

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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Contents

THE PRACTICE OF THE TRUTH (2)

MINISTRY AT A MARRIAGE

SENSITIVE CHILDREN

THE PRACTICE OF THE TRUTH (2)

Philippians 1: 19-30; 1 John 2: 26-29; Numbers 27: 1-7

B.M.D. I thought in this reading we could consider the Spirit as essential to the practice of the truth. The reference here is to "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" and, in John's epistle, to "the unction". Paul is facing his dissolution. He would remain for the sake of the Philippian saints but he is really committing them to the Spirit, and that, dear brethren, is what has maintained the testimony right down the ages. I think it was a very significant point when the saints were recovered to the liberty of addressing the Spirit. Whether or not we have yet reached the full implication of that might be a question. Therefore I ventured to read of the daughters of Zelophehad because I think they took the point of the springing well. I am anticipating in saying that, but I mention it because Paul brings this forward here as facing his departure: he is leaving the good deposit, to be kept by the Holy Spirit. He says that to Timothy: "Keep, by the Holy Spirit ... the good deposit", 2 Tim 1: 14. What is substantial has come down in the testimony through the ages in the power of the Spirit in someone. He is not incarnate: He is a divine Person, co-equal in the Godhead. God is here dwelling Spirit-wise. It is a great matter to take heed to this and to see that there is a "supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" - not exactly the anointing, although that is equally true (the whole tabernacle system was anointed), but the inward power of working, like, if we could use a crude expression, a working capital, "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ". I thought we could speak of that simply, and then there are one or two other matters that come into this section. This is how Paul faces dissolution. I think it would be salutary soberly to consider what he says.

W.A.M. Does that mean that Jesus Christ was continued in testimony, not in doctrine but in the Spirit?

B.M.D. In the power of the Spirit - we would have to say that. You can see how the position publicly has been invaded by the clerical

system which has detracted from the living character of the practice of the truth.

W.A.M. The supplication of the Philippians was in line with that.

B.M.D. Yes, he is really sympathetically bringing them into line with his own way of thinking. No doubt Paul would have the whole history in view prophetically, and that is what has come down to us; through divine grace we have been recovered to Paul's teaching. The 'us' needs guarding, of course. Who are the 'us'?

A.P.D. I suppose those practising the truth.

B.M.D. I think so, the overcomers. We shall come to that and see in the overcomers that the testimony is being maintained and will be maintained to the end in the practice of the truth, the reason being that they are listening to what the Spirit is saying to the assemblies. That keeps us broad in our outlook, for what the Spirit is saying is for every Christian on earth and would preserve us from any sectarian outlook. Would you say that?

A.P.D. I was noticing that Mr Taylor said, rather than discrediting others we should practise the truth ourselves and become attractive.

B.M.D. Yes.

W.A.M. So that Paul here is superior to those who preached the word seeking to add to his tribulation. He was being saved from his natural feelings, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ was manifesting itself.

B.M.D. Showing how broad he was in his outlook. Though the gospel was being preached even out of contention he was able to thank God that it was being preached.

H.G.H. The way Paul presents it here - "turn out for me to salvation, through your supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" - would show his dependence, would it not?

B.M.D. Prayer is a prominent feature in this epistle, not only his own prayer, but he is referring to their prayers. Maybe that is something we need a little stimulation in - our supplication in regard of the preaching.

H.G.H. But he is dependent not only upon their prayers but also on the Holy Spirit.

B.M.D. That is the whole point. He has proved it himself and now he is passing it on: "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ", as much as to say, Maybe I am about to leave you.

W.A.M. Recently amongst us prayer for the glad tidings in the household has been revived. We are very thankful for it.

B.M.D. That is very good, and needs encouraging. It brings all sympathetically and prayerfully into this great matter we were speaking about earlier.

H.G.H. The dependence on the Holy Spirit is over against dependence on one's natural ability, is it not?

B.M.D. Surely. We come to that: Paul had no confidence in the flesh but it seems to take some of us a long time to learn it.

H.G.H. Amen.

Ques. Why is the Holy Spirit referred to as "the Spirit of Jesus Christ"?

B.M.D. I think it is to bring out the Spirit of that Man, the Spirit of Jesus, "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ"; it is the Man who is anointed. We might say the focus is on Jesus. What would you say?

Rem. It is a great test as to whether we are marked by the characteristic features that marked Jesus Christ, and the Spirit is here for that purpose, to help us to be more like Jesus, to manifest that Spirit, is He not?

B.M.D. Effectiveness in service is to leave an impress of Christ, an impress of Jesus. That would make service effective. If you leave an impression of yourself it is a complete failure. If you leave an impression of Christ something may be effected. Gift is the ability to leave an impression of an impression. Is that intelligent?

Ques. Is this what we mean when we speak of the testimony? I was thinking of what you were saying about the Spirit of Jesus Christ. A

brother was enquiring after the meeting this morning as to what we meant when we spoke of the testimony.

B.M.D. That is a very good enquiry, "the testimony of our Lord", 2 Tim 1: 8. The testimony is Christ.

Rem. And the Spirit would be the power for that.

B.M.D. Surely He is the power for testimony. We will come to that: 'the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and the three agree in one', 1 John 5: 8. I hope we can get to that in our enquiry because it bears directly on how the practice of the truth is seen and maintained in witness. But then we should consider what Paul brings out as to his dissolution; it is a sobering matter, and those of us who are getting older have to think soberly of these things and be with God about them.

Ques. What do you understand by dissolution?

B.M.D. It is the death of a saint.

W.A.M. Paul said "to die is gain".

B.M.D. Yes. He would stay for their sakes. That brings out the intensity of his love for these beloved brethren.

W.A.M. It challenges us as to our estimate, whether to die would be gain.

B.M.D. We need to gain from Paul's experience; in some sense he had already touched this side of the gain. Is that intelligible?

A.P.D. Do you mean what he says as to paradise?

B.M.D. Yes, "whether in the body or out of the body" he could not tell (see 2 Cor 12: 2,3). He had already touched the blessedness of what that meant. So he is not speaking exactly in the air here; he is speaking from his personal experience.

H.G.H. Also we get a true judgment of the flesh and its wretchedness so that we want to get rid of it altogether.

B.M.D. Well, from chapter 2 on he counts it as dung; he puts it on the dunghill; and he had more to boast in that you and I would ever

have. He had no confidence in the flesh.

A.P.D. Is it right that we should have some experience as he had?

B.M.D. Well, I wonder if anyone has had an experience just like that. I do not know.

Ques. In that he speaks of "a man in Christ" (2 Cor 12: 1) he is not exactly speaking as an apostle, is he? It is what would be open for us. Whether we have it or not is another matter.

B.M.D. I would say that, and maybe the experience we have at the Lord's supper would be the closest we would come to it. I am sure you have had the sense of being very near the actuality of what you were enjoying.

W.A.M. That involves the work of new creation, does it not?

B.M.D. It would. "In Christ ... new creation" (2 Cor 5: 17), "a man in Christ". I suppose there was a certain spiritual maturity in Paul at that point.

A.P.D. It was said of him when he was in Lystra that he was taken out of the city as they supposed he was dead (see Acts 14: 19).

B.M.D. They thought he was dead. Of course we cannot be sure, but it is very suggestive that it might have been at that very point he had the experience of being caught up to the third heaven, and he said it was paradise (see 2 Cor 12: 4); we cannot add or detract anything from paradise.

W.A.M. He says, "Of such a one I will boast, but of myself I will not boast" (v 5).

B.M.D. Is that not a lovely spirit? To think of him holding it back for fourteen years before he brought it out, and then he did not want to speak of it! It was perhaps because of the Corinthian brethren that he brought it out.

T.E.D. Would speaking in this way have in mind, too, that the next generation should be exercised to come into the gain of what the beloved apostle was in the gain of?

B.M.D. I think that is why he speaks as he does. He is thinking immediately of the Philippians and I suppose there were younger brethren coming on. It is a question of what they could see in Paul as a model. His life was somewhere else: His life was Christ, He had nothing outside of Christ. (Oh the little I get of "He also who eats me shall live also on account of me", John 6: 57). That is how Paul lived. It is open to all, is it not?

T.E.D. Yes, it is. I wondered, too, whether Joshua was influenced by Moses the man of God in view of taking the children of Israel into and causing them to inherit the land.

B.M.D. Yes, he learned through Moses, I suppose. Moses would have been a model for him. When they came down from the mountain Joshua said, "There is a shout of war in the camp", Exod 32: 17. He was not right, was he?

T.E.D. No, but he learned at that time that the important thing was to remain in the tent.

B.M.D. That is right. What does that mean?

T.E.D. I wondered if for us it includes the preparedness to frequent a gathering like this rather than go elsewhere.

B.M.D. And secretly to remain in the divine presence. If for some reason you have lost your link with the Lord - and we know what that is; we speak tenderly and simply to one another, do we not? - do not rest there. We each need to have our own secret personally with the Lord.

Rem. The expression, "For me to live is Christ, and to die gain" is almost hard to understand. What could be greater than Christ, but he says, "For me to live is Christ, and to die gain".

B.M.D. Your own personal secret with the Lord is unbroken. Death does not "separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord", Rom 8: 38,39. Nothing can separate us: that is a wonderful thing. The Spirit given is never taken away. My link with the Lord is by the Spirit: "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit", 1

Cor 6: 17. That is unbroken, and the highest part of man is his spirit, then his soul, then his body.

J.N.C. Do you think that to die being gain would be coming into the thing in actuality? When the saints are caught up, that will be the gain for us if we are alive at that time.

B.M.D. I would think so and those that have gone, where are they?

J.N.C. With Him.

B.M.D. They are with Christ. They are in paradise. That link by the Spirit is unbroken. It is unthinkable that the Spirit would leave a person. The body is gone to corruption, but the spirit is there. It is wonderful and a tremendous comfort to think of.

J.N.C. It is the power of God, superior to any other power. It really makes the Christian feel great superiority being part of Christianity.

B.M.D. That is right, and no human reasoning can explain it because it is not meant to intrude into any area that is entirely spiritual.

W.A.M. So they not only depart to be with Christ but they live to God.

B.M.D. Yes, they all live to God, and these beloved saints died in faith. It is a question of faith in the living God. He is the God of the living.

Rem. When they were burying a man he touched the bones of Elisha and he revived (see 2 Kings 13: 21). So what Paul has left behind for us is gain as well, is it not? It is like the death of the testator: he has left a rich series of epistles wherein we see his spirit, the kind of man he was, as well as the doctrine.

B.M.D. I would say that exactly, particularly his experience of being caught up to the third heaven; and then he describes it - if it can be described - as paradise and that he heard things there. I suppose the epistle to the Ephesians is the nearest we get to "unspeakable things said", 2 Cor 12: 4. There is a note to that, that we are not yet in the condition to understand them. I believe it should hold out a

spiritual incentive to every one of us to develop that precious, inward, secret link with the Lord Jesus that can never be broken. Death does not sever it.

Ques. Do you think Stephen's dissolution bears on this? He says, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit", Acts 7: 59. That is what goes through.

B.M.D. Beautiful! The spirit of his Master, was it not? "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (v 60). He maintained the gospel. Of course, he was more specific than the Lord was, who said "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", Luke 23: 34. Stephen said, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.

WM. I remember an old brother saying that Israel would be very thankful for the Lord's prayer in a day to come because there would not be any governmental forgiveness for them if the Lord had not prayed thus.

B.M.D. That is very affecting. What a gospel it is! We need it all the way through. We need it as sinners; we need it as saints; we need it as believers, all the way through. Never let us get away from the gospel!

Rem. Paul says "But I am pressed by both, having the desire for departure and being with Christ, for it is very much better, but *Remaining* in the flesh is more necessary for your sakes". Is that two desires pulling at him? You can see the feelings of the man coming out, his longing for the saints, and yet his longing to be with Christ.

B.M.D. In a way it is almost a conflict of affection. How he loved the Lord! That was the best, to be with Him. But then he loved the saints; he loved Christ in the saints and for their sakes he would *Remain*. It is the spirit of the bondman, is it not? His first allegiance, his first loyalty is to his master: "I love my master"; but then, "I love ... my wife, and my children", Exod 21: 5. I think it is bringing out the spiritual qualities of the way Paul presents himself in this letter.

Ques. Does not even that expression give us an idea of what "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" is? It is coming out in Paul, what he was himself.

B.M.D. Yes, his own personality was coming out, and it is a very important matter to develop spiritual personality, but where do we develop it? In the company of the Master, and then in service to His own. What is it we love in one another? It is Christ we love in one another. We see Christ in the brethren. That is what Paul learned at his conversion: "Why dost thou persecute me?", Acts 9: 4.

Ques. So is there responsibility with us to be lovable?

B.M.D. Yes; what makes us lovable?

Rem. I suppose the feelings of Christ seen amongst the brethren, but then we do not always show it.

B.M.D. Well, we become like the company we keep, do we not? If we keep in the company of Jesus ... what was it? They took account of them that they were with Jesus (see Acts 4: 13).

Rem. So they would be lovable in that way.

B.M.D. Not that they had been, although it probably means that; the inference is they still were with Jesus. It is a wonderful thing that we can have as much of His company as we wish.

Rem. But it is to have an effect on us.

B.M.D. If you come to a meeting, what are you looking for? You are looking to see Jesus in the brethren. It becomes a spiritual experience, a manifestation, something comes in, and you get a touch, and you say, That is it. You get that you are not content without it. Do you not find that?

Rem. That is what I was thinking, that we have a responsibility to be lovable, so that in the working out in my private life there have to be moral conditions with me in which these features can be seen. If there is evidence that there is the Spirit of Christ in me, then I am attractive. Would that be right?

B.M.D. Yes, what you are saying is important. It would be a concern that we should be lovable and bring out the features that are lovable. We have spiritual affinity for one another, and that affinity is by the Spirit in relation to Christ.

Rem. Paul says in the first chapter that we read this morning, "because ye have me in your hearts" (v 7). There is that side that Paul can recognise as features of responsibility that, if they have him in their hearts, they are drawn towards him.

B.M.D. So he must have been lovable. Think of Acts 20: they wept on his neck. Oh to develop these keen sensibilities! We need them in a day when the grievous wolves would scatter the flock. We need the spirit of the shepherd that gathers the flock.

W.A.M. What he says about the Corinthians is interesting: "Ye are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read of all men", 2 Cor 3: 2. In spite of the conditions at Corinth, the Lord had said to him that he had much people in this city (see Acts 18: 10), and Paul regarded them in that way.

B.M.D. It is a wonderful comfort that we have found one another, brethren with whom we can walk. It is the greatest comfort. It is our life. There is nothing outside of it, and yet we claim nothing.

W.A.M. Mr Raven said that one of the greatest matters of our salvation was the Christian company.

Rem. I was wondering if it was really the shepherd coming out in Paul when he says "but remaining in the flesh is more necessary for your sakes"; and further, "abide along with you all, for your progress and joy in faith; that your boasting may abound in Christ Jesus through me by my presence again with you".

B.M.D. How he loved them! How could anyone serve the brethren if he does not love them? Love is the bond of perfectness (see Col 3: 14), and thank God there is a great deal of love with those among whom we are privileged to walk. Paul prays that it may abound more and more (see chap 1: 9).

Rem. He said to the Corinthians, "and yet shew I unto you a way of more surpassing excellence", 1 Cor 12 : 31. Could you get anything better than that?

B.M.D. You could not.

Rem. And he demonstrated it; it is not only what he said.

B.M.D. Well, much enters into this: "conduct yourselves worthily of the glad tidings", and so on.

W.A.M. Did Paul trace everything back to Christ as He was presented in the glad tidings?

B.M.D. Yes, I think that is how he operated. In John we come to the unction. It says earlier than where we read: "And ye have the unction from the holy one, and ye know all things", (v 20). The setting here comes amidst the danger of being among some who would lead you astray. He says, "I have written to you concerning those who lead you astray". Now the unction would involve spiritual sensibilities. I am just enquiring as to this, how the unction operates.

W.A.M. There is something very subtle there; you cannot explain it. It is what operates in the sensibilities of the saints: they have the sense of what is the truth.

B.M.D. So there is an intuition that senses it, like when someone said "there is death in the pot!", 2 Kings 4: 40. The unction does not link on with wild colocynths. Someone had tasted them; maybe all did not, but someone had and said there is death in the pot. Is that how the unction would work? But not only negatively, it would work still more in a positive sense.

W.A.M. Do you think that would work in bringing in the meal?

B.M.D. I do, more so. You are not looking for wild colocynths, are you? You are not looking for death in the pot. We want to listen and read ministry charitably, not looking for error.

Rem. Would verse 27 be positive, the unction teaching?

B.M.D. Yes, it would be positive teaching. So you detect things by being engaged with a positive line of teaching. If there is something

inconsistent, you would say, Just pause for a moment, let us look at this soberly - because it could happen. It does happen, and we would just say, Let us look at this carefully, enquire about it.

W.A.M. That marked the Bereans, did it not?

B.M.D. Yes, they did not read critically; they looked for confirmation.

W.A.M. That is right. They received the word first "with all readiness of mind", but then they searched the Scriptures for confirmation (see Acts 17: 11).

B.M.D. That "these things were so", not that they were not so.

J.N.C. So it says the unction is true: "and is true", so that would be a standard.

B.M.D. It provides a standard; there is an intuition within that detects a thing and appraises it.

J.N.C. It is an internal standard.

B.M.D. That is a good way of putting it. It is a thing working within you. I find I have an affinity with you; we have the same Spirit.

A.P.D. Is that the meaning of the Spirit being the truth subjectively in the epistle?

B.M.D. That helps, especially as we come to the scripture in Numbers. There is a subjective answer in those five daughters of Zelophehad that speak right, and I am sure they had appreciated 'another voice'. Aaron had died; Miriam had died; Moses was not to go into the land; there is another voice. That is something we could dwell on. Do you remember that? Can we get the point of 'another voice'? Nearly forty years have passed since that ministry: it is sobering. I think what was said as to the inward working of the thing is essential - that is, you are making room for the Spirit of God.

Rem. Mr Darby referred to the Holy Spirit as being God's eye in the conscience. Would that link on with your thought?

B.M.D. That would be part of the way we use the word internal. He is dwelling within. He would affect my conscience and my actions and my thinking, but we need a spiritual mind. The next chapter in

Philippians is the mind of Christ, the going-down mind. In one sense it is all of a piece. We need to learn to think Spirit-wise.

T.E.D. Do we have a touch of that in the scripture in Philippians 1: "I may hear of what concerns you, that ye stand firm in one spirit, with one soul, labouring together in the same conflict"? Paul says "whether coming and seeing you, or absent". Are we not tested as to whether "seeing ... or absent" we are maintaining the divine standard in our part in the testimony?

B.M.D. I think that is very fine, and whether we are together or absent, the same principles govern us; the unity is maintained. I thought we might come to that tomorrow, if the Lord will, that those four things lead to one thing: "thinking one thing", Phil 2: 2. Now that is organic. You could come to thinking the same thing by a book of rules, but "one thing" is a deeper matter; it is an organic matter.

Rem. The unction has been referred to as being rubbed in, like oil that has been rubbed into you; it gets into your whole spiritual constitution and changes your attitude and manner of life; everything about you becomes more and more like Christ.

B.M.D. That is very fine - rubbed in. What do you understand by that?

Rem. It is a gentle process and yet very effective. You cannot take it away; it is in you. Even though you may grieve the Spirit, yet He is in you.

B.M.D. So it is constant occupation with that divine Person dwelling in our hearts, is it not? If we walk in the Spirit, we are walking with God.

E.F.C. And would you say the word 'instinct' might be used too as to this effect of the unction? It is a spiritual instinct.

B.M.D. I think that is important; it is a kind of spiritual intuition. Sisters often have an intuition that needs to be regarded - at least I have found that. It is wisdom to respect it. They may discern a thing more delicately than I do.

E.F.C. Hannah was a wonderful illustration of that. She was misunderstood.

B.M.D. Yes, Eli thought she was drunk, but she was right.

Rem. Perhaps as brothers we tend to lean too much on intellect. You often find with young believers that there is evidence of the unction, they sense things. Perhaps as we get on and get to know a little more we tend to fall back on what we know.

B.M.D. That is the danger, I think, instead of falling back on the unction - in fact, I should not say falling back because we should never leave.

W.A.M. It is "the unction from the holy one".

B.M.D. Exactly. That maintains the divine standard which leaves no room ever for human intellect. It is ruinous in the things of God and may lead me to intrude into an area where it is best to leave it alone.

W.A.M. So we do not even require teachers in the light of this: "and ye have not need that any one should teach you".

B.M.D. He teaches. Just so. Grace teaches too.

Ques. "And ye have not need that any one should teach you" does not mean that we do not need teaching or help from one another but that we work it out inwardly with the unction. It becomes something that is a part of us and we work it out with the Spirit's help.

B.M.D. Just to be simple, we sit in a meeting like this and certain things are said and there is something within you that reacts. You sense you have an affinity, a link, with that, but if you have not, you may ask a question to get it a bit clearer. Our links with one another are very sensitive and spiritual and it is a question of building up something, especially in a reading like this.

Rem. I wondered if it would mean that we just do not take things on at face value but we work them out in our souls.

B.M.D. You have the inward confirmation in yourself and that is how a meeting generally will build up in the spirit of enquiry.

H.G.H. It is not to be dependence on man, whether it be myself or another leader, but dependence upon the Holy Spirit; so we have not need that any man should teach us because we have the unction.

B.M.D. We have to recognise that the Spirit is not incarnate: He is in persons, is He not? He is not incarnate as was our Lord, so we have to recognise how the Spirit is operating. He is a divine Person here.

H.G.H. Anyone who ministers would minister in the understanding that if it is of God, it will be taken on by the saints. If it is not of God or if the saints do not take it on, then I have to question myself. Is that right?

B.M.D. That is right. This section we read in Numbers is very instructive. These five sisters speak right. I wondered whether subjectively they do not allude to getting the gain of another voice. The Spirit clearly is linking us with Christ. Why was it they did not go straight into the land? There is a big detour - the two big kings to be overthrown - self again, I suppose - Sihon and Og - and then Balaam that led to corruption, fornication, link with the world. It seems there was something represented in these daughters of Zelophehad that got the point of another voice. Their whole concern was that they might not miss out their place in the inheritance. They wanted to get over into the land.

H.G.H. What you are saying is that the other voice is the voice of Christ. Is that it?

B.M.D. The voice of the Spirit.

Rem. So these sisters had no instruction. The voice of the Spirit was speaking to them. Is that the thought? Not that you could speak of it as the voice of the Spirit because the Spirit was not prominent in that day as He is in our day, but figuratively speaking would that be your thought?

B.M.D. In what they are saying they are speaking right. I think typically they represent persons who have the unction.

A.P.D. Do you think that Eleazar has a peculiar place at this time?

B.M.D. Do you mean in the way he met what came in?

A.P.D. It was a priestly voice and he was instrumental in settling them into their inheritance. It was a spiritual voice. It was not exactly authoritative, it was spiritual.

B.M.D. That is the point exactly. Moses was to die, the authoritative side, always needed and essential in the wilderness - I am not setting aside the authority of the Lord - but it is not authority that will get you into the inheritance; it is attraction.

W.A.M. Joshua is introduced as a man who has the Spirit.

B.M.D. That is very fine, a man who has the Spirit. Typically Caleb and Joshua represented testimonially what went right through. What I am trying to get at here is that these beloved sisters represent the subjective side to that.

J.A.H. Is there a subjective side in the last four assemblies addressed in Revelation, because, as you know, the four run concurrently? There is continuance. There is the idea of being an overcomer and then hearing what the Spirit says, whereas the first three are the reverse of that. Would there be something in that?

B.M.D. I would say that exactly.

J.A.H. So if we have any difficulty about continuance, we should look more at the subjective than the objective.

B.M.D. I think so: we are probably safer. Of course, we need both. We so easily get out of balance, do we not? but what is subjective should be reliable. The subjective side should be reliable and so they are speaking right. I wondered whether they might relate to the five virgins that had the oil. Do you agree with that?

J.A.H. It is like "the Spirit and the bride say, Come", Rev 22: 17. There is that element there.

B.M.D. It is linking on with that. That is a very sensitive, but most attractive, matter to see developing amongst the saints. And it is - everywhere. There is a quickening of affection and desire for the Lord to come.

W.A.M. So it would be the answer to what came out in Caleb and Joshua. They spoke of it as being "a very, very good land", and then, "If Jehovah delight in us, he will bring us into this land", (Num 14: 7,8). They were to be the gain of that.

B.M.D. Also these daughters of Zelophehad were accurate in their judgment. They could review their wilderness history. They say as to their father that "he died in his own sin". In a way they are looking back over the surface of the waste. They say he was not in the band; he had a judgment of the Korah matter, but it is important what they try to get at here.

W.A.M. He was not a partaker in others' sins (see 1 Tim 5: 22).

B.M.D. No, he died in his own sin. They were sober in their judgment, not over-occupied with it. So we need to see the principles that were at stake in the wars of the Lord and stand by those principles.

T.E.D. Did you say earlier that they would have been in the appreciation of singing to the well? Maybe you would say more about that because I see in that passage (Numbers 21: 17): "Rise up well! sing unto it", that the note says, Or 'answer' - response - is there an answer in me that responds to what is proceeding testimonially?

B.M.D. That is exactly what we are trying to get at. Numbers 21 was like a turning point, was it not? That is one of the most distinctive features of the latter ministry of Mr Taylor. In one sense he, as it were, left us with the Spirit.

Rem. Would you open up then as to the objective of speaking to the Spirit. We have been occupied with the subjective, but for the sake of some would you say a word about speaking to the Spirit.

B.M.D. Well, there is no difficulty in addressing a divine Person. He is co-equal in the Godhead. He is another Comforter.

Ques. Is that not wonderful? But the thought behind addressing the Spirit is that He is a divine Person, and as God we can address Him.

B.M.D. Well, you speak to God.

Rem. And as God we can worship Him.

B.M.D. Surely. God is the sole object of worship. I think it was the skill of divine love that brought us to that point, but the humbling side is that we did not get the point. I would have to say that. We have made a detour. It is nearly forty years since that ministry. What was the Spirit engaging us with? - the Ark. When you see the Ark as Christ personally, go after it! What happened? These two big men in the way, Balaam, and then corruption. Have we retained this point of another voice?

T.E.D. Is there a response from my heart now? Is that what you are saying?

B.M.D. That is what we want to get at, to quicken that inward response to another voice. What is that voice saying? If we took another type, He is saying, "That is my master! ", Gen 24: 65.

T.E.D. If we go right back to that type as well we would say, "Do not hinder me", and then the word is, "I will go" (v 56). That is the response.

B.M.D. That is right.

Rem. You are referring to Genesis 24 in saying another type of the Holy Spirit, not objectively, seen in the servant and also in the camels. Is that right?

B.M.D. That is right. There are five types of the Spirit in that chapter.

Ques. Would you point them out?

B.M.D. The subject is getting a bit big.

Rem. I know, but there is need for it if you will pardon me.

B.M.D. Well, one important thing is that she had said to the servant, "Who is the man that is walking in the fields to meet us?", Gen 24: 65. There was clearly converse between Rebecca and the servant as a type of the Spirit. His answer is, "That is my master!" Does that answer your question? Not altogether? You find out the five types. It is a little bit of homework. Is that all right?

Rem. Thank you.

B.M.D. I do not mean just for you but for all of us. Search out the five types in Genesis 24.

J.N.C. In the course of the testimony a great deal of emphasis was laid for many years on the Supper being the Lord's supper, not the Father's Supper, nor the Spirit's Supper. Do you think that was essential so that the saints might learn the order of the Supper and take it on intelligently and feelingly? And then the Spirit of God was pleased to delay even His own part in it until it had been firmly established in our minds and in our practice as to the conduct of the worship of God.

B.M.D. Yes, I would say that fully. There was divine skill and, I suppose, perhaps the greatest heritage we have is what has come down to us in the service of God, not doctrinally - I do not mean that doctrine does not support it - but experimentally. We have had to find that out by experience. If we do not hold it that way it would become a creed and it would be better not to have it than to have it as a creed.

Rem. So you would say to interested souls, 'Come and see', in relation to the morning meeting.

B.M.D. I would, and I would say the same as to eternal life. We will not learn it from doctrine. Doctrine will support it but we learn it by experience. "Lay hold of eternal life", 1 Tim 6: 12.

Rem. There is an interesting allusion of Mr Darby's to the Spirit being worshipped and adored in the unity of Godhead.

B.M.D. Yes, it was current at that time. There are other instances that would prove that. We were recovered to it, but the truth was always there. We speak of the recovery of the truth, but really we have been recovered to the truth. You cannot do anything against the truth.

Rem. It is interesting in that regard that in Luke 15 the woman found the drachma. It was lost but she found it.

Rem. There is a plaque in a church rectory in Calgary which quotes the hymn: Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below; Praise Him above ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

B.M.D. Someone recognised the preciousness of liberty to address the Spirit. He is co-equal in the Godhead.

A.P.D. What would you say about His being a Friend to us through the wilderness? You are stressing the fact that we speak to Him as God. How else do we consider Him?

B.M.D. Ah, He is another Comforter! That is the wilderness.

A.P.D. You would feel free to speak to Him as another Comforter, would you not?

B.M.D. Would you not speak to Someone who comforts?

A.P.D. Surely. In all those hours in the wilderness you could not think of Rebecca not conversing with the servant as you said earlier.

B.M.D. Clearly. The Spirit is our best Friend, another Comforter: as Jesus was to the twelve, the Spirit is to be to ourselves.

A.P.D. It is as if, when He left them, He left them with the Spirit, to be on easy and equal terms with the Spirit.

B.M.D. "And I will beg the Father", He says, "and he will give you another Comforter", John 14: 16. "Another" means another like Jesus. How wonderfully privileged we are! How our beloved younger brethren should be thrilled to think of it; we have Jesus up there, and we have the Holy Spirit down here indwelling us.

Ques. Would it be fair to say that the reason the Holy Spirit did not bring Himself forward in the early recovery of the saints to the truth was to bring out His services in a subjective way?

B.M.D. Yes, I think we could say that.

Rem. So that had to be understood and enjoyed first because of the breakdown in Christendom in which it was man and man's mind that worked in the things of God, but it was to be the Holy Spirit leading in a subjective way known and understood.

B.M.D. I think many believers are hindered by regarding the Spirit just as an influence. The Spirit is a Person as Jesus is a Person and the Father is a Person. Mr Darby said, All are God, all one God, God all three. It is not an area for the human mind to intrude into in its natural thinking; nor is the cross, nor the grave. Three days and three nights in the heart of the earth: there is no place for the intrusion of the human mind. It is mystery. It is inscrutable. We fall back on Scripture. Thank God that we have the authority of the word of God.

J.N.C. Back in 1957 a brother said to me, It is incredible to think that you cannot speak to Someone who is in you.

B.M.D. And what was his answer to that?

Rem. He had been speaking to the Spirit for a considerable length of time.

B.M.D. I think many had been. It was not anything new to them. So let us rejoice in the liberty of it because it is bringing us into the fulness of Christianity, and the final subjective answer will be seen in the Spirit and the bride. How very near we are to the Spirit and the bride with one voice saying, Come. Oh that we could just be caught up, quickened a little, to get into the current of what the Spirit is saying and come into that invitation, "Come"; and then He says, "Yea, I come quickly", Rev 22: 20.

Ques. Is it not wonderful to give Him such a place that He can take the lead: "the Spirit and the bride say, Come"?

B.M.D. Just so.

WM. So what you have here would end in that the Spirit and the bride really being one.

B.M.D. Yes, one voice.

Rem. So the five daughters of Zelophehad say, "Give unto us a possession among the brethren of our father". They were all of one mind about it. They would not have any difficulty if they were living in our dispensation, would they, in embracing these wonderful truths that we have been speaking about?

B.M.D. I think they are a bit like the five wise virgins. Do you agree with that?

Rem. That is suggestive.

B.M.D. They had the Spirit: "Behold, the bridegroom", Matt 25: 6. We had a little word in the ministry somewhere about the comma. "Behold .." comma. Did you read that? The emphasis is on the bridegroom. That was very choice. The emphasis is on the Person. But the humbling side is that they all slept.

Rem. These five daughters were certainly awake to the importance of sealing their inheritance.

B.M.D. We were saying the other night - I do not know whether you would agree with it - that we are past the midnight now.

Rem. I would think so; we must be in the fourth watch of the night.

B.M.D. The day-break, the morning star. So every cry should be heavenward. The dawn is about to break.

J.N.C. Do you think these five sisters were an influence on Naboth when he read the book of Numbers. He says to Ahab, "Jehovah forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to thee!", 1 Kings 21: 3. He was already living in the land, spiritually speaking.

B.M.D. So he gave his life rather than surrender the inheritance. Are we ready for that? Are you ready to walk all by yourself if you have to? I think an overcomer has to come to that, that if there is no one else I will walk alone rather than lower the divine standard. My loyalty to Christ would require me to walk alone. It may be there will be some martyrs at the end. In fact there are some, maybe not in this country. Those under the altar are waiting for a few more to come yet and they are crying, "How long, O sovereign Ruler ...?", Rev 6: 10. What precious communion in that state of the soul! And the word is, wait a little longer (see v 11). Would you be ready to join them?

J.N.C. That would really be something for us to think about.

B.M.D. Let us be faithful unto death! That should be the attitude of everyone that loves Christ - to be faithful unto death. We shall wait for the crown of life.

J.N.C. "But the path of the righteous is as the shining light, going on and brightening until the day be fully come", Prov 4: 18.

B.M.D. That is a lovely Proverb: "going on". Let us go on! It is on; it is upward:

That way is upward still,
Where life and glory are. (Hymn 12)

We are living in the most wonderful time we could be living in and yet along with it the most responsible. Let us not fail the Lord at the end! He will not fail us; the Spirit will not fail us. We have to watch the world and watch those two big giants, Moabites and then the corruption of the world. The enemy is knocking at the door relentlessly. What will preserve us? Virgin love for Jesus, love in incorruption.

Key to initials

E.F.Cary, Los Angeles; J.N.Castle, San Francisco; A.P.Devenish, Edmonton; B.M.Deck, Motueka; T.E.Druckenmiller, Plainfield; H.G.Holt, Chicago; J.Hibbert, Calgary; W.Moseley, Vancouver

MINISTRY AT A MARRIAGE

(i) Geoffrey Bywater

Ephesians 5: 22-27; 1 Corinthians 7: 39; Titus 2: 1-8

I am thinking, dear brethren, about the divine standard. I am sure that we would accept that God's standard is Christ, and in relation to the marriage that has occurred today, we might say that God's standard is Christ and the assembly. The language here is particularly interesting. It says "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord, for a husband is head of the wife, as also the Christ is head of the assembly". It is noticeable that the words "submit yourselves" have been put in square brackets, as if the translator recognised that the divine thought was so sensitive that it could hardly be put into human language. It is really "Wives to your own husbands, as to the Lord". And then "for a husband is head of the wife, as also the Christ is head of the assembly". Another thing to be noticed is that it says "Husbands, love your own wives". It does not say husbands be head of your wives. They are to be head but it is the way the scripture puts it here: "even as the Christ also loved the assembly". Again we have the divine standard. What a wonderful matter it is for our thoughts to be directed to Christ and the assembly even as we rejoice in the union of our brother and his wife.

I am thinking of the scripture in 1 Corinthians 7, not in the actual setting in which it is, but particularly these words as to marriage: "only in the Lord". We can be thankful that our young brother and sister have committed themselves in this way. They have married whom they will but "only in the Lord". That was their choice, to be regulated thus by the Lord. For the sake of those very much younger amongst us, if it had said "only in Christ", it could have been any believer that our brother or sister had married. As I understand it, this expression "only in the Lord" would point to the fact that our brother and sister, and many others here, have committed themselves to the Lord's will, the fellowship, the

conditions of the fellowship, and to be governed by the truth in doctrine and practice. Thus they have committed themselves to marriage "in the Lord". The older brethren have no doubt followed these matters in many instances with exceeding thankfulness, where young persons have been preserved from what is wayward and have taken on this matter of "in the Lord" - the divine standard. What a basis it is for the Lord to bless the household and the local assembly of which they will form part, that there should be another household where husband and wife have committed themselves to the divine standard. They are not the only ones here who have been marked by this feature, for many others have committed themselves very definitely in this way. Such have not allowed their affections to be wayward in the office or at school, but have been marked by self-control. These things are not automatic; self-judgment and committal are needed, definite committal to the Lord Jesus and to His people and to what is right. In the many cases where this has been so, including that of our brother and sister, we can thoroughly commend them. They have set themselves for what is right, and may there be others who do so if the Lord leaves us here.

Now Paul has something to say to Titus, as he does to Timothy, about the continuance of the divine standard in our households. The elder men and the elder women have their place in this example and admonition. Then he speaks of the young women and the younger men. There is a word for each so that their union and their household may be blessed. As we have observed, the older ones have a part in admonishing. We perhaps think of admonish as a severe word, but it is to help, to advise, to warn, as well as to rebuke if necessary, as the note indicates, that things may prosper with the younger ones. So Paul says "that they may admonish the young women to be attached to their husbands, to be attached to their children, discreet, chaste". And then diligence in homework, is mentioned. We need to keep to the divine standard, dear brethren, and the Lord would help us in it. He would help us as we commit ourselves to the word of God, to see how to work it out in a modern day in which there are many pressures. Then he says, "The

younger men in like manner exhort to be discreet" (both are exhorted to be discreet). Then it goes on to say "in teaching uncorruptedness, gravity, a sound word". Our brother cannot sit back and say, I will leave the giving of sound words to those who take meetings, to those who minister the truth. He needs to bring in a sound word in his household, to be marked by wisdom in that way. May we be helped in these things, as committing ourselves to the divine standard, beginning with what is so excellent in Christ and the assembly. For His Name's sake.

(ii) Edward Walkinshaw

2 Samuel 6: 11; 1 Corinthians 1: 11; 16: 15,16

There are three households referred to in these passages, beloved brethren, and no doubt the Spirit of God has recorded them for our teaching. They are brief references, but I think there is a point for all of us in each of them and at any rate for those of us who have households. In the first case we find a household which is blessed by Jehovah. It is our desire, and faith would say, that the household of our brother and sister will be blessed as they cherish the ark. Now the ark is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, as most of us would know. The question arises with all of us as to whether we cherish Him in our households. The Lord would exercise us about this and at the same time encourage us so that He might have the first place in the household. Those of us who are older are challenged by that and I suppose that everyone is. It was only in the house of this man for three months. It was in the house of another man, named Abinadab, for many years. The question arises whether this man instructed his household. Did he give instruction to his two sons who drove the cart with the ark on it? He might have had opportunity to do so. Our family reading is most important - reading the Scriptures and prayer so that all of us, and especially younger brethren, may be instructed in the greatness of our Lord Jesus Christ. The ark, as most of us would know, was the same outside as it was inside, covered with gold. How wonderful is the person of Christ. If only Abinadab, who had the ark in his house for so many years, had taught his sons, one would not have ventured to touch the ark. He would have respected it and recognised that it was the centre of the divine system at that time. I wonder if we feel like that. I did hear a remark some time ago: Has the family reading and prayer in our households waned, or is it given up? Circumstances are difficult, of course, with the present pressure which many brethren are under, but I believe the Lord would exercise us that we might in our homes have some touch day by day about our Lord Jesus Christ, so that when we come to our assemblings we might know how to behave - not to be forward or, so to speak, touch the ark, but to learn to

cherish it. I am sure that our brother and sister will keep this before them, so that Christ is cherished in their home and not given just a formal recognition. This of course applies to all of us. It says "Jehovah blessed the house of Obed-Edom". May all our households be blessed in this way and, in particular, the household of our brother and sister. May they keep Christ before them in their household and cherish Him as the ark was cherished in the house of Obed-Edom.

Then we have the household of Chloe. They were faithful, faithful I suppose to Paul. They were used of the Lord to bring Paul's teaching to the Corinthians, to correct, encourage and admonish them. I suppose they might well have suffered somewhat from the kings of Corinth for disclosing the details to Paul. Paul did not say, I have been advised of the divisions but I will not mention any names. He says, The house of Chloe have shown me. Faithful they were, as he was too. Not only may our households be blessed, and that of our brother and sister, but may we all learn to be faithful to the truth and to bring in Paul and his teaching. Christendom has departed from him. What about ourselves, dear brethren? Are there any features which show that we have departed from Paul? Are we somewhat like the Corinthians? The Lord would raise these questions with us, I believe, not to discourage us, but to encourage us on the right road, so that our households might be pleasing to Him.

The next household is one devoted to the saints. I can look around here and see those that are devoted to the saints for service; not devoted to service - that might make something of them - but devoted to the saints for service. I believe that as these things are kept before us the Lord would help and strengthen us in what has been called the divine standard as to Christ and the assembly. They will lead to it, I believe, and we all, and our young couple especially, would need to understand that no two persons can be an ultimate object for each other. They must, as one, have Christ as their object with His interests before them. That will minister to their own natural happiness in their home and in their relations both with Him and with

the brethren. May the Lord encourage all of us, and again may I say in particular our young brother and sister as they set up their household, that they may be devoted to the saints for service. May it be so with them and with all of us for His Name's sake.

(iii) John Brown (Grangemouth)

Hebrews 12: 1,2; Revelation 3: 21,22; 21: 2-7

I have been encouraged to read these verses and would seek the Spirit's help to say a little about overcoming. Our brothers have referred to the maintenance of divine standards and the maintenance of what is right in the household setting. That requires the practical experience of overcoming. We all need to be overcomers, and so perhaps this word can be for everyone here. It is good to see so many brethren gathered for such a happy occasion as the marriage of our dear young brother and sister. We are gathered to commend them to the Lord and we certainly do that, but are we all here to hear what the Lord Jesus might have to say to us individually? There are many of us here who are set in households as parents, children, or as heads of houses. All of these relationships exist, and in every one of them overcoming is needed.

There is much to overcome, but I do not want to dwell on what is negative. I want to dwell on the One who was the overcomer par excellence, the Lord Jesus Himself. Paul (at least I suppose that the writer is Paul) begins this chapter by speaking of these negative things. Everyone here would know something about them, these things that entangle us. They can entangle us in our married life and in household matters, just as much as in our individual lives, things that are not necessarily evil or explicitly wrong. There are the sins too; but there are these weights. I would commend the word to our dear young brother and sister, and to everyone of us here down to the very youngest, that the Lord Jesus Himself would help us to be overcomers. I can say, as knowing our young brother, that he is an overcomer, and that feature will be needed with us all until the Lord takes us from this scene. Then Paul brings in the Lord Jesus: "looking steadfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith". Oh, what an overcomer He was! What joy lay before Him as He went into death - "who, in view of the joy lying before him, endured the cross". Think of the merchant seeking goodly pearls, and he found one of great price. The valuation that the Lord Jesus put on that

pearl - "he went and sold all whatever he had and bought it", Matt 13: 46. Think of what the Lord Jesus has done to secure what is for His heart's pleasure.

We read in Revelation 21 of this wonderful city, the assembly, the bride for His heart's pleasure. What a wonderful thing it is to be reminded of the Lord Jesus and the satisfaction that He has in this wonderful vessel. But we need an object for our faith and for our help, and Jesus is our object. Think of those to whom the heavens were opened. Paul had that experience on the road to Damascus. Then Stephen, even while he endured the stoning, beheld the heavens opened and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. I would just like to pass on to our dear young couple, and to the brethren, an impression gained from something I read recently. When the heavens were opened to Jesus it was not exactly that there was an object there for Him: rather, He was the object of divine acclamation. The heavens were opened to Him and the Father's voice came: "This is my beloved Son in whom I have found my delight", Matt 3: 17. Oh, what an object of heaven's delight He was! I believe it is true to say that every overcomer, in however simple a matter, is an object of pleasure to heaven. May our young brother and sister know something of overcoming. They will need it, as we all need it in our household settings and in our individual exercises; to overcome to maintain divine standards, to overcome to be pleasing to divine Persons. None of these things can be brought about without overcoming.

But then what a reward there is! What a word this is to the overcomer in Laodicea! You might say that there are many more problems there, they were neither cold nor hot. Think of the things that the Lord Jesus has to say to Laodicea: but look at what He says to the overcomer there: "He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne; as I also have overcome, and have sat down with my Father in his throne". What a wonderful thing it is to have our eyes on this blessed One who overcame everything that stood against Him; He overcame the power of death. He says to the

overcomer, "to him will I give to sit with me in my throne". What a promise that is and how attractive It is!

Then in chapter 21 we see something of what the Lord Jesus had in view when he endured the cross and despised the shame - this holy city, "new Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband". Our dear young sister is an example of this today. It goes on to say "Behold, I make all things new". But then it says, "He that overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be to him God, and he shall be to me son". I believe, dear brethren, that the promises made to the overcomer are very rich and full indeed, but to overcome we need an object, and that object is the blessed Son of God. He overcame all, everything that stood against Him, so that He might have this object for His heart's affection.

May we all be exercised not to allow these other things to entangle us and weigh us down. May our dear young brother and sister, as they set up house with us locally, in the Lord's will, prove what it is to overcome and to be here for the Lord Jesus and for His pleasure, along with each one of us, for His Name's sake.

BUCKHURST HILL

2 November 1991

SENSITIVE CHILDREN

In the wisdom of God there are five senses in mankind and the animal kingdom generally. The one that you are using in reading this page is that of *sight*, in some ways the most interesting of the five, one small eye being able to see things near and things far off, things tiny and things large. The Scriptures contain many references to 'seeing' on the part of divine Persons, so that we should realise that God is observing us in His love. I remember a little boy who, when passing the bright 'eye-sign' at an optician's shop asked his mother, Is God's eye as big as that? .

Smelling and *tasting* are two other senses which have their importance to us and we should be sorry to lose them. After the flood Jehovah smelled the odour of rest which went up to Him in Noah's burnt-offering. Later, there were two special perfumes to be offered up in connection with God's worship. As to tasting, when the Lord Jesus was at the cross He tasted but did not drink the mingled drink provided. Afterwards, when on the cross He said "I thirst", it says that He received the vinegar offered to Him. He then said "It is finished".

Hearing and *feeling* complete the five senses and we can think of divine Persons, in grace ready to help us as God helped Ishmael. It is said of this boy that "God has heard the voice of the lad there, where he is". Whether or not the lad enquired of Jehovah we do not know, but the Scripture assures us that He cares about us. As regards feeling, Paul wrote that when he was a child, he felt as a child. This is in the great 'love' chapter. Can you learn by heart chapter 13 of first Corinthians?

J.C.Evershed