.E.H. There is a distinction between these two Pharisees that you read of in John and Luke. Here Nicodemus says, "Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God, for none can do these signs that thou doest unless God be with him"; he was positive in what he said about the Lord. As to the Pharisee in Luke 7, it says, "And the Pharisee who had invited him, seeing it, spoke with himself saying, This person if he were a prophet would have known who and what the woman is who touches him, for she is a sinner". Is there something working in Nicodemus here that relates to what the Lord says about new birth?

J.A.G. Yes, he is himself the subject of it, although he does not know it. But I think he went back to the same meeting as Simon, and so he did not get the gain of it. When he speaks in chapter 7 his motion is vetoed in that meeting. He comes out at the end of the book - thank God for that; he is called a secret disciple. But he is the subject of new birth and he does not really know it. Maybe we should ask ourselves if we are conscious that we have been born anew.

C.F.D. Would the place that the Spirit of God has in this help us? The ways of God begin with the Spirit, do they not, but then the Spirit

is the One that gives us the realisation of what has transpired in us and what is transpiring.

J.A.G. Yes, I think so. In this section we are in the presence of the working out of divine love in the economy, the Father, and the Son and the Spirit. It begins with the Spirit, the sovereign action of the Spirit; it is God's work and He is going on with His work. It makes us receptive, pliable or amenable to the work of God. It causes us to be convicted by it. It is not the reception of the Spirit but it is the work of the Spirit in us, the sovereign action of the Spirit, a very blessed thing that we have been the subjects of the sovereign action of the Spirit of God so that we might receive the glad tidings and be brought to God. Our hearts should rise up in deep thanksgiving to the Holy Spirit for that wonderful service that He has rendered to us, and seek to get the gain of the fulness of that service.

L.McF. With most of us it took some time to realise that it was a work apart from ourselves.

J.A.G. Yes, because when we come to the gospel we are on responsible ground and when the word of God comes to us we feel convicted about it, and of the Lord's fulness we get grace to acknowledge that conviction. We are touching the great system of divine grace; it is very wonderful.

G.D.P. Would you mind helping me on the other side - the water and the Spirit.

J.A.G. I think the water is the cleansing agent that the glad tidings and the word of God would be. You are convicted and you submit to the word of God and the cleansing process takes place. What do you say? We all need to help one another because we are in a time when help is greatly needed.

G.D.P. It is getting rid of all the old material, is it not, washing that away and making way for the new?

J.A.G. Yes exactly. So you can see how Nicodemus' thinking faculty needs help. He is not equal at the moment to the pure

mental milk of the word: he is saying natural things by way of natural reasoning. The Lord graciously goes over the thing with him.

C.F.D. Would the bent of the mind of the Spirit be to develop in us this line of fulness? It begins with new birth. It has been said new birth is like a new born child; it is all there, it is complete, but it needs to be developed. And while you come to the thought of eternal life in this chapter it requires the Spirit of God in the next chapter, to become in the person a fountain of water springing up into eternal life. It becomes a reality in the heart of the person.

J.A.G. I think so. I think it is light, the Lord is bringing light to bear upon the man's soul and the fulness of the teaching from this point of view is eternal life. I suppose in one sense that is the ultimate, you might say, of the earthly things. Would that be right?

J.A.P. Yes. I enjoyed the thought of the newborn baby because we have one here and it is illustrative that the whole thing is there. That is a great matter. When you are born again everything is there, the faculties, but they have to be developed in fulness. That is why I think we need help about this expression 'fulness'.

J.A.G. I think 'embryo' is the word, is it not? Everything is there in the baby, an embryo, it needs developing. So that the essential thing is food; at regular times it has to be fed and comforted and cared for. That needs motherhood, a wonderful feature in a local meeting that this is nurtured and brought on, because what is in mind is full grown men. There is a very fine reference to manhood in Ezekiel 36, is there not, "flocks of men", - "so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men". It is a great extension of Christ - manhood in the localities. It starts with a babe in Luke 2 and goes on to the twelve, it goes on to the seventy, and then to Paul; the dispensation starts with one hundred and twenty, then you get three thousand, then five thousand men. You see the great potentialities that are available in Christianity so that we should arrive at the full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ (Eph 4: 13).

L.McF. There has been reference to light, atmosphere and rule. Just going back to the thought of the new-born babe, how essential these things are to growth.

J.A.G. They are vital to it. Light - that is what the Lord is at here, so that you can see - light, atmosphere and rule. The next thing is redemption, then the kingdom of God. When our wills are subdued we will be able to imbibe the teaching, that is the new covenant. Maybe that is going too fast.

C.F.D. I think it is good to give us the idea of the way we work towards things: it is like steps in a sense, is it not? The embryonic idea is that something is developing all the time.

J.A.G. That is right; it develops. The seed is the word of God; it is a bare grain. That is what you sow, just a bare grain, and that is capable of tremendous production; it is going to develop into one hundred fold. In Matthew it is decrease, in Mark increase (which is a great comfort to us in these days of revival) but Luke is constant; just as Paul is constant.

G.H. I can see the great thought of light coming in first but maybe you have something to say as to atmosphere and rule.

J.A.G. I think the atmosphere is provided by the love of God, and the love of the brethren, brought up in a right atmosphere where you are not damaged by what goes on. You are able to breathe pure air. The hill country is a great place for atmosphere; there is a great atmosphere in Luke 2, a fine, buoyant, happy, healthy atmosphere.

G.H. How about rule?

J.A.G. That is what is in mind here - the kingdom of God - and the ultimate in that is that the Lord has the first place in all things. We are coming under the sway of heaven.

A.S.H. Nicodemus would be in a good atmosphere.

J.A.G. That is very good.

A.S.H. I was thinking too, as our brother spoke of the two Pharisees, that it would be right to say that Nicodemus was in the

learning stage, he was seeking to take on things.

J.A.G. Yes. He is confused, as we all were at times, but he is in a great atmosphere in the Lord's presence. Why does he want to go back out of that atmosphere? The Lord is not going back with him to the Jewry, He is not going back to the Pharisees. I think he goes back to Simon's meeting, and he comes under that deadening atmosphere and influence. The woman has proved deliverance; she knows what the brazen serpent is all about, and in the pouring out of the myrrh I think she appreciates and answers to the suffering love of the Lord Jesus. She provides the atmosphere.

C.G. There is an interesting note on "anew" in chapter 3, it says, 'Not only 'again', but 'entirely afresh', as from a new source of life and point of departure; translated in Luke 1: 3, 'from the origin'. 'It is a new source and beginning of life'. Would you say a word on the significance of a new source and beginning of life.

J.A.G. I think the old is completely finished. The Lord Jesus going on to speak of the brazen serpent shows that the old is finished, and it is finished vicariously in Him. The life in us to which sin attached was judicially dealt with vicariously in Christ Himself. Imagine Jesus going that distance for us. Now the new birth makes us amenable to the teaching of the glad tidings, receptive to the light of them and to the wonderful display of God's love in them. That should draw out our hearts to Christ, and when our hearts are drawn out to the Spirit we are beginning to grow in our appreciation and understanding of the activities of divine love and divine Persons.

A.G.S. The hill-country was a healthy atmosphere, was it not? Those two sisters enjoyed it very much.

J.A.G. Yes, that was a beautiful atmosphere. One just needed to speak to the other and there is an immediate quickening touch; it was a great place of affection and much for God in it. You can understand it being linked with the Philippian epistle where the fulness of joy pervades the locality despite the adversity of circumstances and the poverty, you might almost say raging poverty,

that was amongst the brethren. It is not related to that at all, it is completely new, it is out of heaven.

J.R.C. You were speaking about what is constant: verse 6 says "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit". That is another thing we have to come to, is it not?

J.A.G. Yes, it never changes. It is the same until you are gone, either the Lord comes or you are dead and buried; that is the end of the flesh. But that is kept in check in the believer by the power of the Spirit. Hence we become analytical in a right sense and make way for God's work in our souls. That is the truth of the glad tidings. We are touching Romans 7.

J.R.C. I was following what has been said about the hill-country and the atmosphere. This is the atmosphere, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"; it is appreciated in that atmosphere. Is that right?

J.A.G. Exactly. It is made way for and it develops in that atmosphere. Now Zacharias needed help, did he not? He was going on perhaps a little orthodoxly; he is out of communion. Gabriel shows him what communion is about; he stands on the right side of the altar and he brings in this wonderful news. You have been praying all your life for a son, now here it is. And Zacharias does not believe it. How can it be? he says. He has to learn through discipline. Then what comes out of his mouth is very wonderful. He comes to it that "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit". So he says, Get a writing-table; we are not going to call him Zacharias, we are calling him John. In that sense nobody that has been born of the flesh was ever called John because grace does not belong to that family. They say we will extend Zacharias and there will be another Zacharias, but John is of God that is the Spirit. I think that is a very fine thing. "John is his name"; he writes that and that is indelible. That is a man who has come back into communion. In Leviticus 4 when the priest that is anointed sins, the blood of the sin-offering is carried through to the altar of incense. God has in mind that the priest should be restored in communion; that is marvellous grace.

C.S.E. The Lord's word in verse 7 of our chapter is "It is needful that ye should be born anew". Should there be a point in all our histories where we have some sense that that has taken place?

J.A.G. Indeed.

C.S.E. We cannot assume that because we are in fellowship and breaking bread that that has taken place, but it has to be a real experience that there has been a beginning with God with us.

J.A.G. I think that is essential. What you say is vital, that we should be able, according to John, to take reckonings; go back in your soul to when there was first some desire after Christ, and you can follow the milestones, if you like, in your history. This was a milestone in Nicodemus's history. I suppose after the Spirit came he could see the whole thing clearly; he could see the kingdom of God and no doubt he entered into it. But here he is in a bit of a fog because he is thinking so religiously. His whole mind has been so inculcated with the law and that kind of teaching and yet he has neglected the Scriptures. I think the force of the new birth would cause us to pursue the truth in the Scriptures and in the ministries of the revival.

J.A.P. So we should perhaps look a bit more into Ezekiel.

J.A.G. There has been great help brought out of that book through readings I suppose in this very place. There were two or three sets of readings on Ezekiel and how it compares with the gospel we are reading now, John's gospel. It is a day of captivity and Ezekiel is amongst the captives; he goes through the experiences of captivity, yet he gets marvellous light as to the house and the city and the priesthood.

J.A.P. Ezekiel really confirms your thought about fulness because there you get, in the passage we read, a number of persons but you also get something collective; if it begins with one but the mind of God is that our thoughts should be extended in relation to this great vessel. In the world to come it will be seen. Israel shall be born in a day, it says in another place.

J.A.G. I think that is very good because in the type, I suppose, and by way of application, you can see at the close of Ezekiel, when he is speaking about flocks of men, that we arrive at the fact that there is one body and one Spirit and one hope of your calling (see Eph 4: 4). Now that is a marvellous circle amongst the brethren, is it not? That is a fortified city that cannot be broken into. And the beginning of it is the sovereign action of the Spirit in the soul of the believer.

T.E.D. I am still pondering in my mind why it takes me so long to get through. Nicodemus, at least he came, but do we need to see the Lord going into death if we are to reach the termination of the man that is the hindrance to us?

J.A.G. Yes, I think the food in John 6 would be very helpful on that line. Think of the Lord here as the brazen serpent lifted up - I think progress largely has to do with feeding, prayer and feeding. By nature you grow through feeding, but then there is the diet that brings about moral correspondence to Christ and develops room for the Spirit so that we are able to enter into the heavenly things. That is what is primarily in the Lord's mind.

C.F.D. We are touching on something that I also feel is very much needed. In the previous chapter you have a Nathanael; Nathanael was a very quick learner: he arrives at things almost immediately. Nicodemus has to go through the long process. Help us as to how we can get over to this side of learning more quickly so that we do not take forty years to learn anything.

J.A.G. In Nathanael we have a very searching word, I suppose, for all our hearts. Nathanael is commended in the fact that he had no guile. Now I do not know about Nicodemus; he has maybe a few options that he is considering. It needs a pure heart, for we are in the position because we are supposed to be calling on the Lord out of a pure heart. It says of Jesus "neither was guile found in his mouth", 1 Peter 2: 22. Well, I could not say that about myself.

C.F.D. So much depends on our state. You can sit down and read a reading and after you have finished you might say, What did I get out of it? Well, my state might not have been right, so that the Spirit of

God was not free in me. Do you think that Nicodemus would set out a man who was burdened with a lot of things whereas Nathanael was a man who was free in his own spirit; he can get through very quickly to things as to the Person of Christ?

J.A.G. I think so; I think he sets that out. I think that is why the Lord goes over the teaching here as to the brazen serpent; Nicodemus has got to get free of that in himself.

L.McF. It says of Saul "behold, he is praying", Acts 9: 11. He too would be a quick learner. Maybe what is normal is seen in Paul.

J.A.G. Yes. The scales are still on Nicodemus' eyes. Saul was three days and three nights without seeing - he was really earnest in his exercises and in his concerns. The Lord then sent along help and He would still do that. You see persons who get a touch in the glad tidings, they are converted, they are committed to Christ and then they forge ahead. And you struggle along and you say, Look at that. It has nothing to do with intellect or natural ability; it is committal of heart to Christ.

S.E.H. Ananias came to Saul in view of the reception of the Holy Spirit. I was going to ask if you could help us as to being born of the Spirit and then reception of the Holy Spirit. Would you say something for us as to the difference, and as to whether these two matters should normally come very close together with us.

J.A.G. I think they should. I think your reference to Saul on that line would help very much; he was born of water and of Spirit. Immediately then he wants to be baptised, although he needed a little encouragement on that line.

C.F.D. Would it be right to think that, in between what our brother is referring to, is the gift of faith to receive the word of God? You can be born of the Spirit, new birth can have taken place but the believer needs to be receptive of the word of God. That involves the gift of faith, does it?

J.A.G. I suppose it does. I think the service of the Spirit makes us pliable; the mist moistened the whole surface of the ground. No

matter where you drop the seed on that ground it is going to fructify.

K.O. Is it right to say that new birth is wholly from God, the Spirit's work? We cannot do anything to bring about new birth in our souls.

J.A.G. No you cannot do a thing about it, and yet the onus is put upon you, Ye must be born anew.

K.O. I was wondering if the responsibility then lies upon us in answering to the glad tidings: this work may take place and yet it needs the glad tidings to bring it to light.

J.A.G. Exactly. I once heard a brother say, You know the Spirit may just go right before the preacher, step by step. That is a marvellous experience if it happens. You might come into the room - God would order that - and then the Spirit of God acts like a wind and there might be a wind of change blow through your soul, blow through your mind.

K.O. I was thinking of the reference to Saul. It would seem that perhaps there was something going on with him in the way of new birth before the Lord struck him down. He said to Him, Why do you kick against the goads. We do not know how long that was, but apparently there was something working with him.

J.A.G. I think it would probably be right to say that he was affected by what he saw in Stephen - how the Lord honoured the death of His faithful martyr, and He used that to sow something in Saul's soul. So if somebody is going about on a very dangerous course as he was you are not to write him off, because Saul was in the sheet that Peter saw. That should greatly help us in the glad tidings; no matter how rough and tough they may seem, the word of God is equal for it.

D.B. I was wondering if Saul experienced something of the atmosphere in the testimony of Stephen and whether that is what we need to be exercised about, that that atmosphere is provided in which the work can grow.

J.A.G. I think so. I think there was marvellous incense, fragrance, at the death of Stephen; he exuded the Spirit of Christ. In one sense you might say the cloud of incense was there. When Aaron went in

it covered the mercyseat, did it not? I think that is a very beautiful position at the close of Acts 7. It is not without point, I suppose, that it says that they laid their clothes at the feet of a young man called Saul.

J.A.P. The third matter spoken about was rule. Would that answer perhaps the earlier inquiry as to growth? You find in yourself that if your will is broken you make progress, but will is often retained in some form in us and it hinders the Lord's developing things with us. There must be rule, there must be subjection to that rule.

J.A.G. Yes, there must be authority, the Lord's authority. You marvel at the depth of self-will that is in you. You go along and you know you should do something, and up it comes and you are almost unbendable. I think maybe as you go on, discipline helps you on that line. The Lord expects us to be able to humble ourselves and to be humble. Then we need to learn that He may humble us now and then, that we know what is in mind.

G.H. We spoke about being born again. It says, He that is born of God sinneth not, (1 John 5: 18). Would that be partaking of the divine nature?

J.A.G. Yes. I think there are different settings of it in Scripture. Born of God in John 1 is the complete mature idea, there is no development there.

A.G.S. We were speaking about fulness also. Do you think fulness is seen in Simeon and Anna: they spoke freely when the Babe was brought into the temple?

J.A.G. Yes, I think so. Simeon is the result. He fits very nicely into the end of Ezekiel 36 - "A man in Jerusalem" - and he is in the area of divine communications; officially, maybe, in the temple but then it was divinely communicated to him. You would like to be in that kind of state that the Lord can commit His mind to you, He can say things to you, tell you that you are not going to see death until you see the Lord's Christ. And immediately the enlightening of the whole gentile world opens up to him.

K.N.P. Can you help us about the reference here to entering into the kingdom of God. First of all it is seeing the kingdom of God and then entering into it. How do we do that?

J.A.G. I think the entering in involves our deliverance. The brazen serpent is the point of our deliverance, is it not? You wander about in the wilderness all these years but once you come to that chapter, you begin to make progress. The sun is risen, there is light, there are great regions beyond that are attractive to you. There are other things to see to, but never mind, let us go and journey. What do you think?

K.N.P. I think so. Sometimes we stop short. Nicodemus was like that, was he not? We need to foster what is there so that it can grow.

J.A.G. We do not write off Nicodemus, we do not write anybody off, because if the brethren had written anyone off we would have disappeared long ago, but they carried us along and helped us all.

Nicodemus is not conscious that he needs deliverance, he is blind, there is darkness there, and light is needed to dispel that darkness to show the man exactly how things are in the sight of God. Now when you come into the kingdom everything is in divine order.

J.R.C. Ezekiel perhaps could be developed a little; "desolate and ruined cities are fortified". What is involved in that?

J.A.G. I think the whole side of what is military which Numbers brings out is in mind there. He that is of God keeps himself (1 John 5: 18), the work of God is prominent in your soul. So that the person is fortified, there is room for God. The flesh is not allowed; you are able to put it to death by the Spirit immediately it raises its head.

Hence the Spirit of God has scope in these areas and so you can live in peace. It is a terrible thing if the whole of your life you are battling against the flesh.

L.McF. The Philippians seem to have been a fortified city.

J.A.G. That is very beautiful - exactly.

J.R.C. Would it have some bearing at all on local positions?

J.A.G. I think so. I think you can say the whole armour of God is there. It is a great defensive armour but then the sword of the Spirit is God's word and that is what prevails, the word of God.

S.E.H. Originally in the garden of Eden there was not the thought of a city but there is as it is recovered in these verses. Would you say something about that.

J.A.G. I think it is very beautiful. It was man's idea first - it appears from Scripture at least that it was man's idea - but God had that in His mind before the world was; He brings out His city. The garden of Eden is the paradise of God, the choicest place that man can be put in. I think the idea here is to impress our hearts with the fact that we come back to the choicest of divine thoughts, to prime divine thoughts in eternal life and then sonship.

T.E.D. You get, repeatedly, the expression here, I will do it, "I will also cause the cities to be inhabited". Is our struggle largely that the 'I' of Nicodemus comes in the way and hinders this simple readiness and receptiveness to allow God to do His work with us?

J.A.G. I think so. I think that helps because in Genesis 1 God says, Let things happen and they happen; there is no evidence of will or opposition. Well, God's word comes to us and I think if we submit to it it will happen. We go through these days - you come to rule on the fourth day, to an appreciation, it may be objective, of Christ and the assembly and the brethren. It goes on another two days before the thing takes substantial shape in the man and the woman, but you see the thing in all its clarity and beauty. God gives us that kind of vision.

T.E.D. In John 3 the Lord says, "If I have said the earthly things to you, and ye believe not ..." If the belief is not there with me I hinder arrival at this fulness.

J.A.G. Exactly, we need faith. What was said about the gift of faith is interesting. God is giving Himself a clear right of way in the soul of a person. He sets the first order aside and then He is bringing in and establishing another order of man altogether. So that what is in

mind, I suppose, is the heavenly ones, they are of the same character as the heavenly One.

Maybe we should go to Luke 7. It is a marvellous situation where the person is moving in the gain of deliverance in the sphere of testimony. I suppose we would all have to say we get scared of men at times - "The fear of man bringeth a snare", Prov 29: 25 - but there is nothing of that with her, the Lord is her object in this cold, Pharisaical, uninviting, situation.

J.A.P. Was your thought in connecting this with fulness that this woman is making great progress but the other man is going nowhere?

J.A.G. He is stopped. This woman manifests that her works have been wrought in God; the other man loves darkness rather than light. He does not like to be shown up. It is a great thing that the Lord comes in and exposes our motives to ourselves, and that is what He is doing to Simon, but Simon is not keen on it. Maybe he thinks, What will Nicodemus think of me? and Nicodemus might say, What will Simon think of me? They are all tied up in bondage with one another instead of being delivered from that kind of thing. So the brazen serpent is deliverance; he that looked lived. Is that right?

J.A.P. Yes. I was noticing your reference in John 7 during the reading: one of the Pharisees says, "Has any one of the rulers believed on him or of the Pharisees?" v 48. So from that scripture Nicodemus had never really made a confession to the others, but then he did say something, "Does our law judge a man before it have first heard from himself?".

J.A.G. He rendered some bit of testimony. But apart from that, Nicodemus misses out on the blessing for himself. He could have been with the Lord in all these chapters.

G.H. Say something more about the brazen serpent - he that looked lived.

J.A.G. I think you look intently, you keep your eye on that and that is the end of the man. You see how Christ has taken up the whole

position vicariously. That serpent never bit anybody, that brazen serpent never did any damage. Jesus was here and there was no poison; He went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil and in that you see God's judgment on man from the doctrinal point of view. Up to Romans 5 - half way through, as well you know - sins are being dealt with but from then on it is sin, the root of the thing, the cause of all the problems, and you get clear of it in chapter 7.

A.S.H. The Pharisee thought he knew it all but here Jesus is calling his attention to the woman, "Seest thou this woman?".

J.A.G. There is the example, this is what I want you to come to, Simon.

L.McF. The single eye is a very important thing. "When thine eye is simple, thy whole body also is light", Luke 11: 34. I am thinking of looking at the brazen serpent.

J.A.G. Yes, that is very helpful. If the Lord fills your vision you are going to be full of light. Simon is very condescending, he will ask you along and sit you down and you might even get to sign his visitors' book, but there is no impartation with him; he does not impart, there is no spiritual impartation. The woman is imparting all the time: that is Romans. When you come into the gospel you are able to impart some spiritual gift and now there is mutual comfort one of another. Our brother referred on Lord's day to this: this is the lily among the thorns.

B.H. I am thinking about the previous portion where he who practises the truth comes to the light. I am trying to link that practice with what we have here in this woman; she goes in peace, she would come back to the light, she would remain with it.

J.A.G. Yes, I do not think she would ever go out of it. Her works are manifest that they have been wrought in God. She has had to do with God about it, she has found deliverance. That is very beautiful. So that the Beloved said in the Song, did he not, "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters", Song of Songs, 2: 1. There she is, she is grown up, she has come to this fulness in this

kind of atmosphere. You do not blame things on the brethren, you blame them on yourself. Well, the Lord commends her emphatically, she has done this and she has done that, she has done the thing needed, and you Simon you have not done a thing. You have rightly judged and that is about as far as you can go.

T.E.D. That is the expression of the fulness, is it not?

J.A.G. I think so. She has a great resource, she has been with God, she has loved the light, she has followed up the teaching of John 3 and she has found deliverance. The men of this generation, He says, they are like children, (Luke 7: 32). That is a poor thing if men are like children. "To whom therefore shall I liken the men of this generation, and to whom are they like?" That is like Simon; they are like children, no matter what you do they are never pleased. So you do not cater exactly for that kind of thing, "He that sows to the Spirit, from the Spirit shall reap eternal life", Gal 6: 8. That is what she has done.

G.H. You mean this woman arrives at fulness?

J.A.G. I think so. I think she arrives at fulness in an answer in love for Christ to what He has wrought out on the cross for her. She knows the love of God, God so loved the world. She is in that area.

The myrrh, I suppose, is her appreciation of the sufferings of Christ that bore the guilt and judgment and all that was her due. So she goes in peace, her faith has saved her and she goes in peace. She is away into the kingdom now - that is the next chapter. We are going to have a local meeting set up in chapter 8. Immediately you get this woman, you get the government - the twelve were with Him and certain women, there you have the substance that is going to maintain the administration of grace. So He brings out the man and the woman and the child .

C.F.D. So her link with God gives her the strength to take the initiative. She is an uninvited guest but she breaks through all the formality of the Simon household and does things which show her own link with God and her appreciation of Christ. So she gets through to a settled state of things.

J.A.G. I think it is very beautiful that she knew - that was divine knowledge - that He was sitting at meat in the house of the Pharisee. If somebody were to ask you, Where is the Lord today, would you be able to say, Yes, I know where He is, sitting at meat in the house of the Pharisee. What grace it was that He did that, sat at meat; later on He took notice of the way they all wanted the first places and that sort of thing. He is really saying to this woman, Friend go up higher, is He not? It is a great exercise and it is a very blessed thing to be able to locate the Lord at any given moment; it is the knowledge of God.

J.R.C. Would it be right then to say, as having located the Lord in that area, she had the wherewithal that is for Him - it is an alabaster box here?

J.A.G. I think it is very beautiful to see that she maintains her contact with Christ through the whole time. We had a marvellous address back in 1958 in Inverurie from Mr McCallum about contact - Bethany. In the first chapter of the Song of Songs, it says "He shall pass the night between my breasts", v.13; the Lord is maintaining contact in that situation in Bethany right through. And Romans 5 is a great outline of the inheritance, but if we are not in contact with the Spirit, we do not get into it. To stay with the Lord in whatever exercise He is at and whatever He is doing is a marvellous thing.

T.E.D. That is a feature of wisdom's children is it not?

J.A.G. She is one of wisdom's children, she knows the Friend of tax gatherers and sinners. She knows the Creditor is there but He is not calling in His accounts. He is administering forgiveness, He is forgiving you the debt. Simon that is for you too, He says, the same as for this woman. And the whole issue, the great issue in the chapter, I think, is love for Christ.

B.H. Simon is introduced as the Pharisee; the woman is introduced as the sinner. He has a reputation problem: she has nothing before her except the One who can save her.

J.A.G. That is very beautiful. She has the Lord before her. In one sense it is like the camp of Judah; she must have heard the trumpet.

The ark has moved and she has moved; she has taken up her position behind Him weeping. Those are holy emotions in the appreciation of the suffering love of Christ that was going on to die for her. That is the brazen serpent. When the Lord speaks of that then He speaks of God's love, He so loved the world. It is a marvellous thing that the heart of God is thus made known in the cross of Christ. In the Pharisaical system it is all demand. If you owe somebody something you have to pay the last farthing; that is the law, but grace is forgiveness. When He breathed into them that is what He said, You go and remit, you do what I have done, if they can be remitted remit and if not you have to retain them, but the Spirit of Christ, the breath of Christ is remission. He wants everybody to be free and in the enjoyment of eternal life.

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Key to initials

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THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SPIRIT

J.A.Gardiner

Numbers 21: 14-22; 27: 1-5, 18-21; 36: 10-12; Deuteronomy 34: 1-6;

Ephesians 5: 18-21

I am conscious, beloved brethren, of the need of help in reading these scriptures and in seeking to say something about the leadership of the Spirit. It is a very blessed matter when we come to the fact that the Spirit of God is to lead us in the way in which we go. The epistle to the Romans tells us that persons who are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God (Rom 8: 14), and then the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (v 16). He leads us and He maintains us in the conscious knowledge of our relationship with God. Well through the book of Numbers, in chapter 21, they come to the well, in type to the Spirit. A lot of wilderness experience has gone past and they have arrived at this point.

Deliverance has been experienced and the brazen serpent, and now they are journeying, they are moving. The book of the wars of the Lord comes to light here in verse 14, certain things are said in it. All that is said relates in a way to the trend and movement of the Spirit towards the inheritance. His main mission, the main object of the Spirit's mission here is to glorify Christ - blessed and wonderful service. He is not here mainly to help us to judge ourselves or to help us to overcome the flesh in ourselves: that is all part of His service, but His main object is to glorify Christ and to take of the things that are His and show them to us. So we need to follow His leadership through to this moral position where the state is settled and His place in our hearts is settled and we are settled and contented in ourselves to follow His wonderful leading as He leads us on towards the heavenly inheritance.

So we come in this chapter in type to the recognition of the Spirit of God, "Rise up, well! sing unto it". We would do well to inquire of ourselves if it is the case that we have moved this far to

the well, the well that springs up. Are we conscious of the springing up, beloved, in ourselves of the Spirit of God? "Rise up, well! sing unto it", or 'respond unto it', a blessed state of soul to be arrived at morally. Through the teaching of the glad tidings the Spirit of God has His way with us, we are conscious that there is no condemnation. We are going on to the position which is referred to by Paul as 'in Christ Jesus'. That is something further perhaps than eternal life; it is the life of Christ where He is now in the heavenly situation, where our blessings are in the heavenlies. This well has been dug, the princes have dug the well. This book is a book of princes, marvellous personalities, men of God, personality that is of God, personality that was formed by the Spirit of God, men who have gone before us in the marvel of the provision of the love of Christ and have seen to it that the well has been dug and the nobles of the people have hollowed it out at the word of the lawgiver. The Lord's authority has been recognised and these princes, these wonderful men who have moved in such a way as having been affected by the precious sufferings of Christ, and the Spirit of God given on the basis of the sufferings of Christ, these men have actively dug the well. They have made way for the Spirit of God, they have removed all the earth and all the obstacles.

If you want to see these princes and their movement you go to chapter 7 of this book. There is a marvellous expression of the function of the body of Christ in maturity in the twelve princes of Israel; persons who move responsibly in appreciation of what is set out in the altar. The dedication gift of the altar is a marvellous conception in fulness in answering to the love that was made known there. These twelve princes were coming from the various points of the camps in the twelve days and the whole situation is held up so that love can give expression in this wonderful way. They are coming with the same thing, each one coming on a different day and no divergence with them, there is perfect unity. You can say of these princes that they were joined in soul, thinking one thing, thin king the same thing. Their thought was to answer in fulness to the love of Christ. If you want to see full-grown men according to the measure

of the stature of the Christ, they are before us in Numbers 7. God delights in that, He loves that. These men arrived at that substance, they arrived at the marvellous acquisition in their souls of appreciation of the humanity of Christ because they dug the well, because the Spirit of God brought that substance into their souls.

That is very blessed. The standard of things there is all set out before us in the book before we start any wilderness journeys.

Numbers 7 is a marvellous chapter. Numbers 5 is the trial of jealousy, as the brethren well know, and the Lord has the right to set that trial on. In one sense that trial continues all the way through, as to whether the wife is faithful or not. We well know from the teaching that the faithful wife conceives the Nazarite, she brings forth that quality amongst the brethren that makes a special vow of committal to the holy things of God. So the Nazarite is the basis for the sustenance of the blessing of the priest upon the nation; "Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee", Num 6: 24. Jehovah commits His blessing safely, His word safely, He commits His thoughts safely to that kind of situation where persons are committed to Him, who are moving on the principle of a vow of the Nazarite. They are not relating themselves exactly to what is natural, whether from the skin to the seed-stone of the grape, if it is to interfere with what is spiritual and what is for the heart of God in the continuance and maintenance of His service here. That does not mean to say that they are unnatural, it does not mean to say that they are hyper-spiritual; there is nothing like that in Christianity. Christianity is simple and straightforward; Christianity, then, is Christ. And these men in Numbers 7 are Christ, two cups of fine flour, dishes of gold - you read it - and Moses goes in at the close of that chapter, as the brethren well know, and he goes in to speak to God and God is so delighted with it that He speaks to Moses. He anticipates Moses.

Oh, beloved, how blessed it is if that is the situation in our local meetings, we find that God comes in and He gives expression to His delight in what is proceeding. In one sense that is the ultimate, the aim and object of the assembly that the local meeting is here to sustain what ministers to the heart of God Himself.

Well, these princes digged the well, the nobles of the people hollowed it out at the word of the lawgiver, with their staves. I would like to encourage every one of us to continue on that line to see that the well is maintained in a free flow, that you use your staff to maintain the flow of the Spirit. Do you know where you get your staff? You begin in Egypt, you get your staff in Egypt; you begin in your experience with God in the glad tidings in deliverance out of Egypt. You come out with your loins girded, your staff in your hand and your sandals on your feet, you come out in haste. If there is anybody here not out of Egypt, not out of the world, beloved, heed the word of God and make haste to get clear of it. It is not a place for a Christian, it is a place that is under the judgment of God. There is not a house, not one house in Egypt, not one but the firstborn was slain in it. He made sure that the Egyptians knew about the judgment of God, made sure that the Israelites knew about it. That realm then is characterised by death. The leadership of Pharaoh is the leadership of my own mind in independency of God. There is great provision in the gift of the Spirit of God: "Well which princes digged, which the nobles of the people hollowed out at the word of the lawgiver". That has been made available to us, beloved. You think of princely men who digged the well. The well was all clogged up, the early fathers clogged up the well, shutting out the Spirit. So what grew out of that was a whole clerical system of things.

Somebody would come between you and your relations with God; your link with God in Christianity, beloved, is the Spirit. What labours then went into the clearing of the well. It is not sufficient that these books should be on our bookshelves, not sufficient. If we have desire after Christ, if we have love for Christ, we will start looking into these things and see how the well has been cleared, how in the line of church history the recovery has gone right back to what is apostolic, based on what is written in the holy word of God.

Marvellous grace, wonderful mercy, that it has been so and that we have been preserved in relation to it. So I would say to everybody here, especially young persons, you should get J.N.D's Synopsis if you have not got it; you should get it and read it and see how the scriptures are set out, find out the context of the settings in the

books, what they mean and how one book stands related to another. This is your inheritance, beloved. God wants you to be wealthy.

Heaven is not going to be full of paupers; it is going to be full of persons of wealth who are quickened together with Him; they are able to live with Christ in heaven equal to the fulness of spiritual exchange that belongs to the inheritance. You and I need to see if our inheritance, if our field is in any sense as productive as Boaz' field was. You can go away, persons go away and they can blame the brethren and they can do all sorts of things. The root of poverty of soul is always in ourselves. There was a field that prospered; God visited it and prospered it and that inheritance prospered whilst they that went away to Moab lost everything. I think we should be greatly encouraged to make way in ourselves for the Spirit of God and find out for ourselves what is meant when persons speak of the great ministries of the revival. Find out if these ministries are based on Scripture. You do not have to take anybody's word for it, you know; there is no brainwashing or anything like that going on. You get the books and read them. Read your Bible and find out if that confirms your conviction. Does that word carry weight with you? Be like the Bereans, search the scriptures daily and find out if it is so. You are not looking for error, you are not on that line; you want to say, I wonder if I can be confirmed in this, does this give confirmation as to what is working in me, what is being produced in me through the sovereign activities of the Spirit in new birth. Does this feed me? Is this how I see it? Am I carried in my convictions by it? You have all these wonderful ministries of persons who have been in the inheritance and have searched it out, who have made way for the Spirit of God and have known what the leadership of the Spirit is.

They have been under the command of the Lawgiver, they have moved at the word of the Lawgiver. So I would say, beloved, you are perfectly safe to follow the teaching of the truth as it has come down to us through the great ministries of the revival. And you find, as that is so, you begin to make progress in your soul. The main thing is the Scriptures; the standard of the truth is in the holy writings, and the standard of the truth here is in the Spirit and is equal to the standard of the truth of Christ in glory. These are marvellous things, beloved.

So we are in a position of safety and salvation as we move on that line. They begin to make progress and go on here to the top of Pisgah, which looks over the surface of the waste. Really we are in the area of that eighth chapter of Romans, looking back at things from the Spirit's point of view. You can look back at the rebellion, you can look at a time in your own soul maybe when you said, Yes, it is a good land, it is a fine land but we are not able to go up and possess it. You may look back at a time in your soul when you may have despised the pleasant land, look back at a time when you tried to manipulate the manna and make it better, grind it in hand mills and all that sort of thing, when you were not too appreciative of the blessed, lowly Saviour who was here and graced the wilderness.

Beloved, when you come to the Spirit of God it all changes. You get God's point of view, you see the beauty of Christ as every morning that manna fell around the camp, every day the dew fell and then the manna fell. That was your food for the day, the lowly, humble Jesus who graced every situation, who gave effect to every situation for the glory of God.

That is the only food you have in the wilderness. There is nothing here for your soul, nothing else to feed what new birth began, nothing at all. You will find if you are appropriating anything on that line it is going to result in moral death. The Spirit of God is leading the sons of God towards the inheritance; so you are independent of the world, you are finding other features coming up now but you are not in any sense having any affinity with them. Here was Sihon the king of the Amorites, but you are an overcomer. It is a marvellous thing to be an overcomer. I marvel at some persons in business or in life, at work they are on top of the job all the time. No matter what problem comes up, whatever it is, they have this relaxed attitude that they can just go through it, nothing seems to bother them and they go right through and solve the problems and they get the answer. The Spirit of God would make us like that make us overcomers. A marvellous position is being established at the close of the book of Numbers. You are going on the king's road, the highway is clear. There are no side roads, there are no crooked

paths. You do not need Sihon's wells, you do not need his vineyards, your supplies come from the Spirit of God from heaven.

Oh, beloved, how wonderful that is, to be superior to what is in the world and prove the power and the virtue of the name of Christ. You know what salvation is. To know that you have confessed with your mouth, and believed in your heart and you are saved. You are in the power and gain of the kingdom, you know the King's road, the royal road that leads through to glory, and the Spirit of God is leading on that road.

So you are concerned about your inheritance. That is what marks these daughters of Zelophehad. They do not want to be done out of anything. These wonderful ministries, beloved, have opened up the inheritance to us, they have broken things down and made it so we can feed upon it, and understand it. Always prove them by the Scriptures. Here are these women, five of them, "And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and the whole assembly, at the entrance of the tent of meeting". It is a very public matter for these five sisters. In type they have a judgment of church history. You might say of them they know where they are and why they are there. They are convicted and convinced in their soul that they are standing on true assembly ground, they are among the persons who are numbered for heaven - that is the second numbering in the book. The first numbering, as the brethren know, is numbering for war in the wilderness for conflict, the second numbering here in Numbers is that you are numbered for heaven.

Are you going over? The Jordan is deliverance in that sense; it is liberation. You die with Christ morally and you are liberated and you can go into the fulness of the inheritance of God and that is before these women. They have a judgment of the whole natural line; their father died in his own sin, he was not in the band of Korah, and they say, "Give unto us a possession among the brethren of our father".

That is very beautiful, a marvellous desire. Have you that desire in your heart, beloved? Are you after the inheritance? Your inheritance is in the love of God and you want to dwell in His love and to enjoy

the blessedness and the wonder of the divine dwelling. God says, I really appreciate that.

Now somebody else appears here. It is not the well now, but it is Joshua. God provides spiritual leadership militarily in the Spirit. That links on with this feature in our own souls. Moses is going, that line is going; Joshua replaces Moses. It is the subjective line of things in the brethren. You are of Him, the Spirit of Christ is of Him.

So it says here that Moses is to commit himself to Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest. The whole situation here now, beloved, as the Spirit of God has His way with us is that the mind of the Lord can come into our souls immediately. There is a marvellous reference here to Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before Jehovah, touching what is spiritual and what is capable of infinite expansion. Joshua then is provided as the divine answer to the work of God that is set out in these five sisters, a very wonderful provision. God says, That is the kind of person that I am going to dwell with. So leadership now is in Joshua; it is spiritual and it is in power. In another scripture He says to strengthen Joshua and encourage him (Deut 3: 28). We need to do that, beloved, in ourselves, strengthen that kind of leadership and encourage it and make way for it with one another.

Now do not feel that this is repulsive, do not feel that this is going to put you in bondage, do not feel that you are going to be afflicted by some other man or something like that; this is leadership, beloved, that brings in liberty, the liberty of the sons of God. It brings us into the enjoyment of our inheritance, brings us into the conscious enjoyment of our links with Christ risen and glorified. That is Joshua; in the type he is capable of overthrowing every adverse element that would seek to hinder you from the enjoyment of God's love and the enjoyment of your portion with the brethren. So he needs to be made way for. As long as he keeps within the limits, you might say, of Moses' commission he is going to have good success in all his ways. It is fine then to be successful, it is fine to know that you are moving in an expansive way into the greatness of divine love, you are conscious that you are one of the sons of God. There is no

greater privilege, beloved, afforded to any person, any human being you might say, than to be conscious that he is one of the sons of God whom God knew before the foundation of the world. This is the practical working out of the truth, so that we come into the blessedness of sonship. The Spirit's leadership is greatly to be recognised. That he is set before Eleazar the priest is very fine. "At his word" that is at the priest's word, "shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, he, and all the children of Israel with him, even the whole assembly". The position here is such that the headship of Christ is known. Oh, how blessed that is! We are in that area. We have been in the area in Numbers 21 of eternal life where the poets are, where there is buoyancy of soul and buoyancy of spirit, where you say, Come, see a Man who has told me all things I have ever done. There is an evidence in principle of the leadership of the Spirit of God. How marvellous that is in testimony, Come, see a Man, she says. And here it is at the word of the priest, Eleazar, "they shall go out and at his word they shall come in". The whole situation now is spiritual, it is increasing in spirituality. A great proof now that that which is born of the Spirit is spirit and that which is born of the flesh has receded and if it is brought back there will be a hindrance of the Spirit. But here the priest's word is to be recognised! That is the word of Christ, in a position where you are receptive to the word of the Lord. Oh how blessed that is! He that keeps My word abides in Me - that is a very beautiful word of Christ's in John 15 - He that keeps My word abides in Me and I in him. I remember one saying, Keep the Lord's word to abide in Him, for to keep the Lord's word preserves us from lawlessness and His word abiding in us causes us to be intelligent. And intelligence, beloved, in Christianity relates to the eyes of our hearts. It is not a mental thing. God is not producing Philistines, He is producing men like Christ, the Lord can say they are His brethren, they are of His order, they are His like. That is what the Spirit of God is labouring at. It is the assembly - it is not just any meeting, nothing like that exactly, it is the assembly of God. A divine conception that has its beginning on the other side of death. When the Lord came out of death the assembly came out with Him. When Christ came out of death,

beloved, you came out of death with Him. Therefore the need to be maintained in the consciousness of the Spirit's work and of the Spirit's service. If it is not true of us it is possible that things may degenerate to the level of whatever is current in Christendom.

Laodicea came out of Philadelphia because of apathy as to the truth. I am not saying that is the current situation at all - the great position in the revival is to keep His word; "thou ...hast kept my word" and "thou hast kept the word of my patience", Rev 3: 8,10. And that is kept in our affections. The truth is carried forward and carried through in the hearts and the affections of the brethren. It is not carried through exactly in your head because you are then likely to lose it, but if you carry it through in intelligent affection things are maintained. And when that is so, and it will be so, the bride is in evidence. We are waiting for that call, the Spirit and the bride saying, Come, (Rev 22: 17).

So at the close of the book there are these five women and they are there in the mutuality of love. Their names are not in the same order, as you well know, as in Numbers 27, but there is the evidence there of the love of the Spirit and their inheritance is vouchsafed to them. They were exercised and concerned and they followed their exercise and the Lord honoured their exercise.

Beloved brethren, He will honour that kind of exercise in any and every soul. If you are concerned about your inheritance and you carry the matter before the Lord He will provide all that is needed in order that you might come into the gain of it, and that it may remain.

It says, "their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father". That is very wonderful. There is division, half a tribe is living in the natural things, half the tribe of Manasseh are on the wilderness side of the Jordan. They are finding their life there in business and nature, and there is nothing wrong with that as long as it is controlled. We thank God that He provided three cities of refuge on that side because it is there they are mostly needed but the cities of refuge in the land are a fine thing, Joshua hallows them. When you come to that I think you really come to the divine estimation of the wonder of the provision of the glad tidings. The gospel and the

working of the truth, as he says in Ephesians "the word of the truth, the glad tidings of your salvation" is maintained in sanctity in the heart of the believer, and so you are safe. Well, that is very blessed here, their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father. So things continue on that line.

I just want to touch on Moses because he had some wonderful insight into the fulness of the land. This is the other side of mount Pisgah. There is the side that looks over the surface of the waste, where you can look back from the Spirit's viewpoint and see that waste, that howling wilderness, and marvel at the grace of God and the mercy of God that took you through it. You say, If it had not been for God I would have been lost in that wilderness - it speaks of all those that perished in the wilderness. Why then was I not one of them? Because of the mercy of God and because of the grace of God, because on the responsible side in some measure I must have been subject to the leading of the Spirit. So you come now to this other view and you see into the whole of the inheritance. Would you like God to show you the land? None of us know much we know nothing perhaps as we ought to know it, but if we are concerned to have a view of what the brethren speak of as the inheritance, let us ask God to show it to us. He delights to show the inheritance, to show you the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. Maybe you have never seen it in the local brethren in New York, maybe you have been looking at other things, but there it is in all its beauty and glory shining out. Oh, beloved, do not miss it! Ask God to show you it, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in this room at this moment. Think of the wealth that there is here present of the knowledge of God, of the knowledge of God in grace, of the knowledge of God in love. God wants our hearts to be committed to that. He has no love or desire for persons who are apathetic. The Lord says to Laodicea, Thou art neither cold nor hot, I wish you were one of them. He wants us to be committed to what He has set up and established in the blessedness and glory of His love in a local place and to seek for the furtherance and the extension and the addition of His work in that place.

Beloved, let us then ask God to give us a view of His inheritance. Think of what Moses saw. He sees the land in all its fulness and glory. And we might say, to carry the type over into Ephesians, he sees the Christ dwelling in their hearts through faith, he sees the breadth and length and depth and height, and the glory and grandeur of divine purpose accomplished through the wonderful working of the Son of God. Think of the Christ of Ephesians, Solomon setting that out in type, Solomon setting out the Son of God. Think of the grandeur of things under Solomon in the house, paling in a sense into insignificance as you see the wonder and grandeur of what God has secured in the assembly. There is to be glory to God in the assembly unto all generations of the age of ages. How marvellous that is. So the scripture in Ephesians, in this exalted part of the book, is to be filled with the Spirit; "speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and chanting with your heart to the Lord". That is the service of God going on, relationships with the Spirit wonderfully known and enjoyed, spiritual things being communicated by spiritual means - experience, "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and chanting with your heart to the Lord; giving thanks at all times for all things to him who is God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ". That is a marvellous exhortation at the close, "submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ". I think that is in the holy recognition of the work of God amongst the brethren. There is no trouble, there is no diversity, you know how to submit yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ, in the appreciation of what He has wrought amongst the brethren. It is the only reference that Paul makes to being filled with the Spirit. Luke has many in the Acts. There is something very distinctive about this exhortation to be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. What diversity, what wealth, what spiritual communication and interchange exists amongst the brethren as the service of God is carried on throughout the whole of the dispensation at this level and in this way. I believe in that sense we begin to be equal to what is set out in the princes in Numbers 7. The dedication

gift of the altar then continues right through the dispensation. The sufferings of Christ, the work of Christ and the marvellous knowledge of God made known in the death of Christ is maintained in our hearts in freshness and in power and in vitality and the truth is maintained and carried through in the power of the Spirit.

I think that is the idea of what is bridal, freshness and vitality and youthfulness all the way. Oftentimes, you know, you feel a bit bored, you may feel a bit fed up, you think the meetings are getting heavy and you cannot be bothered. Then you should start looking to yourself. See if you can find your way along that line that has been suggested. The Spirit of God is so anxious, so concerned, to glorify Christ and to lead us to Him; if we can only come into the current and flow of His movements He will readily and happily take us on.

So we need then to learn how to sow to the Spirit and from the Spirit reap life eternal. These are great possibilities, beloved, available to us. May the Lord encourage our hearts and give us to understand the more, and further than that give us to experience the more and find that the well springs up unrestrictedly in our souls and thus we will grow and increase in our appreciation of the wonderful manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ. May it be so for His Name's sake.

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THE CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

It has been remarked that the Scriptures show how God makes use of persons who are already active in some useful way. You could readily think of examples of this in young persons such as Gideon who was preparing wheat for food, Ruth who was gleaning day after day in the fields and David the shepherd lad.

It is interesting too that even children, happily engaged in some useful task, have been called into God's service. Miriam, about twelve years of age, was keeping vigil over her younger brother, later called Moses, when he was put into an ark by the river sedge. It appears to have been her own idea to keep watch in this way, and she was able thus to arrange for the child to be protected in dangerous times. Having cared for just one of God's little ones it was given to her to have a share in caring for perhaps two million of His people. Many years later Scripture recorded that "I sent before thee Moses, Aaron and Miriam".

Of the child Samuel we are told that he served in ways taught him by the priest. One of his regular tasks was to open the doors of the temple-house so that persons might enter to worship God. From these beginnings Samuel, still quite young, was entrusted with a message from God to His beloved but unresponsive people. Oh, that more children would grow up to cause others to seek after God and to receive His word, especially now that He has become known in and through the Lord Jesus Christ!

Josiah, who became a king at the age of eight years, was active, as he grew up, in things that were right in the sight of Jehovah, his God. He is a wonderful example for young and old. As a reward he was let into further secrets of God's mind and caused the temple to be restored. That building was a material one made of stone; God's house now is not made with hands" but consists of believers having His Spirit and serving Him in love. Do you desire to do so?

J.C.Evershed