

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 245

August 1993

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DISCIPLESHIP (5)

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J.A.G. Some of these scriptures came before me today in the service of God. We could put them together, counting on the Lord's help, and have some direction from Him to help us further into the gain of the blessings that belong to us in Christianity. Numbers 17 is the power of life in Christ in resurrection. I thought of the scripture in Ephesians 1: 19, "the surpassing greatness of his power ... which he wrought in the Christ in raising him from among the dead"; and when He raised Christ from among the dead He raised the saints with Him, and so they are associated with Him here in the power of life - "budded, brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and ripened almonds". I thought perhaps from the next scripture, where Moses is told to take the staff and he takes the wrong one, we are to learn how we have to respect the brethren and be concerned that we hallow God in relation to them. There is the teaching of grace, I suppose, in Aaron's staff. Then we arrive at the Spirit in this subjective way and the leadership of the Spirit, arrive at it happily: "Then Israel sang this song, Rise up, well! sing unto it". So that there is not only refreshment as in Numbers 20, there is power to move and there is leadership. We are no longer governed exactly by the movements of the system, but there is the leadership of the Spirit personally. The daughters of Zelophehad show that they have concern for the inheritance. I suppose that is a feature of all who have reached through to a second numbering, they are numbered for heaven. In Deuteronomy God would show us the land, the glory of it,

'Thy counsels too in all Thine own,
Fulfilled by power divine

(Hymn 178)

Maybe we had a touch on that line today. I am feeling my way in these scriptures and very much desire the help of the brethren,

indeed we need one another's help. This is a great scripture in Numbers 17 where the death and resurrection of Christ is before us. The house of Levi, I suppose, bears on the great line of sonship, "the assembly of the firstborn who are registered in heaven", Heb 12: 23. So there is the power of life in Christ to sustain all the thoughts of God in the saints and bring them through.

J.A.P. Write Aaron's name (see chap 17: 3): would you say something about the Lord Jesus getting a name as raised and glorified, "a name, that which is above every name", Phil 2: 9.

J.A.G. That will yet be. I think Aaron's name written on his staff points to the distinctiveness, the selectiveness, of the resurrection of Christ. The staves of the other princes, eleven of them, were left there; they go back and take them out in the morning; their names are written on them but they are dead. But God has shown His delight in Christ in raising Him from among the dead. We get some touch, among other things, of the surpassing greatness of His power, and that relates to the Spirit, how the Father raised Him by the Spirit - the surpassing greatness of His power in raising Him from among the dead the setting Him down at His own right hand in the heavens. That is before us here in type in Numbers 17, and there is the power of that indissoluble life (see Heb 7: 16), and the saints are there, the church is raised with Him. They are raised there, and they are satisfied and happy, blissfully enjoying the power of His love. So there is no more murmuring.

E.C.B. Do you get some impression of "old things have passed away; behold all things have become new" (2 Cor 5: 17), because God says He will make something cease - old things have passed away.

J.A.G. Yes, exactly, so we are in the realm, you might say, of new creation.

L.McF. Would John's gospel come into this? "In Him was life" (chap 1: 4) is what is inherent. It came out in Aaron's rod, this life which we touch now, do you think?

J.A.G. Yes, I think so. God raised Him from among the dead because, of course, of His delight in Him: it was impossible that He should lie there. So I thought the day of Pentecost was accomplishing, and it runs right through to the close of the dispensation. We have Christ as the giver of the Spirit: "the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified", John 7: 39.

So there is an appeal to anyone who thirsts to come to Him and drink. I thought perhaps there would be some indication of that in the 20th chapter.

M.P. "Bring ... before the testimony, to be kept as a token for the sons of rebellion": would it be like the sign of Jonas, what is "a wicked and adulterous generation" (Matt 12: 39), at the resurrection.

J.A.G. Yes, you would wonder why they were not raised. Why did not your staff bloom and blossom and so forth.

M.P. That is what I thought. There were three things kept in the ark - the pot of manna, the staff of Aaron and the tables of the law, and my impression is that they would refer to faith, hope and love.

J.A.G. That is interesting, because it brings out the greatness of divine resource, what God has in Christ to meet every situation. It is a fine thing to see that, when God raised Christ, He raised the saints with Him. So we have been taught, and true it is, that He is the giver of the living water.

W.A.M. So, if God has Christ in resurrection, He can do anything through Him. It is wonderful to think of Him being raised from among the dead. As here He was the life of men, but as in resurrection He is available to us.

J.A.G. Yes, exactly, He is free from all limitations and our links with Him are links with a Man in glory; the Spirit comes from Him on high to empower us into the enjoyment of His love, and our place is united to Him. We need to use the correct staff.

W.S.C. Romans deals with many things, but it begins with "marked out Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness, by

resurrection of the dead", chap 1: 4. Does that fit in with what you are saying?

J.A.G. Yes, the distinctiveness of Him, that He could raise dead persons. I think Mr Darby says something like this; that the power of life and the power of holiness in Christ (in the gospels) alive, is the power of life in Christ in death. You will find it in the Synopsis. It is a tremendous contemplation. So that His death, in that sense, is greater than His resurrection.

E.C.B. In Aaron's rod in chapter 17 there is the inference that life was inherent, but not in the others.

J.A.G. That is right.

E.C.B. Not to go on to the end of the book, but do you think Christ in resurrection, and for that matter ascension, takes you to the top of Pisgah?

J.A.G. That is what I thought. It is exactly why I thought we should read that, because that is where our association with Him is in its fulness. It is important that we should be exercised that the spiritual energy proper to the day of Pentecost should be found among us, because there is to be no waning; there is no waning in the energy of the Spirit.

E.C.B. In its application to us do you see a difference between the water from the rock and the water from the well in chapter 21? The water from the rock is "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink", John 7: 37. Chapter 21 perhaps is the Spirit not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified. It is to connect you with another world.

J.A.G. Yes, chapter 21 is really the leadership of the Spirit; the sons of God have been raised with Christ. These blooms and blossoms and ripened almonds are what we are as in Christ Jesus, raised with Him from among the dead. The Spirit is the power that they will come into the gain of that. Spiritual energy is here, the Spirit is here in fulness as He was in the day of Pentecost. I know for myself there is great need of spiritual energy to dig this well and let the water flow.

G.R. In that connection there is an interesting end to verse 13 of chapter 20: "and he hallowed himself in them". Would that link with what you are saying?

J.A.G. I think God has to be represented rightly. We do not call the brethren rebels, you do not berate people, you recognise what the brethren are as raised with Christ, and move towards them in priestly grace. You do not smite them with the staff of authority - some people might do that persons are looking for help, you do not take out Moses staff and go for them. It is grace and truth subsisting through Jesus Christ (see John 1: 17).

J.A.P. Would you care to say a little more about the immensity of the death of Christ?

J.A.G. I do not know that we would ever be able to comprehend its greatness, the fact that that Man was a divine Person and yet as man He died and was really dead. He lay in death for us, He lay in death to clear God's holy throne, having borne the judgment, and God showed His pleasure in Him in going to the tomb with His glory and raising Him up from among the dead, bringing out the absolute purity and holiness of Christ. The whole matter of sin and sins had been finished for ever before God's sight. What a matter that was when God with His glory raised Him from among the dead "by the glory of the Father", Rom 6: 14. You can understand why that should affect us so that we should be walking in newness of life. That is what they are going to do here, is it not?

C.F.D. Another has made a very interesting remark about the death of Christ, that Christ went through death in the power of His divine life. Maybe you would say a word about that.

J.A.G. It is beyond me. I am quite impressed, as I say, with that remark of Mr. Darby's; and the other statement about Him living through death, the power of His divine life, and yet He really died. Nobody, I think, can comprehend the greatness of that.

E.C.B. These things on which you are commenting are implicit in John 2, are they not? "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will

raise it up" (v 19). You might say how could a dead man raise up a dead man, but there is an inherent power of life there.

J.A.G. Exactly.

H.J.G. Would what we had earlier about Peter reaching the rock show in many of his words after Christ was ascended? One of them is that it was not possible that He could be holden of death (see Acts 2: 24).

J.A.G. Yes, I think so. Then when He died, "many bodies of the saints ... arose", Matt 27: 52. That was a sign; they went "into the holy city". There is something tremendous about it. Then when He rose, we rose with Him - "raised us up together, and has made us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ" (Eph 2: 6), and that is what we have here. To get into the gain of that we need the Spirit.

Christ is the giver of the living water, and that would probably be chapter 20. Speak to the rock; it is not the smitten rock. It is not the Spirit from that point-of-view, the Spirit given on the basis of the sufferings of Christ, but it is Christ glorified and the Spirit available.

The Spirit comes down in power and energy and depth of feeling.

J.A.P. I share that impression at the meeting we were at this morning, that the Lord Jesus should meet Him "who has the might of death", Heb 2: 14. These are immense matters that He went into for us. Then when the saints have to face that, what a victory to know that He went that way in all its fulness that we can go that way, if we are called upon to do so.

J.A.G. Yes, and He gives it to you. It says, death is yours (see 1 Cor 3: 22), it belongs to you; and I think the brethren know how to use it. It is a great comfort that there is no water at the Jordan. You see it at the Red Sea and it is a wall to you, but when you come to the Jordan there is nothing but the ark.

W.A.M. In Matthew's gospel the angel says, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay", chap 28: 6. In Mark's gospel it is "where they had put him", chap 16: 6. It is wonderful grace to think that He lay in death.

J.A.G. It is indeed. He lay there for me, He lay there for you; He lay there in committal to the will of God. When the time was come He rose - I think that is John's gospel. These are precious matters. We often refer to the fact that in John there is no evidence of a struggle, the linen cloths were folded up and the handkerchief "in a distinct place by itself", chap 20: 7.

C.F.D. Many years ago it was suggested that, as we think of the death of Christ, we would have to recognise that He died as man, but Mr Taylor at that time said we have to recognise the fact that that Man died and He never ceased to be what He was by what He became. So you cannot separate the fact that Christ in death was Man, but God, and we have to hold it there though it gets into the area of inscrutability, does it not?

J.A.G. Yes. That Man is God. It is not two persons. He will always be God and He will always be Man. we do not know Jesus any other way, and the wonder of it is that though He is God and because He is God He is so tender and compassionate and sympathetic and feeling, and so He manifests God and God's nature and God's attributes. That is why He has such a place in all our hearts and we would like to give Him a greater place, and the Spirit has come to that end, that more room should be made for Christ in our affections.

M.P. It was a rod of the almond tree. It reminds me of Jeremiah, God asking, "what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond-tree. And Jehovah said unto me, Thou hast well seen; for I am watchful over my word to perform it", chap 1: 11,12.

J.A.G. Are you linking vigilance with this?

M.P. Yes, because the word for almond-tree is derived from the root meaning 'watchful' or 'vigilant' (see note to Jer 1: 11). So I thought that the faithfulness of God is to be seen in the light of the resurrection of Christ.

J.A.G. It surely is. Can we get some more help about hallowing God in the eyes of the people? Moses fails and we are not to be occupied with that, but God hallows Himself.

G.R. So there should be a reflection of that Man in all that we do.

J.A.G. I think so, because Moses smote the rock twice and called them rebels. They were not really rebellious at this point.

H.J.G. It touches our hearts to think of the resource that God has in Christ. There is the second set of tables, and now the water flowed anyway, in spite of things. He has that resource in Christ for us.

J.A.G. Yes, indeed, and what is being promoted now is the generation that is going into the inheritance. You have the brazen serpent and the springing well, and there is power for progress to move towards the inheritance. So they are numbered for heaven. It is a fine thing to be like that. You do not want to perish in the wilderness. There is a great need to dig out this well and keep the water flowing. Go up to the top of Pisgah, look over the surface of the waste, and you marvel at God's grace and God's mercy.

C.F.D. You were going to say more about the fact that "he hallowed himself in them".

J.A.G. I have been concerned about how we handle people who may come along to the meeting and look for help. We need to be representing God rightly to them. It is part of the testimony of God, that there is a system of grace, and we need to show that grace and truth are subsisting through Jesus Christ.

D.T.H. It is linked with the Father's bosom in John 1. What do you say about that?

J.A.G. I think that is beautiful: "who is in the bosom of the Father" (v 18). I am sure that, as we move on this line, the knowledge of God will become more precious to us. We will come into the gain of it in a fuller way and consequently be more like God.

R.G.J. Was David like that with Mephibosheth? "Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God to him?", 2 Sam 9: 3.

J.A.G. Exactly, there it was. Everybody had come to make him king. Is anybody left? What has happened to you, Mephibosheth? He

says, I could not come, I am immobilised. Oh well, David says, we will send and fetch you. It is the abundance of grace.

R.G.J. Yes, and he came into the best, he was as one of his sons in his house.

J.A.G. Exactly, he is brought into the whole realm of privilege, and so he maintains faithfulness to David in the midst of the antichristian rebellion of Absalom. I think that is how we gain people; God has gained our affections on that line and that is how we hold and gain persons.

R.N.H. Staves were put into the tent of testimony. Is there a bearing of representation there?

J.A.G. Yes, I think it is always there. You can go and look and see it. Look what has happened here, the power of life is there in Christ, and every other man is set aside before God, which is a wonderful thing. As was referred to earlier, things are finished, murmuring ceases, and all that sort of thing. There is a new life and the satisfaction of it, and the power and energy of it, to set us in the right direction to the very place where it subsists in its fulness.

E.C.B. The sequence of things in this chapter is interesting in itself, because it says, These are the waters of contention (see note to chap 20: 13). Then Jehovah hallowed Himself in them, not before them. And then there is the question whether you are going to contend with Edom; you do not contend, you go on by the high way.

J.A.G. The unfolding in these chapters is very interesting because we have the Spirit in chapter 21, and it is to help us; we are going to have other obstacles - these kings and Balaam - and we have to overcome them. Then we are to have our circumstances ordered in relation to the inheritance and not find our life in these natural relationships although they are of God. The real inheritance is across the Jordan on the other side of death where Christ is. So the Spirit helps us to regulate all these things, and as we do that we come into blessing.

J.A.P. I notice that after Aaron's rod budded God said to him, "Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary ", chap 18: 1. Now if we said to people, we feel the breakdown that led to this separation, this loss that has come in, God would say to us, you have to bear this thing.

J.A.G. I think that all helps us in hallowing God, and it is borne in the power of life. We feel how God feels about it and so we seek to maintain things in accord with what is proper to the sanctuary and, as we do that, the priesthood becomes wealthy and enriched.

E.C.B. Referring to what we had the previous two days, does "a bondman of the Lord ought not to contend" (2 Tim 2: 24) come into this?

J.A.G. I think so; that is God being hallowed. "Gentle towards all; apt to teach", concerned that the work of God might be there, "in meekness setting right those who oppose"; maybe they will get repentance.

D.T.H. Would you say more about bearing the iniquity of the sanctuary.

J.A.G. I think the Lord Jesus shows us how to do it in the second and third chapters of Revelation. He is concerned that matters are maintained in accord with what is due to God. That is what the priesthood is concerned about.

G.R. It is really a delicate area that we touch; persons may come in because they have real interest, but the Lord guards the matter of offending one of the little ones (see Matt. 18: 6). It may be a little one, but the Lord would bring it into something precious. We may turn them aside by what we say.

J.A.G. Look at the wonderful grace of Christ when He said to Judas, "My friend" (Matt. 26: 50), "What thou doest, do quickly", John 13: 27. Is that not wonderful grace? That is the power of the Spirit of God that makes persons say things like that; God is represented fully, hallowed fully in that remark, or in that word.

R.G.J. You were referring to John 20 yesterday and I think it is helpful that we are to move out in the spirit of what was represented in Christ as He breathed into them.

J.A.G. Surely. If we are to find divine support it has to be so. That is why He says, "whosoever sins ye remit" (John 20: 23); remission comes first. Now the next provision in chapter 19 is the red heifer. Why should that be kept until the close of the wilderness journey? There was provision there to maintain us from defilement.

All that makes way for the operations of the Spirit positively in leading us on towards the inheritance.

C.F.D. Do you link Romans 8 with the leadership of the Spirit - "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (v 14)?

J.A.G. I thought that is answered to in "Rise up, well! sing unto it: Well which princes digged, which the nobles of the people hollowed out at the word of the lawgiver, with their staves". Then they are on the move, up to the top of Pisgah, and look over the waste. I think then we can have the Spirit's judgment about things.

C.F.D. Is it your thought that the leadership of the Spirit in the wilderness would keep everything to the wilderness in balance? I am thinking of families that you were referring to earlier; families are right but we should hold that in balance, and every other facet of our lives, household-wise and businesswise. The Spirit would help us to do that so that Christ is having His rightful place in my life, whether it be individually or collectively.

J.A.G. Yes, I think so. The great idea is that "he might have the first place in all things", Col 1: 18. We get influenced by our own natural families; it takes a bit of being with God to overcome that so that we are not biased in our judgments. You are never to be deflected because of natural influence.

K.A.K. What would you say about the fact that there were three stages of development in this rod of Aaron's - buds, blossoms, ripened almonds?

J.A.G. I think it covers the whole family of Levi; you might say it is fathers, young men, little children; all the stages of growth were maintained in life; and that is a very beautiful thing. It shows the concern that the Lord Jesus has for every person in the family.

K.A.K. All that would be before the testimony, so that even those that have not developed fully are made way for.

J.A.G. Yes, they are on the way to development. That is fine because the testimony is to the power of life in Christ and His ability to sustain the whole position in life, vitally, for God. So you think of the local meetings, and you say, maybe we could do with a little more spiritual energy here. The Spirit is there, the well is there to be made way for, to spring up in yourself. It springs up, the Lord says to the woman, "into eternal life", John 4: 14. It is directing you towards Christ in glory. John 7 has been referred to, it is flowing out: "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (v 38).

G.R. They were still afraid of dying, but Paul says "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free" (Rom 8: 2), me free. He has in mind that we all should be free of that bondage.

J.A.G. I think so; it is so unreasonable in the presence of a manifestation of life like this to cry, O, we all expire, we perish, the end of the world has come upon us! It is how we are naturally, we get all mixed up and confused in our thinking.

R.J.G. In chapter 20 the people were complaining. They said there was no food, and no water to drink. The grace of God came in even though they contended; He was able to supply water.

J.A.G. Yes, it is a great lesson for us. If there are any problems, take the staff, Moses' staff of authority, and that is needed. Paul said he had it and could use it, but he did not want to, he would rather come in love and a spirit of meekness (see 1 Cor 4: 21); he would take this staff.

R.G.J. Maybe you could help us as to the way that Moses was told to speak to the rock, and then there is smiting of the rock.

J.A.G. I think speaking to the rock shows the readiness with which the Lord Jesus is prepared to impart what is spiritual. Speak to the rock, it is available, this is what I want to give you. "He has poured out this which ye behold and hear", Acts 2: 33. There is no restraint with God, there is no restraint with Christ. He wants to have us fully in the enjoyment of the inheritance, and moving along on that line, in spiritual power and energy, as Himself being the motivation and "the hidden man of the heart", 1 Pet 3: 4.

R.N.H. Do we see the spirit of that with Peter standing up with the eleven in Acts 2? His preaching was in power, and near the end of the preaching he says, "Repent, and be baptised ... for remission of sins, and ye will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (v .38).

J.A.G. Yes, it shows the great importance of that in the preaching, not only repentance but the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter used one of the keys in that chapter; he turned the key and opened for the nation the door to the city of refuge.

J.A.P. It is interesting that God checked Moses here. Now when we come to the assembly, and matters are proceeding in a locality, often there is a softening influence among the brethren, like Abigail. Some of us may be concerned that the principles are right and all that, but sometimes the local assembly has a kind of gracious appeal so that things are done in a better way. Would you count on that in your locality?

J.A.G. Yes, I think so. The grace of the Spirit of Christ has a mellowing effect and that is needed. Of course, as we get older, time takes care of a lot of things about us. But we need help that there might be this spiritual energy, the Spirit having His place, and we shape a course so that He does have His place and we come to recognise His leadership.

L.McF. Please say something about this song: "Then Israel sang this song, Rise up, well! sing unto it: Well which princes digged".

J.A.G. I think they are so pleased and happy and thankful. You do not sing too much when you are sad. "Assemble the people", he says, "and I will give them water", I have plenty of resource, I will

give it to you. You do not have to work hard for it, it is the gift of the Spirit. If we put ourselves in the way of righteousness all these things happen. But you would like to see a bit more of this kind of energy. We are about all the same in our meetings: who is going to get up and pray? who is going to do this? who is going to do that? The force of the Spirit leads everybody into liberty, and strengthens us and causes growth, and the inheritance comes into view.

E.C.B. To refer again to chapter 20, it is of interest that, when they meet Edom, Israel does not say, We have been right, you have been wrong. All they say is, This is what God has done for us. Do you think something of that spirit is appropriate?

J.A.G. It is indeed, and the spirit of meekness. They say, "We will go by the high way". Maybe we are touching the high way in chapters 5-7 of Matthew. That is how we will go, we are not going to damage anybody. Edom can pursue with the sword if he likes, but we are moving in the meekness and gentleness of the Christ, because that is where we find our joy and happiness and satisfaction.

E.C.B. So the king's road becomes "the new and living way", Heb 10: 20.

J.A.G. Yes, indeed, that is a fine reference, "which he has dedicated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh". That is how we approach with boldness. You meet Edom, you meet Sihon and Og and Balaam, and all these elements that would seek to deflect you from the purpose of your heart. They have to be overcome.

E.C.B. The well in chapter 21 is not brought forward immediately in relation to need. In chapter 20 there is a need, but now this is just divine outflowing. Is this John 14, 15 and 16?

J.A.G. Yes, "Assemble the people, and I will give them water". In chapter 20 there was thirst and they were given much water, their need was met, but this is a sort of superabundance.

E.C.B. This is like the scripture you have often quoted: "the abundance of grace, and of the free gift of righteousness", Rom 5:

17.

J.A.G. It is indeed. If we could only see the readiness, the willingness, the desire of God to bring us into the inheritance and cause us to be so eternally satisfied and happy, we would perhaps set our hearts and our faces a little more in that direction.

E.C.B. You would not get the impression that digging this well was very hard work, would you? It is often made out that it is - how would you dig a hole with staves? But it seems to me that the inference is that it was very easy to get at this water. All you needed was a staff and there it was.

J.A.G. The well has been dug, the princes have dug it, "Well which princes digged, which the nobles of the people hollowed out at the word of the lawgiver, with their staves". They keep the water flowing, the Spirit is "springing up into eternal life", John 4: 14.

I thought maybe we should look at the daughters of Zelophehad. They are very attractive persons.

B.J. Is the unity of these daughters, who maintained the line of Joseph, so necessary, and a voice to us as to our being one in things, and our desire to maintain all that relates to the inheritance?

J.A.G. That is fine. They are very mutual people; they come up again at the end of the book in a different order. What you say about Joseph is very interesting; the inheritance is his, Judah was the prince.

B.J. Is the repetition of their names three times in the Scriptures a confirmation that the inheritance is a vital thing for us to lay hold of?

J.A.G. Yes. So let us learn to use the right staff. If we use the wrong staff we are going to be in deep trouble, but if we use the right staff we will come here, and then God will say, You speak right. It is a fine thing when that happens. Jehovah says to Moses, "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right". The word is with grace, seasoned with salt.

D.T.H. Do you think Timothy was the right staff for the saints at Corinth?

J.A.G. Exactly, my child Timotheus, "who shall put you in mind of my ways as they are in Christ", 1 Cor 4: 17. It is like the new cruse with salt in it (see 2 King 2: 20).

J.A.P. They were also marked by discretion. "Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the band of them that banded themselves together against Jehovah in the band of Korah; but he died in his own sin". There is great need of discretion in all the matters that may come before the brethren.

J.A.G. Yes, they have a right judgment about their father, they have a right judgment about things, and they have God's assessment, they prefer the inheritance, they do not want to lose out on it. You can be sure, if we are like that, God will certainly make way for us to enjoy it, not make way for us to be prominent in meetings or anything like that, but make way for us so that we come into the enjoyment of His love and the blessedness of it, and the real vitals of Christianity, all that is proper to the fellowship, and all that sort of thing.

K.A.O. Would you say something more as to the daughters of Zelophehad speaking right.

J.A.G. I think God is confirming their exercise, and it is a fine thing when that happens. "Moses brought their cause before Jehovah", and God says they speak right. That is very wonderful, "thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance". If we have any problem, just let us bring it before God and He will see if we are speaking right or not. It is like what our brother said, they are approaching with boldness.

E.C.B. Do you think they had come all the way through the wilderness?

J.A.G. I think they represent the second generation, as going into heaven.

E.C.B. While other scriptures would support what you say, I was wondering whether they do not, in a certain sense for us, represent people who have come through all the trouble, or most of it. But they are not looking to be vindicated or anything like that. What they want

is the inheritance. But they know they will not get their inheritance unless everybody else gets theirs as well.

J.A.G. That is a fine point, that we possess the inheritance among the brethren.

B.J. There seems to be a voice to us as to the testimony continuing inviolate in our localities.

J.A.G. Yes; the word is that they are to marry within the tribe; that is to be maintained. That is the only - imposition, you might say, and that is a preservative for them, so that the inheritance is safeguarded and prospered, because they have some impression of what "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" is, Eph 1: 18.

K.A.O. I was thinking this morning, as we were together in the service of song and praise, especially in the singing, of the contributions which the sisters made, what a softening effect it had.

It has been well said that in our care meetings the sisters' presence has a softening effect, and this would help us, would it not, in relation to what we are speaking of?

J.A.G. Yes, the sisters' part in the meeting is a very essential part; it sets out depth of feelings, and the Lord appreciates it very much.

They can give voice to their affections in the singing of the hymns, and many a meeting has been sustained and maintained through godly sisters who have been with the Lord and sought to maintain and influence the testimony in a right way.

We should maybe look at Deuteronomy because you get a preview of what is to be. They are not looking back over the surface of the waste here; God is showing Moses the whole land. What a thing it would be to have this kind of apprehension, of what the assembly is in the counsels of God, what it is as filling out the whole of the heavenly scene with all the saints.

E.C.B. This corresponds to God's inheritance in the saints, does it not?

J.A.G. Yes indeed, the riches of the glory of it, what God has in them. The scripture in 1 Chronicles 29 yesterday brings out what is

in the saints, "the riches of the glory of his inheritance", what God inherits from them. It has been well said that unless we have our inheritance God cannot get His.

E.C.B. You alluded, I think, to all the saints. That would come back to the question which you recall arose in Aberdeen as to what is in the loaf. Do we not move from contemplating "we, being many, are one loaf" (1 Cor 10: 17) to seeing heaven with the saints in it?

J.A.G. Yes; Jesus comes and stands in the midst: that is all the saints.

M.P. Is it "to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height" Eph 3: 18?

J.A.G. Yes, the vastness, the greatness of that holy realm. We are sustained by the love of the Christ; He is dwelling in our hearts. It is very interesting that the over-Jordan epistles - Colossians and Ephesians - are marked by love towards all the saints and faith in our Lord Jesus that is in His current movements.

H.J.G. Does that link with the promise here? God reminds Moses of His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

J.A.G. Yes, God has such delight in this. The land is so precious to God that He delights to show it to you. If you are interested, God will show it to you. Think of God showing it in wonderful, condescending grace. You might say, He says, Look at the land, this is what I swore, and this is what is going to happen, I am going to bring you into it, I am committed to this: "I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it".

J.A.P. Does it not show that, as we judge the murmuring of Numbers 20 ourselves - and we have much to judge - then God is gracious with His people and would bring us into the greatest things?

J.A.G. I think so. If we get ourselves rightly aligned in these chapters we have a kind of a free way into the land. Just think if God said to you, I am going to give you the whole of America to yourself.

That is what He said to Abraham; He said, I am going to give you all this land to yourself, the whole of it, and your seed. But we have

something far greater in the heavenly inheritance than the Jew has, and the Spirit here serving us to come into the gain of it- "the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God" (1 Cor 2: 10) - to open up to us the things "which God has prepared for them that love him". It is beyond the natural comprehension. "Eye has not seen ... and which have not come into man's heart", the things "which God has prepared for them that love him" (v 9). But the Spirit is here to reveal them to us.

W.A.M. He really saw the land with the saints in it did he not?

J.A.G. That is right. It is not an empty land, it is a land that is teeming with life. It is like

'Every circle gathered round Thee
Yields of Christ some beauteous ray'
(Hymn 83)

That is what we see in the inheritance.

R.N.H. So Paul's prayer to the Ephesians was that "the Father of glory, would give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of him", chap 1: 17. It is wonderful to think that it is the Father Himself who brings in this revelation for us.

J.A.G. Yes, that is very fine, and enlightens you, it says, "in the eyes of your heart". Think of God doing that, effecting that in our souls, giving us the spirit of wisdom and revelation. I think the Lord did that to Mary; she became enlightened in the eyes of her heart to see the greatness of all that was afoot in the resurrection of Christ.

H.J.G. Is there something in what we had earlier as to Moses being the bondman of God? He said "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance" (Exod 15: 17) and now He gives Moses the glimpse of it.

J.A.G. I think there is a lot in that, "The Sanctuary, Lord, that thy hands have prepared". Think of the saints, you might say, going through the hands of God as He prepares them for His dwelling-place, all that the brethren go through; you find there is a divine

touch in it as God is just shaping and forming in view of this great matter of dwelling with men.

G.R. In the loaf we view things from the divine side; there is no breakdown in the body. Is that what you have in mind, that as we give thanks for the loaf we are embracing the whole of God's work?

J.A.G. Yes, I think so; you have to, otherwise you are sectional. As has been quoted, "we, being many, are one loaf, one body" (1 Cor 10: 17), and Paul credits the Corinthians with every possible thing, and it was right that he should do that. Then he tells them how awful they are.

E.C.B. Do you think Moses actually saw "The fountain of Jacob, in a land of corn and new wine", the heavens dropping dew, and happy art thou, Israel! (see Deut 33: 28)?

J.A.G. Yes, he saw exactly what he had composed in his song, what had happened in the previous chapters. Instead of being in the plains of Moab - that is a tremendous setting at the close of Deuteronomy here - they are just ready actually to go over.

Somebody this morning gave out Hymn 62, 'What has God wrought'. You go over it and you see in these chapters everything that God has wrought. Then Moses sees it in its own setting in the counsel of God, what it should be.

E.C.B. It would be a very great thing to give a prophetic word in the ministry meeting and then see it happen.

J.A.G. Yes, it would indeed.

'Thy counsels too in all Thine own,
Fulfilled by power divine,
Spread wide the glory of Thy throne,
Where all in glory shine'.

(Hymn 178)

That is what Moses sees.

E.C.B. Do you not think in John 4 that the fountain of Israel was in a land of corn and new wine? The Lord brought someone into it and

she brought others into it.

J.A.G. Yes, and they said, We are into it but it is not because you told us, we have found Him for ourselves, and that confirms the Lord's words that the fields are white and ready for harvest (see John 4: 35). The inheritance is going on normally. As was referred to yesterday, in 1 Chronicles 29 the background had been turmoil and wars and difficulties and so forth. Where did this well come from? God was working things out according to the counsel of His own will.

E.C.B. That is like John 4, is it not? The fields are "white to harvest" and the disciples did not even notice it. You might think that here, fields white to harvest, but can we see it?

J.A.G. Surely, the disciples were engaged with something else. The fields are white for harvest, we just need to go and take it in.

K.A.O. If we view it from the top of the mountain we will see it, will we not? Do we need, as we move among the saints, to have a view of them from this mountain? It would help us to see what God is doing in the saints.

J.A.G. Yes, and you approach them from that point of view.

E.C.B. We often take up the reference in John 4, the fields are "white to harvest" and apply it to the gospel. But does it not also have in mind the oblation and the first-fruits, what is for God?

J.A.G. Yes, exactly. It has in mind that there is going to be a great extension of the humanity of Christ.

TORONTO

13 October 1991

PREACHING

James A. Gardiner

Luke 17: 11-19

It is a wonderful moment, dear friends, when without any fear of contradiction on the basis of the Scriptures - what we find in this book, the Bible - I can say to every person here that God loves you.

God loves everybody in this room. His heart is towards you, His favour is toward you, He is smiling upon you in the favour of His love and grace.

This gospel of Luke was written by a Gentile. I think he is the only Gentile to write any of the Scriptures. The whole of the books of the Bible apart from this one and the Acts, were written by Jews.

Luke did not know the Lord Jesus in flesh and blood, but he was obviously so interested, so absorbed with Christ, that he made it his business to find out about the things that Jesus did when He was here in flesh and blood. He comes up with this remarkable gospel and he says, I am going to write it down "with method" (chap 1: 3), going to put everything in order, and show how Jesus was here as the Son of man in relation to men. Is that not fine, that this physician, Luke, writes like that, about Christ, the Son of man, in relation to humanity? As Son of David he was in relation to the Jews. As Son of God He is on God's side, representing God, gloriously and wondrously, and effecting things for God. As Son of man He is on man's side and sympathetic with man, and concerned that man should be blessed and come into the wondrous blessings that are in God's heart for them. So Jesus moves among men, quite free from prejudice, social distinctions or anything like that, He is not racist, He comes in touch with every person who is concerned for healing and blessing, concerned that they may be made right in their links with God. He comes into this gospel, born into a manger as a babe: how wonderful that is! That should dispel fear and doubts from any heart. He identifies Himself with the race in that condition; He grows up a boy in the village of Nazareth, always doing the things that pleased

His Father. What a person Jesus is! When He was born there was a great stir in heaven, "a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men", chap 2: 13,14. That is very wonderful. The poet says

'More just those acclamations,
Than when the glorious band
Chanted earth's deep foundations, -
Just laid by God's right hand.'

You can understand the depths of his feelings as he wrote that. God was coming into matters Himself in Christ, He was going to effect things for His own glory, justify His own righteousness and His own holiness, remove from before Himself any elements that might have embarrassed Him in His coming out in blessing for men. Jesus is the One who was going to do that. How wonderful that is!

He grew up before God. It says He grew up "before him as a tender sapling, and as a root out of dry ground", Isa 53: 2. In that chapter in Isaiah there are two things: Jesus is the arm of the Lord, and He has effected things for God. The question is, in this preaching, as to who is going to believe the report. Christ has effected all God's pleasure, all His will, so that we can say without reserve that God's heart is towards you, as it is towards me, as it is towards humanity, because Christ has removed everything that would have been a stigma or an affront to Him to take man back into His presence. So the matter comes up now - and how right it is that it should come up - as to your relations with God. Are you a sinner? Do you feel you are a sinner? If you are away from God, God misses you. He said to Adam in the garden, "Where art thou", Gen 3: 9.

Where are you? He may be saying that today in this preaching, asking persons where they are. Where are you in your soul? Where am I in my soul? Where am I in my relations with God? It is a terrible thing when you miss people. There is anguish in the measure in which you miss them. Think of how God feels about persons, how He feels about souls, how He feels about humanity. Your family may go out at night, you say you have to be in at a certain time and the

time comes and they do not show up. Then maybe fifteen minutes later, maybe half an hour later, they still do not show up. You begin to be concerned, do you not? You begin to get anxious. Give them another hour and you are really anxious. Then you start looking for them, initiating some sort of search to find out where they are; and your anxiety deepens and your concern increases.

I remember during the war, during the days at the time of Dunkirk, many local men and boys were missing; nobody knew where they were. I can recall the anguish of parents, anguish of relatives. Then some would come back in the boats from Dunkirk. The days went on, and they went into weeks, and there was still no word, and the anguish was awful to behold. Then months later they may have received a card from a prison camp saying So-and-so was a prisoner. I only say that to try to show you the depth of divine feelings in relation to men, in relation to your soul, how God feels about persons who are away from Him. He felt so much for man that He gave His only beloved Son, the best that He had, He gave Jesus up in death that you might be brought back to Him and live before His face and in His favour eternally. O, beloved, can I convey to you the depth of divine love for you? Are you impressed with the fact that God cares so much for you as an individual that He sets this preaching on that you might listen to His word and follow it because it is going to bring you back to God Himself, the living God with whom we have to do?

What a moment it is! What blessings are available! How available Jesus is to meet your case at this moment! Here are these leprous men, ten of them; this is just a picture of what Jesus will do for you, what He has done for me. What He has done for others He can do for you. You feel the awfulness of this situation. What is leprosy? You say, I am quite well, I have no leprosy, I have no ailment about me. Are you sure? Have you not a moral ailment? Are you not morally ailing under this awful disease of leprosy, which is a type of selfwill? Do you carry on doing your own thing, in the face of the revealed will of God, manifesting that you are going your own way? That is what sin is, that is what lawlessness is. God follows

you, He wants to bring you back to Himself, because the end of that way is death (see Rom 6: 21), and after death there is judgment (see Heb 9: 27). The judgment will be seen to be executed righteously, and the judge who will pass the sentence and carry out the execution is Jesus Himself. Righteously and holily He will do it, because He Himself has borne that judgment of sin in His own body on the tree (see 1 Pet 2: 24).

What a moment it is, yet how solemn it is that we might go on in this line of self-will, of sin, in the presence of the appeals of divine love, appealing to us to come to God for forgiveness, have to do with Him in repentance, get rid of this awful burden, this governing element in our lives. We would like to do it, we would like to be right, we would like to get to God but there is this force that keeps us from it; and that is the devil acting through our own wills. How do I get clear of it? Cry to Jesus, ask Him for help. Do not be afraid, do not think you cannot say the right thing. "Lord, save me", Peter says, Matt 14: 30. That is all you need to do. You have this problem, many have it, you may even be breaking bread, you have this problem and you need deliverance, you need to be free from it. He is able to deliver you, He is the mighty Deliverer. Here are these leprous men, ten of them. Jesus is going up to Jerusalem to die, and He is so considering for humanity that, as He is dying on the cross, there is a man who says, "Remember me, Lord, when thou comest in thy kingdom", Luke 23: 42. Does He say, I am too occupied with myself? O no, that is not Jesus, that is not the Saviour, beloved. In these circumstances of extreme straightening, Jesus says to him, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise". He does not put it off until the future, He says right today you will be with me in paradise. Is that not wonderful?

Now here are ten leprous men who stood afar off. So they should, they felt their position, they are concerned about it. If you are concerned about your state, there is no question but what you will get blessing right now from Christ. He is a great dispenser of blessing. "They lifted up their voice saying, Jesus, Master, have compassion on us". Are you going to do that? Anybody here in this

room who lifts up their voice to Christ and says, Jesus, Master, have compassion on me, will surely be blessed. He will certainly manifest to you that He has compassion on you, He is caring for you, indeed He Himself has prompted that cry from your heart, Jesus, Master, have compassion on me. He says to them, "Go, shew yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass as they were going they were cleansed". What power that is! They were cleansed, the leprosy was healed. Go to the priest: what did Jesus mean by that? He wanted the priest to see that there was a person here who could heal leprosy. God Himself was here in Christ, healing the leper. The priest would know about the law of leprosy, he would know what to do next. Here is the leper cleansed, the priests have to take up the case and to act in such a way that this man finds his place in the community, in the society, according to God, finds his place spiritually and rightly in the community from which he was cast out. He had to get outside the camp and shout out that he was unclean. The priest sets him up in the blessedness and in the holiness and in the rightness, you might say, of Christian fellowship. And as they were going they are cleansed. Well, is that not wonderful?

There is something more. "One of them, seeing that he was cured, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and fell on his face at his feet giving him thanks". That is fine! How Jesus appreciated that! You may have been cleansed. You may be clear of your leprosy but have you come back to Jesus with a loud voice glorifying God? What testimony there was in that, far more testimony in that than going to the priest and showing him - with a loud voice, glorifying God, falling at His feet and giving Him thanks. Are you appreciative? Are you as appreciative as this? Do you just go to the priest and stay there and you are clean, or are you going to come back to Christ where He is and identify yourself with Him, happily and joyfully, knowing that your salvation, your life, your whole future, your whole well-being is bound up with your being linked with Him where He is? David says to a man: "Abide with me ... for with me thou art in safe keeping", 1 Sam 22: 23. If you go away you will fall

into the hands of Saul. But he says to Abiathar, you stay with me and where I am you will be in safe keeping.

The Lord Jesus is thinking about these others. That is why I read this section. "Jesus answering said, Were not the ten cleansed? but the nine, where are they?" The nine, where are they? Maybe you are one of the nine. Are you one of the nine? Are you away out there looking for the priest? The Priest was there right before them. It was the Priest who had cleansed them, and this man realises it. Why should I go and show myself to the priest when the Priest was there and had effected the cleansing in my soul? The power of Christ had dispelled the leprosy. Are you thankful, like this Samaritan stranger who came back, or are you amongst the nine? There is no condemnation, He does not condemn the nine, He does not write them down. He merely asks, Where are the nine? He misses them, He would have loved to have the whole ten come back and show that they really appreciated the tremendous work, the tremendous healing that had taken place in their souls. But we are so selfish, we take the blessing, we forget about the Blessor. As long as we are all right, that is fine, that is the relief side, we go for that in a big way. But then to become a priest ourselves and to come back to Christ and to glorify God with a loud voice, fall at His feet, do Him homage, commit your all to Him: are you going to do that or are you still somewhere amongst the nine? Why should He say that: "but the nine, where are they?" Where are the nine in Toronto? Why all the empty seats? Where are the nine? Ask yourself, are you amongst the nine? Am I amongst the nine, or am I like this man, this Samaritan stranger, who has returned, "turned back", it says, "seeing that He was cured, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and fell on his face at His feet giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan". He is not concerned about reputation or what people will think about him, he is not a Jew, he is delivered from that, he is delivered from the religiousness of the Jews. There are many secret disciples. It says of that disciple in John's gospel that he was a secret disciple, "through fear of the Jews", chap 19: 38. Here is a Samaritan who has no reputation;

neither had they, they were lepers. Why should the Spirit of God record that he was a Samaritan? But he comes back and he falls at the feet of Jesus, glorifying God with a loud voice, giving Him thanks. "Jesus answering said, Were not the ten cleansed? but the nine, where are they?" What a telling question! True, they were all cleansed, they were all healed. One came back, nine are somewhere around; we do not know where they are. This one came back and the Spirit of God highlights the fact that he came back.

Jesus says to him, "Rise up and go thy way: thy faith has made thee well". He gets something additional. What a commendation he gets from Christ: "Rise up and go thy way", you can be trusted. Such a one can be trusted, "thy faith", He says, "has made thee well".

Well, beloved, all this is available to every soul in this room today. If you are a leper, you feel the pressure of it, the awfulness that there is a force directing you above what you would like to do.

That is the force of self-will, and the devil is in it. You would like to do something, you feel you should do it, and you do not do it.

Something else happens. You want to do good and you cannot do it because there is a greater power, there is a war going on in your members, there is a struggle. Who is going to be the victor? Is the devil going to be the winner, or is it Christ? He is the Deliverer. You come to this; you say "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord", Rom 7: 25. Then you find, as this man found, that the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus had set him free from the law of sin and death, (see Rom 8: 2). How wonderful that is! So he comes back and falls at His feet and glorifies God. He is outwardly committed, totally engaged with Christ. Beloved, this is the way to blessing. I just leave that word with all of us, whether we have returned, like the Samaritan, or whether we are still amongst the nine. Jesus is missing the nine, He would have liked to have them all back, but He says to this Samaritan, Rise up and go thy way. He may say that to you. What a thing it would be, when we finish this preaching, if Jesus says to you, Rise up and go your way, you go out that door and on you go, your faith has made you well. It can happen to every single soul

here, you can go out with the consciousness that you have been well, you have had to do with Christ, you can rise up and walk out there in newness of life, begin to serve in newness of spirit, because you have had to do with Christ and you have been made well. May it be so of all of us. Let us see that we are not lost amongst the nine but are with this man who has come back and glorifies God with a loud voice, giving Christ thanks for the wonderful work which He has wrought in us, setting us free in wonderful power from the law of sin and death. For His Name's sake.

TORONTO

13 October 1991

GROWING CHILDREN

When Jesus was here He spoke to children very tenderly. This is seen in the case of the girl of twelve years, who fell ill and died. On raising her up to life the Lord used an affectionate word, "Damsel, I say to thee, Arise". He took her hand and she awoke and walked. It is interesting, that at the same age of twelve years, Jesus had been found in the Temple, hearing the teachers and asking them questions. Perhaps twelve years is a stage of development in childhood. In later years, when Jesus was risen and glorified, Peter wrote to believers that as new-born babes they should earnestly desire the "pure mental milk of the word".

The children growing up in the wilderness must have become well acquainted with manna as their daily food. For believers now this would mean seeking early thought about the Lord Jesus Christ and praying to Him. As a result of this there would be growth "by the true knowledge of God". When the time of the wilderness was over and the Israelites had come into the promised land of God 's purpose, they were blessed by being able to feed on 'the old corn of the land". This is Christ known in glory. As growth takes place it will lead to eating "the strong meat" of Paul 's ministry.

How is your appetite?

J.C.Evershed