

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 190

January 1989

Contents

THE HOLY SPIRIT

"THE MAN CHRIST JESUS"

THE CHILDREN'S BOOKS

THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 14: 15-27; 15: 26,27; 16: 7-16; 1 Corinthians 2: 9-12; 3: 16,17

R.T. I thought there might be help for us in looking at the Lord's own words as to the Holy Spirit. He had spoken earlier of the Holy Spirit as water, and in other figures, but as leaving the disciples He speaks of the Holy Spirit as One to be loved and relied upon. I think it would be true to say that as the dispensation has continued, in the public body the Spirit has been more and more disregarded. It therefore becomes those who would seek to taste the vitality of Christianity to revere Him and to be impressed with the sense of His greatness.

The Lord would make clear to those He is leaving that there was to be no loss; no lesser personage was coming to be with them. We speak regularly of the greatness of this dispensation - and rightly so - and of the greatness of the assembly as being the family that is nearest to Deity, but these things are so because the Spirit of God is here, and such a Person is with us. This dispensation transcends all dispensations because of the place that divine Persons have taken in the economy, but principally on account of the place that the Spirit has taken. The Lord says, "that he may be with you for ever". That was never so before, but it is true now, that there is a divine Person "with you for ever". What settlement that gives! There were times of great exploits in previous dispensations, but what a touch it gives to this dispensation that He will be "with you for ever". May we have some sense of the Spirit and the Lord helping us to be enlarged, deepened, in our appreciation of this blessed, holy Person.

D.J.H. Would it be true to say that God is here?

R.T. Yes. As you look at these passages it is very affecting; the Lord says that He would beg the Father about Him. He says in chapter 15 "whom I will send to you from the Father". In chapter 16 He comes. "It is profitable for you that I go away", the Lord says, "I will send him" (the Comforter) "to you". He comes from heaven where the Father and the Son, and the relationships that exist in

heaven, are known, and He brings the wealth of that sphere to be our present portion. As you say, God is here: I do not know whether the fullness of that really affects us enough. We speak about decline and we feel the weakness. Some may say, What is going to happen? Well, God is here - another Comforter. They had known the assurance and the comfort of the presence of Jesus, but there is another Person here, and He will be with you for ever.

E.C.B. In this section Jesus speaks distinctly of the Spirit as a Person, not, as you say, as water, or wind or otherwise, but as a Person.

R.T. Yes. We may tend to think more of Him in His services than as a Person. His grace through the dispensation needs to be contemplated more. There is room for expansion in our expressions of worship to Him, and as we think of what has been effected in the dispensation for God, it would help us in our response to such a One. He is to be worshipped.

H.A.H. Is it your understanding that this is the only dispensation in which He is known as indwelling persons?

R.T. Yes. The Lord is speaking of something that was new to them. They had known something about the Spirit coming on David, and the Spirit of Christ in such persons, but think of the impact of this: "that he may be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth"! It gives the present dispensation, and the assembly, a wonderful status, that there is such a One - a divine Person - with us for ever.

W.J.R.B. What is implied in the expression "the Comforter"?

R.T. Well, you are glad of it, are you not? The Lord was leaving them and He knew what was coming in. Where is our comfort? Where is it? It is in the Holy Spirit. The comfort of the Spirit is to be with us; the comfort is in the fact that there is Someone here who is superior to all that is around - the decline, the decay, the breakdown, and all that is going on - there is Someone, a divine Person, who is greater than all that, and He is with us for ever. Is that not a wonderful comfort?

W.J.R.B. It would have that particular meaning in this present dispensation.

R.T. Yes. I have often thought of it in recent sorrows, that a divine Person has taken (not by mistake) this name of the Comforter, that He can bring in solace and what is needed to heal the wounds.

Comfort is more than sympathy. You can sympathise, but comfort fills the void. There may be a great loss felt; sympathy does not quite meet it, but comfort brings things back to a normal, stable relationship.

S.D.K.R. Mr Darby has a note to verse 16, that 'solicitor', if it were not too common, just answers the sense. He is one who is managing for us and whom we can consult.

R.T. Well, what makes you go to a solicitor? Because you do not feel able to handle your affairs, and the solicitor is supposed to be somebody who knows all about things and is able just to fit you into the picture and do things on your behalf. You are the client, you are the important person. As you say, it is a very common word, but Mr Darby says it illustrates the idea of somebody who makes up for all the loss.

V.E.W. The disciples knew what it was to go to the Lord Jesus day by day in every detail, but now they would have another Comforter.

R.T. Yes. You just feel that the simplicity of it should enter our hearts more: "another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth". He says, "whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him nor know him"; but there are those persons who are loved by Christ, and He begs the Father that a divine Person may be here, as you said, in His stead.

D.A.B. It was said here on a previous occasion in relation to the solicitor that he is charged to do his very best for you. Is that the thought here?

R.T. What a friend! It has often been referred to, has it not? A solicitor may be official (that is why Mr Darby hesitates at the word) but what a friend, as you say, who will do His best for you, and

Somebody who has infinite resources. He has come from this area; think of the Lord's love for His own, that He would beg the Father that Someone so great should come with the wealth of heaven to be at our disposal.

E.C.B. The distinction from the solicitor is that the Spirit does not have to be briefed, does He? Romans 8 brings that out; He knows your case first.

R.T. Yes; you do not need to pay Him either. He says "I will beg the Father". The Lord has taken up the matter of the cost. He says "I will beg the Father". What an affecting thing that is! He felt the need we would have here in this dispensation, but He knew Someone who was great enough to see us through.

H.G.H. He does know all things, yet He loves to hear us put our needs before Him.

R.T. He joins His help to our weakness; we do not know what to pray for as is fitting (see Rom 8: 26). These are real experiences and I think that many of the brethren in recent times know something about them. There are matters lying on your spirit that are more than you can handle. He joins His help to our weakness.

H.A.H. Is it a blessed thing that these scriptures to which you have referred, apart possibly from the one in chapter 16, make no reference to moral issues or His restraint of evil? They are His normal blessed service to the saints.

R.T. Well, the moral questions are underlined in what He says in the latter part of chapter 14; He brings in His commandment and His word. Love for Christ and committal to Him gives the Spirit greater liberty. The lack of vessels has hindered the Spirit in His liberty, but the Lord here, I think, is engaging us with the grandeur and the glory and the greatness of the Personage that is coming in, and we need help in faith to lay hold of it.

C.C.I. You have emphasised the matter of His being with us. Is that perhaps one of the most important scriptures in the New Testament, as to the Spirit being known objectively, to be prayed to and

worshipped, and sung to? Is that the way that the Lord has drawn attention to the Spirit in our day objectively?

R.T. Yes. I think that the Lord here is opening our eyes to the greatness of the Person of the Spirit. He says not only He will be with you for ever, but "he abides with you, and shall be in you". I think it is to help us to be settled about the dispensation, that things are not oscillating or getting out of hand.

J.M. There are ups and downs, are there not, but the fact that He is with us for ever, in charge of the testimony, is the assurance that what is in the divine mind will go through to glory. That gives us a certain restfulness of spirit, though not causing us to be without exercise.

R.T. And as the greatness of the Person comes before us it would stimulate us to be with Him, because He is going through. Scripture says that He is guiding, so that you can hardly think of these scriptures without thinking of Genesis 24. The great matter with Rebecca is "I will go". "Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go" (v 58). Is that not what is to stimulate us, that we will go with Him? He is going through the dispensation, and as we are prepared to go with Him we will come into all the blessedness and the grace of His service, will we not?

W.J.R.B. Is there a good deal in the Spirit descending on the Lord as a dove? He singled Him out in all His perfection.

R.T. That brings out the preciousness of that Man to heaven. Here is brought out something of the preciousness of the saints to heaven. He came, as you say, on Christ in bodily form. What a point of attraction to heaven there was in Christ as a man here, but now here it is the saints, the saints in those circumstances, and a divine Person has come forth from with the Father to be with us for ever, to abide in us.

E.P. I was wondering what your thought would be as to the fact that it is in the epistle to the Romans, right at the end, that "the love of the Spirit" is referred to (chap 15: 30), and the apostle exhorts them - which seems to me as if it was a known thing by those Roman saints

- that they knew the love of the Spirit. Would you say something about that.

R.T. Do we not know it? The idea of the Comforter must involve love - "the love of the Spirit". He speaks too of "the communion of the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor 13: 14), that it may be with them. I think it brings out the greatness of the Person. It is not (I do not want to say not only) the water aspect; it is a Person so great, and what love He has shown! But then it is to be working in the saints.

P.M. Does the distinctiveness of that Person come out in this reference, "ye know him, for he abides with you"?

R.T. Yes, what do you say about that?

P.M. I wondered if they had seen the character of the blessed Spirit here in the Lord's own movements among them, but then "he ... shall be in you" would be distinctive too, would it not?

R.T. The same blessed Person. As you say, they had seen the Lord doing things in the power of the anointing, the power of the Holy Spirit. You can see how quickly they came into it in the beginning of Acts. "Ye know him": they knew the power that had come in. Peter has no longer doubts as to the Person of Christ, doubts as to His work. The whole thing is set on in power as the Spirit comes to be with them and abide in them.

E.C. Would you say something about the Spirit teaching? We know the Lord as Teacher, but it is emphasised here: "he shall teach you all things".

R.T. That has come out very markedly in the recovery, do you not think? You go to the meeting and you say, Well, Mr So-and-so is not here tonight and it is a difficult chapter. Well, I think the Scriptures would help us. It needs vessels, of course, but you are exercised in the morning about the reading at night, are you not? You are exercised about the chapter through the day before you go to the meeting. I think all these things make room for the teaching of the Spirit known among us, would you say?

E.C. It is very important, is it not? "He shall teach you all things". I wonder how much we rely on the Holy Spirit for the teaching.

R.T. Well, if we do not we will lose it. I think that the Spirit teaching you makes the thing good in your soul and it develops manhood. "He shall teach you all things, and will bring to your remembrance" - who could remember? - "bring to your remembrance all the things which I have said to you". Think of how much lies in the realm of the Spirit's operations. John, in this very book, says "not even the world itself would contain the books written", chap 21: 25. Yet there is a divine Person who has the whole treasury in His hand, and He is leading us into it, teaching us all things.

E.C.B. Would it be opening out the things which began to be spoken about by the Lord?

R.T. Yes; it includes what the Lord had said in the days of His flesh. "He ... will bring to your remembrance all the things which I have said to you." I think it leads on to Paul's ministry. It leads on to the opening up of what is in glory, but the whole thing is in Him. It is not in the books and it is not in any man. That was the confusion in Corinth - they had men before them, and it is not absent among the saints to make too much of men. Would that we loved all the brethren! He says "he shall teach you all things". There is a divine Person here in charge, and teaching and setting things forward.

E.C. Does it help to remember that He Himself indited the very Scriptures from which He teaches us?

R.T. Yes, and the application. I think as you look through the recovery, certain Scriptures have a bearing today that they did not have before. "He shall teach you all things" - the Spirit gives a touch to scriptures that bear on the present, to comfort and to lead and to strengthen the saints in the circumstances in which they are .

D.J.H. These very chapters are an example of the way He brought things to John's remembrance - written years afterwards, and yet the detail of what Jesus said.

R.T. Yes. Well, think of Peter; he says "having been eyewitnesses of his majesty", 2 Pet 1: 16. He did not say that on the mount, nor did he think about it before Christ went to glory, but you can see the Spirit teaching him as to that very occasion on the mount, that they were eyewitnesses of His majesty, bringing things to his remembrance. He was bringing before the saints a present, up-to-date touch as to Christ to strengthen them.

E.O. So as the Lord was patient in teaching the disciples when He was here, the Holy Spirit is continuing that service in His speaking to the assemblies. It is vital to cherish all that has come out, as you say, in the recovery. We shall make shipwreck, will we not, if we do not cherish what has been said to us?

R.T. Yes; and authority lies in the Spirit's speaking; the realisation of who He is would help us to come under His teaching, to be amenable to His leading. It is a very affecting word in chapter 16: "he shall guide you into all the truth".

D.E.R. Is the Spirit's service consequent upon the company who love the Lord and keep His commandments, and too the individual who loves the Lord and keeps His word?

R.T. Well, these are the persons who get the gain of it, are they not? But the setting of the chapter is that the Lord loved them. "I will beg the Father"; He was appreciative of their love for Him, but He loved them and felt for them in the conditions in which they were, and He says "I will beg the Father, and he will give you another Comforter". I think verse 21 has in mind the breakdown, that there is the need for being in the area where the flow of the Spirit is known, and the commandments help to keep us in the area where the Spirit is in liberty.

H.A.H. So would you say that "If ye love" and "If any one love" is not an 'if' of doubt but is to bring in the consequence?

R.T. It is to encourage us. The Lord had no doubt about their love, but He says that things are very mixed. He says "He that has my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves me". He is helping us to get clear of profession, to get into an area where Christ

is loved and the Spirit is free to take of the things that are His and show them unto us.

A.J.E.W. I was just thinking of the very interesting part that the Spirit has in Peter's adjustment in Acts 10 and 11. Peter has the vision of the sheet, but then later as to the men that came from Cornelius He says "go with them, nothing doubting, because I have sent them", chap 10: 20. The Spirit was taking charge of the situation, linking it in the sense of teaching with what had gone before, making it tangible, so to say, in the experience of Peter.

R.T. I think that is a very encouraging suggestion. So Peter says, when he was recounting it, "who indeed was I", chap 11: 17. There was Someone greater than anything that is in man, a divine Person directing the operations, and that direction is still continuing through the dispensation.

A.J.E.W. That was really the critical time in the unfolding of the dispensation, was it not? The Spirit becomes the key to what you might speak of as the disentanglement of everything for Peter.

R.T. Very good. You can go through the Acts, and there are many difficult situations where, as you say, the Spirit was the key, as in chapter 15. But the Lord would try to help us here into the normal leading and directing of One here to be with us and in us, abiding with us for ever, to see us through at the heavenly level of what Christ is setting on from heaven.

D.E.B. Had you any impression as to why verse 18 comes in in this context, why when the Lord is speaking about the Comforter being with them for ever He speaks about Himself "coming to you".

R.T. Well, He says "I will not leave you orphans". I suppose they thought that was what was going to happen. He says "I am coming to you". Would the setting of the verses imply that He is coming to them in the Comforter, in the Spirit?

D.E.B. I just wondered whether there was something there that could be opened up.

R.T. Well, they had known what it was for the Lord to meet their needs; think of them in the boat, toiling in the agitated sea and the wind contrary. It says "he rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm", Matt 8: 26. They had known that. I think the Lord was suggesting that the Spirit coming would bring that same calm restfulness of spirit. "I am coming to you": in this Person being here the Lord's grace and the wealth of what Christ is in glory is available to be the strength and support and encouragement of the saints.

J.M. Is one side of the Lord's coming in at the Supper that He actually comes in in confirmation of the saints in the testimony? He comes in in relation to the Spirit's operations among the saints, but does it not need the Spirit on our side to discern His coming in?

R.T. Say something about that for us.

J.M. I do not know that I can say very much but it shows, does it not, how dependent we are on the Spirit, even as to our recognition and our understanding of the movements of the Lord?

R.T. Yes. It is, I think, a bit like the women in the hill country, and also like when David comes in in Samuel: "Arise, anoint him; for this is he", 1 Sam 16: 12. There is something in you that you cannot define too exactly, but it rises up: "this is he". It is the Spirit working in the believer, and for the moment you are lifted beyond the small meeting, the sorrows of the testimony, all these things; you are lifted into a scene where Christ is held in your affections in all His supremacy.

E.C.B. In this section we get not only Jesus Himself saying He will come, but Himself and the Father, "we will come", and the Spirit come. Does it fill out 'God with us'?

R.T. Yes, and it is not just coming; in verse 23 it says "we will come to him and make our abode with him". There is something very precious about that, is there not? As I said, I think these verses are alluding to the breakdown, because it speaks about coming to one individual, but what comes to the individual is intensely precious - "make our abode with him". What do you say about that?

E.C.B. Well, the disciples in the beginning of the gospel had asked Him where He abode and He said "Come and see", and now He is pointing out that He and the Father will have their abode, their abiding place. They too will be with us for ever, will They not? One impression you get from this section, which seems to run with your thought, is the great readiness of divine Persons to come. "I will beg the Father, and he will give you", as if the whole divine system is engaged with the saints.

R.T. Well, the Lord loves us here in these conditions. Chapter 17 gives you an insight into His feelings about the saints continuing through the dispensation, and here the Spirit is answering that prayer, you might say - He is making good all that the Lord was requesting. He says "My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him"; that is to be enjoyed today amidst all these things that may press in upon us.

C.G.H. At the occasion of the Supper, when the Lord is discerned as having come in, we pass from the sphere of responsibility into the sphere of privilege, and there is opened up to us, as He leads, the whole aspect of the divine mind in purpose.

R.T. Yes, well, we are very thankful for the experiences of privilege, but the Lord is speaking here too about the course of the testimony. In the circumstances in which we are we are to know a divine Person abiding with us, and we are to know not only our abiding in Him - that comes in more at the Supper - but here it is divine Persons in the circumstances in which we are - "make our abode with him". It brings out what a blessing there is to the lovers of Christ.

C.G.H. Does that enable us to go through the circumstances in quietness and peacefulness of mind, knowing that all is in His hand?

R.T. The hymn which we sang (No.408) brought that home to me afresh, the rest that is to be tasted in the conscious sense of such a Person here to see us through. I think the encouragement of the Lord's words about the Spirit would be to strengthen us in the confidence that there is such a Person available to us. He says "he

... will bring to your remembrance all the things which I have said to you". Think of the immensity of that, that there is a Person who is able to bring these things to us, at the moment we need them to strengthen the saints.

E.P. That is calculated to stir a response to Him in our hearts, is it not? I was thinking that, for example, there is the spirit of this in Psalm 103. The psalmist says "Bless Jehovah, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name" (v 1). Do you think that it is right to accord that to the Holy Spirit?

R.T. Yes; I think it is something that we should perhaps think about. There is room for more depth in our response to the Spirit of God. We sometimes speak in a way that is hardly suited to the greatness of the Spirit of God. His service is so precious, coming down to the weakness of the conditions in which we are, but what a mission He has in view, in the type to conduct Rebecca to Isaac. He comes down to our needs, but His great mission was to take Rebecca in all her freshness to be a comfort to Isaac, that is the assembly to Christ.

B.W.W. It would go along with that that His service has spread over nearly two thousand years, and the number of individuals in whom He has been and in whom He has operated must be vast.

R.T. Yes, and what pressure, what opposition there has been! Yet the grace of the Spirit is seen in the lowliness that has marked His service, but this is not to becloud the greatness and glory of His Person.

E.C.B. It is quite anomalous if response to the Spirit becomes formalised, because He is the great source of liberty.

R.T. Yes: I do not say these things critically, but there is room for expansion. Just think of who He is, and He was active from the creation. One particular feature of the Spirit of God is His feelings. The great point of His service now, amidst all the confusion, is that there has been formed a bride that is suited to the heavenly Man.

E.F.W. Does this depend on how much we know Him? The Lord speaks of the world not seeing Him; we cannot see Him, so there is

another way in which we know Him.

R.T. That is an interesting verse - "because it does not see him nor know him"; then He says "but ye know him, for he abides with you, and shall be in you". What do you say about that?

E.F.W. I would think experience is more than anything that we can say, to assure us of the Spirit dwelling in us. You have spoken about His comfort, His support. There are so many ways in which He freshly assures us of His dwelling in us. You would encourage us that we might know Him more in that way.

R.T. Yes; His service is not only to bring relief into the circumstances but to endear Himself and the glory of His person to our affections.

C.C.I. Rebecca says "Who is the man?" Does that involve the rapture? The glory of Christ in manhood is a peculiar matter that has been unfolded at the end of the Spirit's dispensation.

R.T. It is on the eve of union, is it not? "Who is the man that is walking in the fields to meet us?", Gen 24: 63. Typically, the Lord was on the move, and the Spirit was on the same path, you may say. They were going together, eye meeting eye. "Who is the man that is walking in the fields to meet us?" It was very soon that she was in his embrace, was it not?

C.C.I. So do you think we are particularly dependent on the Spirit to understand the humanity of Christ? Our natural minds are, we might say, unable in any way to appropriate that wonderful matter, the humanity of Christ in a new condition.

R.T. Oh yes, that is chapter 15; He says "whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes forth from with the Father". In chapter 14 the Lord is speaking about His going away, and He is speaking about His going into heaven. In chapter 15 He says "when the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father", speaking there of Himself sending Him from the Father, coming from that scene of the Father and the Son, and bringing the

wealth of that to be within our reach. He says "he shall bear witness concerning me", and He says "ye too bear witness".

E.C.B. I suppose the witness there is to Jesus glorified.

R.T. Yes, I think so. It is bringing into human hearts what exists in heaven, Christ received there, 'Received in glory bright up there' (hymn 350). How do we know the place that Christ has in heaven? We know it because the Spirit has come from that scene and taught us about these things.

E.C.B. It is the only means by which we can know that Christ is alive and is glorified; not only that He is alive, but He is glorified. A lot of these scriptures seem to connect very much with Paul's impressions in Corinth: the Father and the Son abiding, "ye are the temple of God" (1 Cor 3: 16), and what you are referring to in chapter 15 seems to connect very much with 2 Corinthians 4: 6, the radiancy is in the heart.

R.T. Yes, I think that Paul, while not one of the twelve, is a vessel in whom the Spirit's service is very distinctively set forth. Through him, the Spirit brings out the things of Christ in glory, all that was in heaven and all that was to be worked out here in the assembly as a vessel that was suited to the heavenly One. I thought that chapter 16 brought us on to Paul: "he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself". Such a Person is here, and yet it says He will not speak from Himself, "but whatsoever he shall hear he shall speak; and he will announce to you what is coming". The wealth of heaven is at His disposal; that is what He is bringing out.

E.C.B. Announcing what is coming is not exactly what is spoken of as prophecy, is it? It involves the church, and the whole of the present dispensation, because that was coming.

R.T. Yes; it involves the rapture. Those verses about the rapture: "the Lord himself ... shall descend" (1 Thess 4: 16); how do we know that? Because the Spirit is announcing to us what is coming.

We have comfort in these words that the Lord Himself will come for the saints. Too, He will come in the appearing. How do we know all these things? We know them as the result, not of ministry, not as

scriptures; we know them as the result of the Spirit's leading, guiding and announcing to us what is coming.

A.J.E.W. It is very affecting that the verse of which you are speaking flows from the Lord's word, "I have yet many things to say to you" - many things - "but ye cannot bear them now". This carries, does it not, the definite inference that the Lord will see that these things are conveyed to the saints? He would not allow them to be hindered from reaching the saints, but in the day of the Spirit it need no longer be said "ye cannot bear them now", because the Spirit is known by those to whom the precious truth is being conveyed, known by them in support and in constant application of what the Lord is conveying.

R.T. That is very comforting. The result of Christ in glory is that the counsel and purpose of God are opened out to us by the Holy Spirit. As the Lord says here, "It is profitable for you that I go away". What a profit we have, that there is a Man in heaven, a great Priest there, representing us before the Father, and another divine Person come from that scene of glory, bringing the wealth of heaven and announcing it to us, and shedding it abroad in our hearts.

J.M. The Spirit of truth guiding us into all the truth is more than the opening up of it; does it involve His work in formation, an answer to the counsels and purpose of God?

R.T. Yes, and I think this verse would affect our attitude in the meetings. As I said earlier about coming to a meeting or a reading, "He shall guide you into all the truth". The way to get the advantage of the Guide is to keep near Him. A guide usually has a lot of people round about him and if you are on the outside of the circle you do not hear too well. Well, you have to get near Him, He will guide you.

You have to be near the Guide to follow and to apprehend the greatness of what He is calling attention to.

S.D.K.R. You have in mind making room for Him, for example in a reading. Would you say a little more about that.

R.T. Well, that was the exercise in Genesis 24, was it not? "Is there room ...?" (v 23). It came out that there was the acknowledgment, but there was hardly the room: let her stay ten days was not giving

him room, was it? But the formation was in Rebecca; assembly affections make room for Him. I think it is a matter of faith. We tend to rely on memory, rely on experience, but that will not guide us into anything that we do not know. The Spirit is leading us into things that we do not know, and could never know. It is only the Spirit of God that could lead us into them.

J.W. It says of the Spirit, "whatsoever he shall hear he shall speak". Do you think we practically make room for the Spirit through hearing, hearing Him? I was thinking of the overcomer, "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says" (Rev 2: 7, etc.), and wondered if that would practically make room for the Spirit in our comings-together, if we are exercised to hear the Spirit speak.

R.T. Well, we come together to listen, do we not? Somebody has to speak, but even the speaker is to listen. So that you feel your way in a reading. Something you have not thought about before is usually the best part of the meeting. A fresh impression on a well-known scripture, or it could be a well-known doctrine, comes from the Spirit, and we need to hear for that. Then the setting here is "whatsoever he shall hear". Think of the Spirit here listening to what is taking place in glory, listening to the Father, listening to the Son, and bringing that to be shed abroad in our hearts.

E.P. It is the Spirit that quickens, is it not? And that is a touch that we would look for, as we gather, in a reading. The Spirit quickens, something comes in that is really living, and you say, I have never seen that before.

R.T. I think that is verse 14: "He shall glorify me". I think that is the great end, the great purpose of the Spirit's service here. We think so much about what He does for us but the great end is what He is doing for Christ, what He is doing for the Father, bringing persons into sonship, securing a bride for Christ; "He shall glorify me". We need to have that in the faith of our minds, that the Spirit will meet our weaknesses, He will meet present situations, but not just meet them. Are we exercised enough to get the gain and the end - "He shall glorify me"?

P.M. Does the Spirit glorifying Christ involve what He is forming in the saints that is in the features of that blessed Man? Must that not be consequent, or dependent, on our being guided into all the truth?

R.T. Christ will be glorified in a vessel which the Spirit has adorned and has had to do with us in the earlier chapters in this gospel, in new birth, and so on, all leading to assembly formation. Think of Isaac's admiration as he saw Rebecca, as he took her into that tent; it says he was comforted. What an answer to the Spirit's grace, that there is someone brought to be so near to Christ to be His bride.

E.C.B. The Spirit is competent for the whole range of the glories of Christ, is He not? It struck me at the Supper recently that we sometimes feel limited in our response even to Christ, but the Spirit is competent for His glories from creation until finality.

R.T. I think we need to feel incompetent. It is not what we know, because we may say a very blessed truth and it just does not have a ring about it, but the Spirit gives a ring to things that are said. I think that is "He shall glorify me". Something rises in our affections that will only be satisfied with the heavenly Man.

D.E.B. Being guided into all the truth: does that mean that at any time we understand all the truth?

R.T. No, we would cease to need a guide if that was so, would we not? All the truth is available in the Spirit, but I do not think we yet know it all.

D.E.B. Well, I do not, anyway, but there is a certain link on with 1 Corinthians 2 as to "things ... which have not come into man's heart". That is always before us, is it not?

R.T. Yes, there is a divine Person able; "He shall guide you into all the truth", not just a section of truth. Guiding us into all the truth helps us to hold it in balance, to be heavenly persons in the midst of all that would becloud the glory of the heavenly Man.

H.G.H. Could there be a dispensational part in the path of guiding you into all the truth?

R.T. Well, what do you mean by that?

H.G.H. Before the dispensation is over it will all be out.

R.T. Yes, so that encourages us, that the Spirit is active all the time. He has not ceased; great personages have gone, but He is continuing His service to provide these adorning touches to the bride suited to the heavenly Man.

H.G.H. So we want to be exercised as to what the Spirit has to say to us in our day.

R.T. Yes, and in relation to all the truth, not just to be specialists on Romans or Colossians or Ephesians, but "guide you into all the truth". He has Christ the heavenly Man before Him, and He is bringing about, through His guidance and through His teaching, formation in features suitable to the heavenly One.

J.M. It bears very much on the place that the Spirit has taken in the economy. The truth as we speak of it is all out, but His service is particularly to bring the saints into it in a subjective way, do you think?

R.T. Yes, the truth is all out in the sense of Christ having gone in and the Spirit come, but it does not mean that I know it all, nor does it mean that the brethren know it all, but it means that there is a divine Person who has it all before Him, and He is anxious, and He is leading, and He is serving, that we may come into the joy and blessedness of it.

J.M. The close of the dispensation will show that there has been a full result from His service and a full answer to all that has come out from God, will it not?

R.T. What will be translated will be the fruit of the Spirit's service, and Christ glorified in that, God glorified in it, the triumph of divine grace over evil and all that has come in, that there will be raptured a vessel that is suited to the heavenly One.

A.J.E.W. Is it interesting to think of the way that the type in Genesis 24 brings out the Spirit's feelings in respect of what He (if I could use the word) discovers in the assembly, what is there which He can take

on and bring into relation to Christ. The servant worships as He contemplates what is brought into view in Rebecca.

R.T. The divine counsel is unfolding before his eyes, you may say, and you see it here too, that "All things that the Father has are mine". The Spirit, in type in Genesis, came with all the wealth of Abraham; bringing out these silver and gold articles, the clothing for Rebecca. He is bringing them out; I think that is all part of the guiding, bringing out these things that He brought from glory, and He is adorning the assembly with them. Are we prepared to put them on, dear brethren? When Rebecca accepted that heavenly clothing she had to follow the Spirit. What good would that adornment have been in the wilderness, or in Laban's household? As accepting these things that the Spirit brings she had to go with Him, because they were all things that were only suited to Isaac.

P.M. Does the Spirit have them all before Him "as the truth is in Jesus", Eph 4: 21? Is it in the most attractive sphere, and would He not in His service occupy us not only with the detail of the truth but with the character of it as it is in Jesus?

R.T. That is very much emphasised in what it says here: "whatsoever he shall hear he shall speak". That hearing is from heaven, is it not? Then He says "he shall receive of mine". Think of the glory that Christ has been given! What honours the Father has conferred on Him, the heavenly One! He says "he shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you". What a link we have with the glorified Man in the Spirit of God, and He is bringing these things out that they may be substantially in the saints and be our present portion.

S.J.H. In Genesis 24 it speaks in type of the Spirit having men; they were with Him, that is, they understood what He was about, as it were. That is where we want to be, is it not?

R.T. Yes. It may apply to the gifts in 1 Corinthians, the Spirit dividing to each in particular" (chap 12: 11), the Spirit giving all these gifts and all these things set for the helping forward of the formation that is suited to Christ. So there is a great system of help. The Spirit

has vessels, and as you say, we want to be one of them, we want to be listeners, we want to be those who are receptive to what He is announcing, to what He is bringing of the heavenly Man.

S.J.H. I think that somebody has said that, when we walk in the Spirit, Christ is paramount.

R.T. Well, there is no true walk for the believer unless Christ is before the soul.

Be Thou the object bright and fair
To fill and satisfy the heart.

(Hymn 328) How much we grieve the Spirit through being occupied with others and other things, but He is longing to produce this kind of affection that will not be satisfied without Christ. "He shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you".

In Corinth it is all worked out in the local company. It says "Do ye not know that ye are the temple ... ?". We should make room for that. "Do ye not know that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" The quotation is from Isaiah 64: 4 - which says "Never have men heard" - it was not possible for them to hear - "nor perceived" - it was not possible. That is what Paul is saying at Corinth. It is not possible for the natural man, the natural mind, ever to entertain what is spiritual, but he says "God has revealed (them) to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God", I think, brethren, there is a lot to be opened out yet as to the depths of God. What do we know about the Lord's burial? What do we know about Christ in death? The Spirit gives us some inklings about that. It says that He was loosed from the pains of death (see Acts 2: 24): what do we know about it? I think that is all part of the Spirit searching all things, the depths of God. May we not be complacent in feeling how much we know, but may there be produced in us a sense of dependence that we may know more the leadership of such a glorious divine Person who has come to be with us.

LONDON

19 March 1988

Key to initials

D.A.Burr, London; D.E.Burr, Redbridge; E.C.Burr, London;
W.J.R.Brodie, Ealing; E.Croot, Dorking; C.G.Hitchcock, Ealing;
D.J.Hutson, London; H.A.Hutson, London; H.G.Holt, Chicago;
S.J.Hewison, Dorking; C.C.Ikin, Southend; J.Mitchell, Bexley;
P.Martin, Colchester; E.Oliver, London; E.Palmer, London;
D.E.Remmington, St.Albans; S.D.K.Roberts, Croydon; R.Taylor,
Barnet; A.J.E.Welch, Sunbury; B.W.Ward, London; E.F.Woodford,
Dorking; J.Wright, Redbridge; V.E.Wraighte, Gillingham

"THE MAN CHRIST JESUS"

R.Taylor

1 Timothy 2: 5,6 to "for all"; John 1: 14, 16-18; 1 Peter2: 21-25; Philippians 2: 5-11;

Revelation 22: 16,17 (1st sentence)

It will be obvious that these scriptures all speak of Christ, and that is what ministry is, to endear Christ to the affections of the saints - the man Christ Jesus. That hardly needed to be said in the verse in Timothy; "God is one, and the mediator of God and men one": it could have stopped there, but it continues: "the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all". What a man He is! The scriptures bring out not only what He was, but what a man He is, the man Christ Jesus, great enough to be the mediator of God and men. Oh, what God has thought about Him! Moses was a type, but (I say it carefully) a very poor type. There could not really be a type of the Mediator, because Moses had sin attaching to him, but the man Christ Jesus was spotless, holy, harmless, a blessed Man, the One who could satisfy God about the sins of the universe. How qualified He is to be presented as the mediator of God and men! God in his holiness and righteousness could never pass by sin, yet loved the sinner; how was it all going to be met? In the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all. God's righteousness was fully met, the holiness that God's throne demanded fully satisfied in that blessed Man. Oh, how God loves to bring Him on to view! God is satisfied with Jesus. He fills the vision for time, for eternity. It speaks about God's righteousness "in respect of the passing by the sins that had taken place before", Rom 3: 25. Oh, what a volume of them! They are all met righteously in the man Christ Jesus, the sins that had taken place before, the volume of them from Adam right down. It speaks too of the sins of the present time, God perfectly righteous in passing them by because of the delight that He has found in the man Christ Jesus. The Mediator would never have been adequate if He had not satisfied God about everything. Far

less might have done for us, but God has found His infinite satisfaction, yea His delight, in Christ, the man Christ Jesus. He gave Himself a ransom for all. Does not that endear Him to your affections? You can speak to any Christian or anyone about Christ.

We sometimes too quickly bring in other things, but the link we have with every saint of God is the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all. Oh, how full that ransom price which has been paid! The very day we are living in, the fact that the dispensation is continuing, is because there is a Mediator One able to uphold the rights, the holiness of God's throne, and yet able to put His hand upon you and me in all our need - the man Christ Jesus.

I have read of how Peter and John and Paul speak about Him. There is more in these verses than we can ever go over, and I trust the very reading of them, putting them together, may have endeared that glorious Man to our affections. John brings out His deity, the man Christ Jesus a divine Person, He says "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us". It was His own action. What was there to call it forth? A history of shame. Yet think of that point in time when a divine Person, the Creator of the universe, (it says without Him there was nothing made that was made (see John 1: 3)) the Creator of all became flesh. Why? Why not an angel? Why should He come into such a condition? Just that He might be near us. He became flesh. He came within our reach. An angel would not be within our reach, but "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us". What grace! The man Christ Jesus: think of Him as John and the other writers of the gospels speak about Him. It says He took His place in the likeness of men, but how different! Day by day heaven saw in Him every divine thought and desire for man perfectly fulfilled. Oh, what a fragrance for God in the man Christ Jesus! What an odour went up to heaven in those days! It says, "we have contemplated his glory": what a glory it was, a glory that attracted persons to Him! Somebody saw Him as He walked. "The Word became flesh". He walked in those streets of Nazareth, took His place among men in perfect submission to what was suited to that condition. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us". He never took Himself out of those

circumstances into which He came, however great the needs. He was wearied with the way He had come; He hungered. What He entered into in that condition is the subject of holy contemplation.

Wearied with the way He had come, He sat on the well. At the call of a poor blind man He stood still. I find that a very affecting verse, a blind man calling out as He was passing by; it says "Jesus stood still", Luke 18: 40. Oh, what work He had to do! How much there was to be accomplished, but at the call of a poor blind man the Son of God, the Creator, stood still, ready to open his eyes. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us". Oh, what grace was there! It says "full of grace and truth". He brought it all with Him. It was not here before, but as the Word became flesh and dwelt among us He brought in every divine grace. In Him truth was perfectly expressed, "full of grace and truth". "The law was given by Moses": what did that do? It left men guilty, perishing. That is what the law did, it left them more guilty. "The law was given by Moses"; that had gone on for all these generations. Into that very area of things "the word became flesh", and He brought in with Him all that was needed - "full of grace and truth". It says "of his fulness" (what fulness there was!) "we all have received, and grace upon grace". Grace upon grace: that will never run out, never. Page after page in the gospel: grace upon grace. From man's side hatred upon hatred; in Christ, grace upon grace.

These writers, John and Peter, are writing about a Man they knew here, but they are writing about Him as now in His place in glory, the Spirit giving them insight into who He was. They hardly apprehended it when He was here, but as they look back they say that was grace upon grace. Oh, what a flood of it! It has been likened to the waves of the ocean; they roll in one after another, the one breaks and spreads itself, another comes and fills it up - grace upon grace. It has never run out because of who He is - the Word.

The law and the prophets all exhausted themselves from one point of view, but in the man Christ Jesus the whole matter is filled out. It is never exhausted - grace upon grace. It did not set aside the truth, but it was able to hold these things in perfect balance and, since the

Word became flesh, grace is in the lead. You could not put truth before grace. If you did, we would all have stood condemned, lost; but grace is in the lead. You go to chapter 8, with that woman: grace and truth perfectly upheld in the man Christ Jesus, the woman told to go and sin no more. Grace and truth prevails through the dispensation. You say, I thought it was righteousness. No; righteousness is the foundation, but grace is the operating principle.

The law did not accomplish these things, but it says that grace reigns through righteousness (see Rom 5: 31). Righteousness is the foundation that has been laid, the righteousness of Christ; the righteousness of the man Christ Jesus has made way for a reign of grace that is going on through the whole dispensation.

Well, these things are set out from John's point of view. He is bringing out the glory, the majesty, the deity of the Person. Peter is speaking of Him as a holy sufferer. Peter is speaking of sufferings that even we in some measure are called to have part in. He says about Him that He has left us a model. Who is your model, may I ask? When we are younger we have heroes. Maybe as we get older we have some too, but who is your model? It says He has left us a model. You need to look at it; may I say you need to look at it oftener. We are so apt to get accustomed to things that are short of the divine ideal. "The mediator of God and men one". One and no other, the man Christ Jesus. He has left us a model. Well, let us look at Him. Peter knew Him, perhaps, better than any, and he was writing here as looking back by the Spirit, and the Spirit illuminating certain things before Peter's vision. You could go through the gospels - a very interesting contemplation - and identify these things about which Peter speaks. "Neither was guile found in his mouth": Oh, how often He was upbraided, how often He was maligned.

"Neither was guile found in his mouth"; He was full of grace and truth. What cutting words He could have said. "When reviled, reviled not again". Had He not a reason? Could He not have just corrected them? Could He not have just presented His case? I think of the Saviour in Pilate's judgment hall when I read this. It says "he opened not his mouth", Isa 53: 7. Oh, what He could have said!

Where were the ten lepers that were cleansed? Where was the widow who had her son raised? Where were the five thousand indeed that were fed? Where were they when He, the holy sufferer, was maligned in Pilate's presence? Did He call any of them for witnesses? No, "he opened not his mouth; he was led as a lamb to the slaughter", the man Christ Jesus. Oh, how different! We ought to open our hearts more often, beloved brethren, to the intrinsic uniqueness of that holy Man. It says something else - He "gave himself over into the hands of him who judges righteously". I would commend that to you. He did not answer Pilate, He "gave himself over". Have you ever been upbraided?

Have you ever thought, Well, what they did to me was not quite right? Have you thought that? He felt that more than any creature could ever feel it. What He felt in the scorn and the shame that was heaped upon Him! By the Jews? Yea, by the whole world. Luke, writing about that scene, says that the whole world was there (see Acts 4: 27). There was Herod, there was Pontius Pilate, there were the Jews, the nations, all there, heaping ignominy and shame upon Christ. It says He "gave himself over into the hands of him who judges righteously". Oh, what a model! What a model when you feel that you have been wronged. There is Someone who judges righteously. That was Christ, all through His path the righteous One. His resource, His retreat, was in the Father. You wonder where His resource was. It says in Luke "by night ... he remained abroad on the mountain called the mount of Olives", chap 21: 37. John says they went to their own home, "But Jesus went to the mount of Olives" (chap 8: 1) - the man Christ Jesus, the holy sufferer, committing Himself into the hands of Him who judges righteously.

Beloved, these verses are infinite, because of the Person about whom we are speaking. I only commend that one touch to you - He gave Himself over. He was at no disadvantage for that. It meant the cross. Yes. It meant the crown of thorns; it meant His being crucified between two robbers. But what is the answer? God has highly exalted Him. That is the effect of giving Himself over into the hands of Him who judges righteously. We will be at no

disadvantage. Oh, what grace it needs, but may we be assured of the outcome as we look at the model. You will never get this in other books. No books of man in their education will tell you to proceed on this way, but here is the model, the man Christ Jesus.

In Philippians Paul speaks about Him as a bondman. Paul here is seeking to further unity among the saints. We speak a lot about it, and generally we mean other persons coming round to our point of view. That is what we think would be unity. He says here "that ye may think the same thing", and then he presents the Bondman. He says "let this mind", not your mind, my mind, or so-and-so's mind, but "let this mind", the mind that was in the man Christ Jesus. What a mind it was, what an attitude! I only say, Is it ours? Do we really want unity? Or do we want, as I said, people thinking the same as I? Paul says "let this mind be in you ... subsisting in the form of God", all that true and unique about Him, but it says He "emptied himself, taking a bondman's form". That is the way to unity, beloved, take a bondman's form, go down. Indeed, I think you will find that, even in practical matters, a way out of a tight situation is to go down. There is usually room to get out at the bottom because everybody else is at the top trying to get out. Go down. He took a bondman's form, "taking his place in the likeness of men". I remember someone asking about a way out in a crisis. A beloved servant said, Well, you can always die. And that is the solution, you can always die. That is what the Bondman in principle did, He laid aside what belonged to Him, He "emptied himself, taking a bondman's form". The way out for Him was that He went to the cross. Disunity comes through each striving to project themselves and their own point of view, and the man Christ Jesus has gone this way, taking a bondman's form. "Let this mind be in you". He emptied Himself. Again you get the idea of giving Himself over into the hands of Him who judges righteously. His God has highly exalted Him, the Bondman. May we be exercised to take on His features.

In Revelation He is speaking about Himself. It is not now a Paul or a Peter or a John speaking about Him; He is calling attention

to Himself - may I say, the only Person who has a right to speak about Himself, "I Jesus". Very beautiful that He reverts to that name! Would it not have an echoing chord in every redeemed soul? "I Jesus". What a book it has been, a book largely speaking of agencies being used - angelic and others - but here, ere the book closes, He speaks Himself about Himself to appeal to the heart of His lovers - "I Jesus". Then He says "I am the root and offspring of David". What a man He is! The scriptures we have read are very full about Him, but they could never exhaust who He is, the root of David, the beloved of the Old Testament, the man who was most attractive as he came in. It says "he was ruddy, and besides of a lovely countenance", 1 Sam 16: 12. Everybody loved David. They were drawn to him in their need. He was always there, a great drawing centre. They went to him, "and he became a captain over them", 1 Sam 22: 2. Now here is the Root and Offspring of David. It refers to His deity, His majesty, and yet He is saying "I Jesus".

Beloved, the One who became flesh, the One who has come within our range, is a divine Person, the man Christ Jesus. There is nobody like Him. He is the Root; He was there before time began.

He knew all about the happenings in this book. Then He says He is the offspring of David, come of that beautiful line. All that was attractive was set out in David. Here is his Root, here is his Offspring. But then He says something finer than that; He says "the bright and morning star". Oh, what a man He is! "The bright and morning star" is shining amidst the darkness, shining there a great beacon, a token that the day is very soon to come. Nobody could put the morning star out, could they? "The root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star". Have you ever looked to Him like that? What does it mean, you say. It means that the day is very soon coming. It means that the day will soon burst upon our vision, and on those who are looking. And seeing that Morning Star, It says "the Spirit and the bride say, Come". What a word! Persons looking, and seeing Him, seeing Someone arising there in His majesty, amidst all the darkness, amidst all the breakdown, amidst all the depression, see Someone shining there in His own brilliance. It says "the Spirit and the bride say, Come. Someone has said about that

that a divine Person and a creature vessel use the same language at the same time. How precious! Think of the Spirit looking at that Morning Star too, strengthening the affections of the saints, and there is only one cry - Come, come Lord to reign. Oh, the man Christ Jesus, no longer in humiliation, but He will come out to reign, He will come out to put everything in its place, He will come out to be displayed. It says He will be "wondered at in all that have believed", 2 Thess 1: 10. Oh, all that is conveyed now in the Morning Star. It speaks about the morning star elsewhere but only here it says the bright and morning star. The length of the dispensation all that has come in, has not obscured the brightness and the shining of the man Christ Jesus. May the Spirit of God keep Him before our affections, for His Name's sake.

LONDON

19 March 1988

THE CHILDREN'S BOOKS

In Bible times books were generally in the form of long parchments, joined together and run on rollers held one in each hand by the reader standing at a lectern. These parchments were unrolled from one side on to the other as the 'book' was read, and then rolled back again for future use. It is interesting that the Lord Jesus, when preaching at Nazareth, stood up to read those beautiful words of salvation from what we know as chapter 61 of Isaiah. The worshippers must have wondered whenever He would stop and read! As He unrolled the book He would have passed the solemn chapter 53, and indeed again as He rerolled it. What this must have meant to His holy soul! We can learn that the sufferings of the Christ were necessary as a righteous basis for our salvation and that God "may be glorified".

The Scriptures refer to quite a number of different books such as those of history and of law which have come down to us in whole or in part. Others, like the "book of the wars of the Lord", apparently a collection of odes and poems composed by Moses, have disappeared. In New Testament times the apostle Paul wrote of some believers "whose names are in the book of life", not of course meaning that the names of others were not so. The apostle John in his vision saw certain books opened in connection with God's judgments and one of these also was the "book of life". You will remember that the Lord Jesus said to His disciples "rejoice that your names are written in the heavens".

There was a new book in heaven's library when those who feared the Lord spoke often to one another in the time of the prophet Malachi. No doubt children were amongst these God-fearing ones - not that they were afraid of God - but they thought of Him in all their matters. I believe that we shall find that there were additions to that book throughout the four hundred and fifty years until New Testament times. There must always have been two or more who

cherished God's promises of blessing and conversed about them. The aged prophetess, Anna, when she saw the babe Jesus, praised God and spoke to all those who waited for redemption in Jerusalem. This great work has now long been accomplished. Do you know Jesus as your Redeemer?

J.C.Evershed