

A
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“A LARGE UPPER ROOM”

Mark 14: 13-16; 2 Corinthians 3: 3; John 14: 1-3; Ephesians 1: 3-6; 3: 14-21

J.D.G. What has been suggested has sprung, as the brethren would understand, from impressions gained at the Lord's Supper. I was quite impressed by the gathering of the saints to remember the Lord Jesus. It turned my mind to this scripture about the large upper room, the guest-chamber. I thought to read from Mark's gospel, it says, "Where is my guest-chamber where I may eat the passover with my disciples?" It is a large upper room – which has its applications morally and spiritually – which should be made ready for the Lord to come among us. I read in 2 Corinthians 3 because of the setting as the brethren came in, what was manifest was Christ's epistle. I think that was something to take account of before the Lord came in amongst us; what was present in the room to me was a manifestation of Christ's epistle, written; something that is permanent, written there in the hearts of the saints. It says, "manifested to be Christ's epistle ministered by us, written, not with ink, but the Spirit of the living God; not on stone tables, but on fleshy tables of the heart". Something written, permanent, the work of God in the saints as they gather. So the room is furnished when the Lord comes in. I thought there was some indication, maybe more than an indication, in John 14 of His intention and the application of it; "I go to prepare you a place" – in His Father's house – "and if I go and shall prepare you a place, I am coming again and shall receive you to myself, that where I am ye also may be". He has His own place and His dignity and His Person and His own part in the service and the Spirit's portion. However, I think there is an indication here of what His object is, if I can use the word rightly, and that is to take us to the place He has in the Father's presence. And that is what led me to Ephesians 1 because "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ; according as he has chosen us in him"; we are going into the presence of the Father, the One who has chosen us in

Him. We are brought in in holy accord with the God into whose presence we are brought, “we should be holy and blameless before him in love”. And then He would give us a sense of the sovereignty of His will, “having marked us out beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ to himself”, which as has been pointed out is to emphasise His pleasure in having us in His presence “through Jesus Christ to himself”. It is our joy to be there; our joy is full and filled with the divine presence because there is impartation of the Father’s love. And then just to touch on chapter 3: “to be strengthened with power by his Spirit in the inner man”. To know certain things – one thing that is wonderful, “to know the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge; that ye may be filled even to all the fullness of God”. The saints are in that realm, not only the realm of the Father’s love, but the love of the Christ which, as Mr Darby points out somewhere, is an anchor to the soul in a scene where otherwise we might be overcome or overwhelmed by the grandeur of it. These are the thoughts I had in mind for the time we are together. I trust they will be profitable.

L.McF. Very timely. “A man shall meet you carrying a pitcher of water”. Who would that man represent?

J.D.G. You help us as to that.

L.McF. It has been thought it is a spiritual lead. It is like Simeon coming into the temple in the Spirit, do you think?

J.D.G. Yes. It reminds you of that hymn:

Oft has the Comforter spoken of Thee (Hymn 4)

It would draw our hearts into the realm where Christ can manifest Himself, gather the saints together. He leads to the guest-chamber, “my guest-chamber”; it is a very fine word that, it is suggestive. I suppose this was the guest-chamber where He disclosed all that was in His heart in John’s gospel chapters 14 through to 17.

L.McF. There would be dignity connected with it, do you think?

J.D.G. Yes. The place belongs to Him, He said, it is where manifestations take place. “Shew you a large upper room furnished”

is suggestive of where He is going to expand for us in our affections the divine thoughts. We are to make ready there; it is interesting it says, “furnished ready” and then “there make ready for us”. The place is furnished by the saints, I think.

L.McF. That is the present time. The saints are the appropriate furnishings of this upper room?

J.D.G. Yes. I think it is interesting to take account of this.

Sometimes you get a fresh touch of it in your affections. Today as gathered in this place, the saints gathering from a city that surrounds us where man is largely neglectful of God, are persons coming up to celebrate the Supper. It is really Christ’s epistle; you can read something of Christ in the saints – manifest, he says, “manifested to be Christ’s epistle”.

H.G.H. It is the Teacher; would there be the thought of having been taught, the intelligent side?

J.D.G. Yes, “The Teacher says, Where is my guest-chamber”. The One from whom they had learned things as the Teacher, now they are going to know Him perhaps in a more intimate way. The Lord comes among us not exactly as a Teacher; He still is that but He does not come in that way, He comes in in the glory of His Person; He comes in as attracted to the personnel that are there, it is His epistle.

J.A.P. What you say about enlargement is very interesting: I think that is good, that when the Lord Jesus went to heaven and the Spirit came the Supper was enlarged in 1 Corinthians 11. Would you agree that perhaps the passage in Acts 20, “we being assembled to break bread” (v.7), is what came out of that?

J.D.G. It is very fine to take account of the “we”, “we being assembled”. That is what I was impressed with in this scripture in Mark’s gospel that the upper room was furnished ready. They were ready for Him, there was a sphere where He would come to; love’s hands lay the table. The saints gathered together become the furnishings. I think we should take account of what is in the saints.

Who are these persons that gather in this city and other cities too?

They come up and sit down as brethren to celebrate the Lord's Supper.

C.F.D. Is the idea of "furnished" a moral and spiritual idea?

J.D.G. Yes, I would think so, would you not? I think of it a moral and spiritual idea, the place is furnished; before we meet the Lord we meet the brethren. That is not original to me as the brethren know, but from time to time you get a fresh impression of it.

G.D.R. You are encouraged not to be afraid of the suggestion of what is exclusive. Do you not think that this is written over this whole matter "my guest-chamber"? It is His Supper and He knows who is there. He is not going everywhere, is He?

J.D.G. No. The Lord has rights that we cannot interrupt or interfere with but we are speaking about what we know and those who assemble, that first of all in them there is a manifestation. When we come together there is an atmosphere suitable for Christ to come in and for a manifestation. Before even He comes in, if we have eyes to see, there is a manifestation of Christ's epistle here present among us.

C.F.D. So the idea of "there make ready" involves how we proceed before we come up. Do you think as having to do with divine Persons before we come we are providing something in the way of furnishings?

J.D.G. Coming up from glory to glory. "Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of Jah" (Ps. 122: 4); you are coming up from glory to glory, are you not?

R.G. The Lord moved through the world but was never tainted by it, the man with the pitcher of water went through and was never tainted by it, and now the disciples had moved through and were not tainted by it. So it is from glory into the upper room to glory, is it?

J.D.G. That is right. It is not from degradation to glory but from glory to glory, there is something about the saints that is glorious as they move in dignity, moral dignity. Even in coming up to the meting there is moral dignity in the movements of the saints.

J.G. I was wondering about the man with the pitcher of water. He suggests maturity, does he not, it suggests dignity, and I wondered if that would link with Christ's epistle, if this man would represent something of that. There would have been exercises completed in him would you think?

J.D.G. It is a good suggestion in relation to the man, he is mature. That would mark the saints as they come up, maturity and dignity, moral dignity, something that is different from the world around. The Lord would have us take account of it that they have had experience with Himself. There is a history with God entered into with persons who gather to the name of the Lord Jesus, they have had to do with Him not just historically but currently.

W.McK. Do you think spiritual personality comes out in regard to the saints as you take account of them? Here they are not named; they are in Luke and in Acts 20 you have a number of them named. So as we regard one another from the standpoint of having been written upon, spiritual personality comes into evidence.

J.D.G. Yes, that is good. We can take account of that as the saints gather together. You can look around and see what is there and with knowledge of one another; you know something of the spiritual personality that is there.

W.McK. So you remarked in giving thanks that we are of no account religiously in this great metropolis but what is to be seen by those who have eyes to see it is spiritual personality.

J.D.G. Something of full growth there, that is in the saints. That is the touch I had in my spirit, I trust we will be helped as we move on in the reading. Corinthians has been covered, as the brethren have gathered it was linked on with Mark 14. In John's gospel the Lord Jesus is indicating something of His desire to proceed.

W.McK. Before we go on to that, referring to Corinthians, the Spirit of the living God would save us from formality. There would be a question of life and intelligence and affection coming into operation.

J.D.G. Yes. “Not with ink, but the Spirit of the living God”; there would be persons responsive, the living God. There is evidence of life there that has been stimulated and imparted by the living God.

The whole thing suggests something beautiful and there is a permanency about it, what is written, that will go through into eternity and maintain the living freshness by the Spirit over against the deadness that marked the tables of stone.

G.D.R. In relation to the suggestion earlier, “Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of Jah”, are we not entitled to think of divine Persons viewing the saints as coming up? It just comes to mind that divine Persons also have joy seeing the gathering of the saints at such an occasion.

J.D.G. I think the Lord takes account of us gathering together and He knows our places where we gather, but He comes to us. He finds something there that is suitable for His manifestation.

H.J.G. You are making a present bearing of John 14 where He says, “and shall receive you to myself”? Do you think that comes into the present bearing of it?

J.D.G. Yes, I thought so. I wanted to make that application of it. What I felt was that as the saints are gathered together the Lord comes there. So the Lord comes to where the saints are gathered, where the upper room is furnished. It says that in the passage, it says, “he comes with the twelve”; He comes to that place. So He has something in His mind to take us to an area of looking on the Lord with unveiled face. We read that in the house this morning, “But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face”, 2 Cor 3: 18. He has in mind to take us, you might say, to where He abides. Do you think that is right?

H.J.G. Yes, we see that He comes as we gather to take us from our circumstances into His, but it is very practical and very real when we understand His words, “shall receive you to myself”. It is very real, is it not?

J.D.G. What was in my heart was, and I believe the Lord would impart to us, that He has the Father in mind. He has the Father’s

service in mind, the Father's house, the Father's heart being satisfied. That is not to set aside the portion that the Lord receives as He comes among us; He must have the first place in all things as coming in, it is His Supper. Then His joy in the holy association with Him as His brethren; then the holy joy of union as responding to Him as His assembly; and expressing our appreciation of the Holy Spirit who He is. I think this scripture is indicative of what is really in His heart, in fullness, is the Father's portion. Someone remarked this morning, source of all blessing, the source of everything is the Father.

R.G. Does He have the good pleasure of the Father's will in mind, preparing a place? Reference has been made to the distinctiveness of the saints and the dignity. I was thinking "for I go to prepare you a place" would bring out the distinctiveness of those of the assembly as over against the many other families named of the Father which would link with the many abodes.

J.D.G. Yes, that is helpful. "In my Father's house there are many abodes"; we would rejoice in that, that there are many abodes, that the Father has many families. It is not appropriate to go into them all today but we know some of them anyway. But the Lord goes to prepare a place for you, that is a special place for the saints of the present dispensation. It would seem to me that it is in the Father's house, so He has the Father in mind. He has a place there, Christ has, "where I am ye also may be"; it must involve the Father's affections. Do you think so?

R.G. The good pleasure of the Father's will.

J.D.G. That is the sovereign will of God, the sovereign will of the Father – sovereignty. We will go on to that in a minute.

G.D.R. Not only is He preparing a place but He is preparing the persons for the place; "prepare you a place". Could you enlarge that a bit?

J.D.G. I think the way we are following it He has already prepared vessels. Those that are "manifested to be Christ's epistle" are prepared vessels, they have had a history with God, you might say.

We are gathered together – just to catch on to what we are seeking to suggest – suitably for the remembrance of the Lord Jesus, there are vessels that are morally in accord with Himself, so He can come and take His place there. But what complacency there was when He came in! I am speaking about the Passover time just as an illustration, what complacency there was in Christ's heart coming in there and then particularly after Judas goes out. He says, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God also shall glorify him in himself", John 13: 31,32. What an opening up of the divine thoughts. The vessels were suitable vessels for those manifestations. Is that right?

W.McK. Really vessels of mercy prepared for glory, are they not?

J.D.G. Vessels of mercy prepared for glory. Preparation had gone on beforehand, they are immediately suitable.

G.D.R. Does the continuation of what has come from an ascended Christ at the present time involve continued formation in us? I appreciate what you say as to His distinctive coming in; it is in view of what is perfect in His own sight.

J.D.G. I do not deny there is continued formation as long as we are here, but as coming in at that time the Lord would regard His work as perfect in us. He would regard it that way at the moment of His manifestation. Would that be right?

W.McK. I think it is. So He says, "Thou art all fair, my love; And there is no spot in thee", SoS 4: 7. There is nothing that is imperfect or deficient and the Lord regards us from that point of view.

J.D.G. I think that is what is borne out in Ephesians 1, "holy and blameless before him in love". It must not be viewed as future entirely; it may have a future bearing in one sense, but it must have a present bearing now.

W.McK. Ephesians 2 would confirm that, "we are his workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus" (v.10). You could not attach anything except perfection to that.

J.D.G. It is a view taken by the Lord in His manifestation of Himself.

L.D.P. In John 17 the Lord says, "Thou hast loved them as thou hast love me" (v.23). Does this fit in with what we are reading now?

J.D.G. Yes. "Thou hast loved them as thou hast love me". "That the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them" (v.26); it is a holy environment of love, the Father's love, the Father's love for Christ. So He comes to them. In this passage there is movement in mind: "I am coming again and shall receive you to myself, that where I am ye also may be", there is movement in mind. So the Lord has spiritual movement in mind for us as He comes among us.

E.F.C. He is coming for us in the first part of the chapter and then in the middle of the chapter He says, "I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you" (v.18). Is that not a test to us as to whether we really experience His coming among us and whether we discern that it is Himself, not just a theory?

J.D.G. "Receive you to myself", He has the power to effect transportation spiritually. "Receive you to myself", so you have a sense of being received by Him. And then He says, "where I am", He has in mind another sphere for us, where He is. "Receive you to myself" as to the Person, "that were I am"; then you find where He abode. The two disciples said, "where abidest thou?", John 1: 38.

R.G. Do you think at the point when He receives us to Himself He sees what is of Himself and like Himself?

J.D.G. Yes, I think He sees what is morally suitable to the presence of God; that is Ephesians 1, "holy and blameless before him in love". I often wondered about that scripture in the past, what the setting was, but I think it is persons who are morally in accord with the divine nature, holy and blameless they can be in the presence of God.

R.G. I wondered if it was the Benjamin side in relation to Joseph. He was never blameworthy, "blameless before him in love"; like Joseph taken into the presence of God.

J.D.G. Yes. It says, “who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ; according as he has chosen us in him before the world’s foundation, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love”. I think those are the persons who have gathered to remember the Lord Jesus, that have been manifested to be Christ’s epistle. They are suitable to be in the presence of God. It is not only the Father, but God is stressed.

T.V. Do you think that may be anticipated when the Lord says in John 20, “go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God”, (v.17)? He does not take them up or take us up in imperfection but they are to be with Him before God.

J.D.G. Yes. We are viewing ourselves as chosen in Christ. We are not in a perfect state in our bodies yet – do not let us misunderstand one another – but the work of God is perfect and it is viewed as in perfection in the persons. So the persons are suitable because they are holy and blameless before God and they can be there in love.

What a thing that God can bring man into His presence, those that He had chosen in Christ before the world’s foundation! But note He is able to do it, bring them into His presence holy and blameless.

C.F.D. And as brought into His presence we are clothed with the perfection of Christ. So there is nothing out of order at all.

J.D.G. You can understand how, in the parable when the son comes back, there is nothing but joy. He is clothed with the best robe, he is suitable for going into the house; the ring on his hand and sandals on his feet, there is nothing but joy in mind. God is rejoicing over us.

C.F.D. Divine Persons have a right to view us apart from sin, clothed in all the perfection of Christ.

J.D.G. That is helpful to remark. That is how they view us in the sphere of privilege. Is that not true?

J.A.P. The father says there, “it is right to make merry” (Luke 15: 32), righteousness entered into that: “it is right” that we should do it.

J.D.G. It is in accord with the environment that we are in for God to rejoice, is it not? It is a happy state for us so, there is release of affections to that God, the God whom we have known, made known in Jesus. So His purposes are secured.

G.D.R. It seems to add force to the expression you quoted earlier that we come together to meet the brethren first. I wondered if in our contemplation of brethren as they come in there is a certain appropriation which really delights the heart. And that really all flows out as we proceed in relation to divine Persons.

J.D.G. It brings out that those persons that we gather with are persons we are going to be with in heaven, the persons who are suitable to be holy and blameless before God. Think of being in the presence of God and being happy there, of His nature. These matters, as I understand it, holy and blameless, relate to the nature of God; He is that kind of Person. I want to use the word respectfully.

L.McF. So we were in His presence this morning as clothed; we had a word on that, clothed in the best robe. So the whole environment speaks of Christ.

J.D.G. Yes. What clothing there is as moving in to the area of privilege. Then it says, "marked us out beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ to himself", that is the Father. It was mentioned earlier, "according to the good pleasure of his will", that is divine sovereignty, is it not? It has been said that choice is not exactly sovereign will, but He has chosen us in relation to what He is in His nature to be in His presence; but sonship is according to His will. Can you help us on that?

W.McK. I think what you are saying is right. "Holy and blameless before him in love" is necessary because God is love, that is His nature, but in His sovereignty He has brought us into the same relationship as Christ is in sonship.

J.D.G. It is because His desire was to have man in sonship. Mr. Darby remarked somewhere, He may have angels as His servants

but He is going to have man in sonship in His presence to satisfy the affections of His heart.

W.McK. Angels are sons creationally but you could not say that they are made partakers of His nature; they are obedient creatures. But here you have persons who are formed by the love of God and who enjoy it and respond to Him in relationship of sonship as affected by what He is in His nature.

J.D.G. So you can understand how by the Spirit we are really given to know and appreciate such a love in reality in the service of God because the communications are spiritual. I was thinking of the reality to divine Persons as the saints are assembled in a suitable environment for the realisation of these blessed experiences spiritually, and to know something in our hearts and spirits of God being satisfied as having persons in His presence suitable to His nature and then the Father rejoicing over the relationships we have with Him in sonship and the Spirit imparting those affections to us as the Spirit of adoption, and Christ there too rejoicing as well.

J.R.C. We come together in that way; the divine view of the saints should colour my outlook on the saints as well.

J.D.G. Yes. You are, I was going to say, surprised sometimes with what is expressed in a brother and contributed in the spirits of the sisters in such an environment that takes us beyond really where we are in ourselves in relation to the mysteries attached to God's revelation.

J.R.C. We seek to credit one another in regard to the position that we occupy.

J.D.G. Well, credit them when we come back into the area of responsibility. I think while we are in the sphere of privilege we are astounded by the fact of what is present.

W.McK. We do not leave the satins behind as we proceed from glory to glory. We might begin very simply as disciples as in Mark, but when you come to this line it is sons and we have been raised up together and made to sit down together. The sons are all together,

they are not left behind. Each one appears before God in Zion (see Ps 84: 7).

J.D.G. I think that should be understood by us, we are all moving together. In the midst of the assembly will I hymn Thee (see Heb 2: 12), is the assembly in sonship. It is the masculine thought there.

What a glorious host, we touch something of it in our spirits by the Holy Spirit, that is the Spirit of adoption. Divine experiences are real; we await the actuality of the thing in its fullness but we touch something of the reality of it. In Ephesians 3 it continues really to enlarge on the same realm that we have been speaking about. It touches again, "of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named". It brings out the substantiality of what is there. We have been speaking about that in the saints. We are strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man. Is the inner man collective?

W.McK. Yes. It really refers to the totality of the work of God in the saints. And if we think of it in its fullness it would include all the work of the Spirit from Pentecost to the rapture. The inner man is an immense thought, is it not?

J.D.G. That is good. Strengthened, so we are participating in that; just as we do in the new man we spoke of yesterday, we are participating in the inner man so there is something in each one of us that is wrought of God that can be strengthened to take account of these things.

W.McK. It conveys the thought, does it not, of great spiritual capacity inwardly, the inner man? When John saw the holy city he saw no temple in it, God and the Lamb are the temple. The inner man is Paul's way of presenting that. And think of the immense capacity that has been formed that it can be filled even to all the fullness of God.

J.D.G. I noticed just in the interval that Mr. Darby speaks about the centre, but there is no circle to limit its view; it is lost in the infinitude that God alone fills. What a sphere we touch in our spirits. There is no hard and fast line between finite and infinite, we are touching a sphere that God fills, "filled even to all the fullness of God". But the

persons are made equal to that, not by our own power but by what God has wrought in us.

J.A.P. We can learn from the great skill of the apostle. I notice that you took up yesterday this book and we went into the practical side to walk as a Christian. It comes in chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this book. But the early chapters are dealing with what we are in Christ and in God. Why did he begin that way and did not use the reverse way?

J.D.G. I think we can see something of the spiritual suggestion in the large upper room coming on to our view as the matter expands under Christ's touch. We come into this realm we are speaking about now spiritually. We are still in the faith period, we are still here in that sense in our bodies, but we are able to expand in our affections and our minds to take account of this realm. I suppose it is related to the Father's house. As far as I understand it the Lord is bringing us into the Father's house and this scene opens that up to us.

R.G. Is "receive you to myself" in John 14 commensurate with "that he may give you according to the riches of his glory"? There are other abodes. It says here, "of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named", but then immediately it comes to the saints, "in order that he may give you according to the riches of his glory". It says in John 14, "and shall receive you to myself", and immediately you are in an area of Him providing us with the riches of His glory.

J.D.G. Yes, an area where you see Christ's glory shine in the Father's presence, "to know the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge". It is His own environment.

R.G. So we are led into the area of infinitude that we are speaking about.

J.D.G. That is right. You touch something in your heart. We sang the hymn:

O how inscrutable,
Yea, how unsearchable
Art Thou, O God! (Hymn 48)

A.S.H. The inscrutableness of the occasion at that time made me think that hymn would be appropriate. I was thinking a little earlier as to the large upper room and the bigness or the greatness that is in God's heart. It is not a small room, and then it is furnished. There is room for capacity, there is room for movement. Would that enter into it?

J.D.G. That is what we are seeking to do, to show how it commenced there, but as the Lord comes in the whole matter expands as we have been speaking about it. So He brings us over to where He is, where He abides, which is in the Father's presence. He has a distinctive place there but we are brought into the place He has as it says in chapter 1, "for adoption through Jesus Christ to himself", the Father brings us to Himself because He has personal joy in the results of the activity of His sovereign will in bringing men into His presence in sonship.

A.S.H. "I and the Father are one", John 10: 30. Think of the oneness that exists between the Father and the Son.

J.D.G. That would be true; and the Lord rejoicing in the Father's joy and the Father rejoicing in Christ's joy, the Spirit too rejoicing in the securing of the purpose of God in man.

G.D.R. Spiritual intelligence would underlie all this, do you think? I noticed our brother's expression this morning in relation to our intelligence along with what is known but us, but it is inward formation, spiritual intelligence. He says In John 14: 4 "ye know"; in 2 Corinthians 3 the transformation comes in early, it should come in early in our experience on Lord's day morning.

J.D.G. I am sure intelligence goes along with it. Sonship involves affection but intelligence too.

K.N.P. I was wondering if a link with the Spirit as we go in is necessary, "strengthened with power by his Spirit"? It is something that we cannot neglect as we move forward in the service, do you think?

J.D.G. It is necessary on our side to be strengthened. We would not be equal to it on our own, we might say, but the Spirit strengthens us, what is spiritually in accord with that realm; we have been speaking about the inner man, the capacity to move in a realm where response to God is there.

K.N.P. It is not something that is transformed or changed; what is there is according to Christ but it needs to be strengthened.

J.D.G. Yes, in this realm, that would be right.

H.G.H. It is something we experience.

J.D.G. Yes, that is what we are seeking to speak about, is it not, our experience together and how our hearts and minds are carried forward in that spiritual realm. It may be beyond our own capacity, but still by the Spirit you are strengthened at that time to take account of these matters, the glory of that realm and the satisfaction and pleasure of divine Persons in that realm and the persons who are there.

H.G.H. It is in the inner man, it is spiritual.

J.D.G. Yes it is. It is not related to flesh and blood condition at all.

L.McF. So the father went out in Luke 15 and besought the older son to come in. These things are available to us all, it is the question whether we are enjoying them do you think?

J.D.G. Well, in the realm we are speaking about we are all within, brought there by Christ and the Spirit strengthening our hearts we touch that realm.

H.G.H. We will not enjoy it without love, "being rooted and founded in love".

J.D.G. I think you experience something of that love in the realm we are speaking about anyway. We know it in Christ. You are thankful for men who have experiences greater than yourself, who are a pattern to you, "to know the love of the Christ"; a man who could touch that realm and say this. What an anchor to the soul, a known love in the realm of glory that could maybe overwhelm us.

W.McK. So would you say that sovereign love has brought us into this relation of sonship and divine work has given us a nature suited to that relationship? But in this realm we need power as well and so we have “according to the power which works in us”. And that would touch our hearts because we should never lose sight of the fact that Christ is mediator and the Spirit as on our side is the Spirit of adoption and they are always active so that we might be sustained Godward in this realm of glory.

J.D.G. “The power which works in us” I suppose would be the idea of quickening by the Spirit to maintain us responsive in the realm in which we are. Do you think so?

W.McK. That is what I thought, and it involves that two divine Persons are on our side continually and They are sustaining us in view of this response to God; “to him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus”.

J.D.G. That is helpful, because it is working out of what we have had in mind, that God the Father is the object that is in the mind of divine Persons to minister to through us.

W.McK. It is striking that in one place Mr. Taylor says that God is the supreme object both to Christ and to the Spirit, viewing Them as on our side mediatorially – God Himself is the object to Them and to us.

J.D.G. That is very fine. We have to ponder these things; these are holy things we are speaking about. Because the Persons in themselves are God but still They have been a place of service – through Christ and by one Spirit we have access to the Father, would bear that out. So that would always be true, would it not?

J.D.G. Yes. It is the vessel of His praise. John says it is His tabernacle.

J.A.P. It is the setting of the Lord’s Supper as I understand it; the Lord’s Supper has been put in the setting of the assembly by Paul, and then the service of God finishes in the assembly, glory to God in the assembly.

J.D.G. We have to distinguish the two, the Supper is set in the assembly in the wilderness, and this is the service of God in the heavenlies.

J.A.P. I see that. It is the same vessel, is it not?

J.D.G. Well, it is the same persons. I suppose it is the same vessel but seen in a different setting; seen in its own setting here, seen in finality. The other is its temporary setting – the Supper set in the assembly in the wilderness is its temporary setting, but here it is finality, is it not, the tabernacle of God is with men, it is His dwelling place and there is glory to Him in the assembly in this setting. These are the thoughts we had in mind and trust they have been of some value.

New York

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Key to Initials

(New York unless otherwise shown)

J.R.Cumming, Edinburgh; C.F.Dadd, Plainfield; R.Gardiner, Kirkcaldy; J.D.Gray, Edinburgh; A.S.Hinkson; H.G.Holt, Wheaton; L.McFarlane; W.McKillop, Ormond Beach; J.A.Petersen, Plainfield; L.N.Phillips; K.N.Pye; G.D.Rosenberry, San Francisco; T.VanderHoek, Denton

THE VIEW FROM PISGAH

J.D.Gray

Numbers 21: 4-20; Deuteronomy 3: 27; 34: 1-3; Philippians 3: 14, 20, 21

I trust the Lord helps to say something about the top of Pisgah. It is a very fine place to be, Pisgah. It comes into this section of the Scriptures. It is a mountain range, the young people would know that, it is just across the Jordan from Jericho. It seems from Scripture that all the children of Israel reached to the top of that mountain range. They went up Mount Nebo, that we read of, where Moses was taken up. It is one of the mountains in that range. I read chapter 3 of Deuteronomy just to show the young people that you can look northward, southward, eastward and westward from Pisgah. It is a wonderful view you get from Pisgah. When a man was going to curse the people of God in chapter 23 of Numbers, Balaam, God said to him, I will stop you cursing them, I will take you to a place where you will see what I think of them. So He took him up to the top of Pisgah and it says in chapter 23, "At this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!" (v.23). It is good to get a view of the saints from the divine viewpoint; it is good to get a view of things from God's viewpoint. One word comes into this chapter, which is in verse 4 and also in verse 10, they journeyed, the children of Israel *journeyed*. Earlier on in their history in chapter 14 of Numbers, when they refused to accept the gospel of the glory and go into the land and take Hebron, God says to them there in Numbers 14, "And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness" (v.32). That is *wandering*.

I would like to speak something about the lessons of the wilderness, things we have to learn. Every believer has to learn them if they want to be in the pathway with the Lord; every believer who has put his body on the altar has to learn these exercises, come through them, somehow or other he has to come through them. It might seem, dear brethren, that we have wandered at times. I speak

for myself, we have wandered in the wilderness, but when you get a view from Pisgah you do not see it like wanderings, you see that God's hand has been over you all the way through. What a God we have that His presence goes with us. Where we have been diverted from the pathway we might say He still goes with us; He may not support us in it but He will go with us and help us. His ways are unsearchable, that is Romans 11. Paul comes to a doxology as he considers God's ways with His earthly people, His ways too with the gentiles, His ways are unsearchable, "who has been his counsellor?". There is a mind that is greater than the human mind; there is a God we have to do with, dear brethren, and His hand is over us.

Well, who gets to the top of Pisgah? What is this vantage point? It is a vantage point where you can look northward, southward, eastward and westward. You can look back and see the waste; you can look forward and see the land, see the saints in heaven. Who gets there? Well, the man who goes there is the man who has come through chapter 21 of Numbers. You say, that is figurative speech; it is, but I trust the Lord will help to show what we have had in the reading applies here, that is, these children of Israel had been journeying, they had been journeying for forty years. In some way, as I said already, in chapter 14 it was wandering, but the scripture also views it as journeying. They were about to move from mount Horeb and proceed to the Jordan, over mount Pisgah to the Jordan, but their relatives in the land of Edom, Esau's children, would not allow them to pass through their land so they had to take a long journey down to the Red Sea again, go round the land of Edom. You can understand how people are tried, sometimes we are tried. The Lord tries us, tries us by circumstances; these people were tried by their circumstances. They journeyed from mount Horeb by way of the Red Sea to go round the land of Edom. They had to go all that journey round when they could have gone straight forward and crossed the neck of the land of Edom and gone up to the Jordan by a short way. Yet in the ways of God He had them go round the land of Edom and take this journey, which brought out the impatience in

their soul. Sometimes God allows us to come into circumstances, I speak to older ones more than younger one, to bring out where we really are with God, what formation is taking place in me. The circumstances here brought out that inwardly, they said, why have you brought us out of Egypt forty years before? Why should we die in the wilderness? They had not died in the wilderness, they had been there for forty years. Then they said, “for there is no bread, and no water, and our soul loathes this light bread”. Inwardly there were still things unresolved; they still did not fully have a taste for Christ. What a state there was in their souls, but good results came from it because they came finally to the matter of the serpent’s bite.

They came finally to understand, and you and I have to come to understand, that we have been the subject of the serpent’s bite. And the answer to that is Christ lifted up, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness thus must the Son of man be lifted up, that every one who believes on him may not perish, but have life eternal”, John 3: 14,15. They finally came to it that there was something in them that could never respond to God’s ways, it had to be judged and maintained in its own place. You cannot get rid of sin in the flesh but you can judge it. “God, having sent his own Son, in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom 8: 3), sin is condemned, it is not forgiven, He has condemned sin in the flesh.

So these people come to that as a result of their history after a long protracted period. They had drunk of the Spirit, we might say, in their early days at the first smiting of the rock in Meribah, but they had not got the full gain of it. How like ourselves – we oscillate till finally we come to the fact that sin in the flesh remains and power is needed as we had in the reading, “I myself with the mind serve God’s law; but with the flesh sin’s law”, “who shall deliver me out of this body of death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord”, Rom. 7: 24,25. You have to come to that, it is something to arrive at. I remember Mr. Lyon saying, Romans 7 is a long dark tunnel with a light at the end of it, and I often wondered about that. Mr.

Lyon was a brother who lived many years ago, a worthy among the saints at that time, and I often thought how he could say that, how he could not get through it. But finally, these people come to it. It say

again, God allows circumstances in our histories to bring us to really bottom things. I think what was said today, we can go too fast, there is a measure of truth in that. We have to build on a foundation like the house that is built upon a rock not upon the sand. We can acquire knowledge only and disaster may come as it did in the history of the people of Israel.

After this they journey again and they are really drinking into the Holy Spirit; “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God”, Rom 8: 14. What rapidity of movement. I read the chapter just to bring that out in the literal sense and to show how it applies spiritually. There is rapidity of movement with a person. We need to judge the flesh, and drink into the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit becomes a power in you. You need power, you need strength – that is true physically, it is true spiritually, to get to this viewpoint, to have God’s viewpoint. What a difference it makes when you get God’s viewpoint. Now you look over the whole book of Numbers from Pisgah, “which looks over the surface of the waste”.

You look back: for the young people I say, you can look back to the Red Sea. Pisgah is near the land of Canaan, just across the river Jordan, it is thousands of feet high, and you look back to the Red Sea and say, God brought us out of Egypt, He delivered me from the sin system; He brought me across the Red Sea. I remember singing, ‘O happy day when Jesus washed my sins away’, remember singing at the banks of the Red Sea? We all remember that I trust, the song of redemption. Then the grace of God that met me, fed me with Christ, then I learned and I went through my history. You did not like Christ all the time, there was a mixed condition in you.

Then there are other exercises that come up. I wanted to refer to one or two of these exercises, exercises that have to be learned on the way, wilderness exercises; not only personal wilderness exercises but assembly wilderness exercises that come into our history. I say again to the young people, we have all to come this way. The book of Numbers is typical of the believer’s pathway through the wilderness not only individually but also in relation to the walk with the saints. I refer to Numbers 12 because it

is a scripture that was borne home to me in recent time, the speaking of the Son; it says there that Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses on the pretext that it was because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had taken for his wife. Then Jehovah heard it (v.3). The man Moses was very meek. Then Jehovah spoke suddenly (v.4), and called Moses and Aaron and Miriam, "Come out ye three unto the tent of meeting". And then later down Jehovah says, "Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known to him in a vision, I will speak to him in a dream. Not so my servant Moses: he is faithful in all my house" (v.6). That is typical teaching of who is over the house.

Hebrews 3 brings out the Son is over the house. Hebrews is a remarkable book, we have read part of it today, God speaking in Son; in former times He spoke another way now He is speaking in Son, the Son is over the house and His words have to be adhered to – the faithful speaking of the Son. He has made the laws of the house; He has it laid down for us in Scripture. I have thought much about this that the Son is over the house and we have to pay heed to that. In ministry it is said by extension the apostles, that would be right too, because they carry authority from the Son, because the apostles' writing is all in Scripture and by extension ministers who have ministered to us the truth. We have to minister the truth that is in accordance with the Son over the house, the law of the house.

You cannot eliminate Scripture. I have thought of it much in relation to the disaster that struck us thirty years ago when a certain verse of Scripture was set aside. It led to disaster. It put us on sectarian ground – it led to disaster. The Son over God's house stands.

Every speaking must be in accordance with His thought; He is over the house, He rules in the house, He has the last word. The Son of God has the last word and it is down in Scripture for us. Others have helped us to understand it and we are thankful for that, but the speaking must be in accordance with the Son. We were seduced into following something that was not in accordance with the Son of God. I say that to us in all sobriety that we may be preserved from anything toward that, setting aside Scripture the Son of God has indicted.

So in Numbers 13, just to touch on that, the gospel of the glory is brought to them. The spies go and search out the land of promise and they come back and say, It is a good land, the cities are good and everything is good, but the cities have walls and they are built up to the heavens and the men are giants. They would not go in, they were not prepared to go and attack those situations in the power of the Spirit of God and overthrow them. Companies who were holding divine ground, you might say, but not according to the divine mind. You will meet in your pathway believers that will say, Yes, the saints gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus are right, but I am not able for that. We can thank God for those who have staked out the ground. We have not staked out the ground, that has been done for us. Men who established things as coming out from the systems in the power of the name of the Lord Jesus, have gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus, have done it for us. We have to hold that ground. You can see later on in the history of the children of Israel how they came to take that ground because they came another way; they followed that ark through the Jordan. Affection for Christ took them into the land and there the Spirit of God helped them. So that in our histories we come alongside persons who acknowledge that the ground of gathering may be right, but they are not prepared for it. Are you prepared for it? Am I prepared for it, to maintain the truth that has been established for us and the ground of gathering that has been maintained for us? And then again in chapter 16, which we touched on in the reading, where the two hundred and fifty princes of Israel seek to assert themselves above the people of Israel and establish the priesthood to themselves that was not according to God. That is the clerical system, that is where really the Spirit of God is quenched. The sin against the Holy Spirit, As Mr. Darby wrote in his booklet, is the clerical system. Have we really judged that? You get upset and sorrow fills your heart when brethren that once walked with us go back to that system, go back to the recognition of clergy and laity where the Spirit of God has not free course. The Lord in His goodness may give a word through a godly minister, we would not set that aside, but have we really judged the system? We have to face up to these things in our

lifetime whether we have really judged them or not. Circumstances arise that test you. Will I go back to that or am I committed to where the Lord has placed His name and where faithfulness to the truth has been enlightened to me. And then in chapter 17 you find the answer to everything, the answer to the sons of rebellion; the children of Israel, they had to take their twelve staves and put them in the tent of meeting and God says, I will show you the man I have chosen. And Levi's staff brought forth buds, and blossoms, and ripened almonds. One Man lives before God; Christ alone lives. Life is in Christ, it is inherent in Him; He is the Man before God, Christ in resurrection, Christ in glory, He is the Man that God has chosen, not us in that sense; not any of the other staves of Israel, but Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ. Is that the Man I prefer to all others? What a glorious Man He is. At the end of David's life when David died, scripture speaks about the times that passed over David, that passed over Israel, that passed over the nations (see 1 Chron. 29: 30). What times have passed over us. What has been the result of all this faithfulness? I will say something to you; pick up a hymn book of 1903, that is when Mr. Raven was alive and Mr. Darby's day went before that, and pick up the hymn book we have now and go over it and you will find the precious truth that has been unfolded to us between those two times. What has been the reward for faithfulness in the wilderness? The reward is the preciousness of the privilege of remembering the Lord Jesus and moving thereafter into the area of privilege. Where else in Christendom would you get that? We gather to the name of the Lord Jesus, we celebrate His Supper, "we being assembled to break bread" (Acts 20: 7); it seems simple to us, we are used to it, but you know in times gone past the brethren gathered in the light they had and very faithful and very sincere and God honoured it. Do not get me wrong, God honoured it. They wept and the floors were wet with tears of the saints. God honoured that and then they broke bread, but they did not have too much of going into the area of privilege. I do not say they did not touch it, that would be wrong of me to say that, the Lord is very gracious unto His saints. I am sure He gave them a sense of His presence but it was not expanded. But the faithfulness of those who have gone before

us has brought about a reward for us in the richness of the divine service. So that we are instructed, “we being assembled to break bread”, we break bread immediately.

Then what flows out, the Lord coming in, in all His glory and dignity as the firstborn from among the dead, firstborn among many brethren. Then the light as to His joy in His assembly; then the light as to the worship of the Spirit, which came into chapter 21 of Numbers, “Rise up, well! Sing unto it!”; then the light of the service of God to the Father. Can we enter into it in spirit, dear brethren, touch an area that is beyond responsibility? What a reward for faithfulness. You can see how the exercise of the wilderness is gone through and gone through rightly, something arrived at in our souls.

That is what the Lord has put in my heart, to ensure that the truth we have is formed in me in a manner that nothing will move it – the rock is there, nothing is going to move it, it will stand as I keep near to the Spirit of God it will not be overthrown. And then all these wonderful privileges that come in.

That is what I had in mind to speak to you about, to encourage you. Moses sees the saints in the land; I just read it to link with Philippians. Moses gets a view of the saints in the land.

What a viewpoint! You go round this country and you see viewpoints; you stand and see the glories, not exactly of man’s doing but glories of creation. You say, God made all this land; you stand at pinnacles and mountaintops or viewpoints, (some of us have to drive there by car), when we get there we view the viewpoints, see the creation, see the scenery. Here Moses is looking upward seeing the saints in heaven. I think Paul in Philippians had that view. He sees them all. God showed them to Moses from the top of Pisgah. Get up to Pisgah, dear brethren, see the saints from another viewpoint. I sometimes say it is good to fly thirty-nine thousand feet high, when you see the land you see it in a different perspective. In some ways it appeals to me as God’s perspective. Petty murmurings among the brethren mean nothing, they do not mean anything. How people carry on among the brethren mean nothing, they do not mean anything. How people carry on with petty things I do not understand,

it is beyond me. Clans in Scotland carry on fights from one generation to another generation, that is beyond me. You go up there and you see it all in perspective; puny man down there, but God's viewpoint of the saints, "What hath God wrought!" Is it worthwhile maintaining disagreements amongst us? It is not worth it. It is not worth it, dear brethren, it is better to use the death of Christ to maintain reconciliation and get up to the heights of Pisgah. Get a view of those persons, get a view of the saints from that viewpoint and you say, "What hath God wrought!" He has wrought in my brother and wrought in my sister, He has wrought in me. Oh, to see the saints that way, the whole landscape changes completely. Down in the valleys in that sense, there they are bickering and disagreeing, poor puny brother or sister, to continue feuds from one generation to another, never any sign of termination. Get up above and see the saints; see that person from the heights, God has wrought in their soul. There is a work of God there that is going to shine in the day to come. Paul says that in the Philippian epistle, he says he has a hope, the hope of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus. What a hope to have. How it lifts the spirit, lifts the viewpoint. Elevation – elevation helps in local matters to get a viewpoint, the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus. It may be the end of the way. Mr. Darby says salvation in Philippians is the end of the road, but you have always got a view of it. "For the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus". What a prize it is; it maintains your outlook heavenly. Then it says, "our commonwealth has its existence in the heaven". If my commonwealth has its existence in the heavens I want to live there, I want to view the saints from that point of view, I want to be on the top of Pisgah as a man who has judged himself, a man who is walking in the power of the Holy Spirit. If you are not able to get up to the top of that viewpoint there is defect in your own soul, but it is available to you in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit to be able to rise from the circumstances where they were impatient on the way, and ascend. What rapidity they ascended with. You know, young people, the way they went, the children of Israel, it was uphill and down dale and uphill till they got to the top of that range, thousands of feet; all that host, two and one half million,

getting to the top of Pisgah and from there looking over the whole surface of the waste. What a change it makes. You can see God's hand in the way He has brought you, brought individually; trace God's ways with you and something will be wrought out. Maybe my ways have not always been in accordance with the truth but God has brought me that way and formed me. He has used my history to form me after Christ. It is the hand of a Person who has a mind greater than the human mind who can turn disasters into profit. He does not justify our disasters but He can turn them into profit and He can form us. You look back and He might say, I could not have taken you another way; I wanted to form something in you that I brought you that way. That is my understanding of the view of the top of Pisgah; it eliminates the wandering side and brings out the side of the unsearchable ways of God. He says, I have something in mind to form you, I could not form you any other way. I had to bring you that way because I wanted to form some particular feature of Christ in you. What a God we have to do with, dear brethren – what a God, He would encourage us. So he says, “our commonwealth has its existence in the heavens, from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to his body of glory”. Oh, to be in a body where sin is not. What a statement, dear brethren, what a statement, to be in a body where sin is not; “conformity to his body of glory”. He is going to give us a house from heaven; He is going to give us a body of glory. You know sin will not dwell in its members. We are in a body of humiliation that is because sin dwells in our members; we have to be on constant guard and watching. It says in Numbers 23 it is the watchmen's field, we have to be on our watch always by the Holy Spirit and guarded. What a prospect to have a body in which sin is not. That is the portion of every true believer. The Lord Jesus is the power, it says, “according to the working of the power which he has even to subdue all things to himself”. He is going to subdue everything to Himself. Thank God He has subdued you and me and brought us into subjection to Himself, the Christ. How blessed to be a person who is in subjection to the Christ.

Well, I trust these few words will stimulate a measure of exercise in our hearts and souls, give us encouragement to see there is a viewpoint for one who has judged himself and who seeks to walk in the power of the Spirit to ascend to a point where he can view the whole history of himself and his brethren from the divine viewpoint where everything else is nullified. He gets a view of the saints as those in whom God has wrought and there is preciousness there that is going to be housed with a house from heaven and, as this scripture says, have a body of glory. May the Lord bless us for His Name's sake.

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