

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE WILDERNESS

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AM I wonder whether we could enquire into the way in which we can prove the Holy Spirit's service as we make our journey through this 'living waste' of which we sang (Hymn 46). The scriptures in Exodus and Numbers give us the pathway of God's people through the wilderness and we find at every point that there was what was needed to sustain them. The encampment at Elim was very early in their experience; they knew what it was for the Passover lamb to be slain and that they were not coming under the judgment of God; they knew what it was to become free of Satan's world through crossing the Red Sea. They knew what it was for the bitterness that they had encountered in the pathway to be made sweet by the wood which was cast into the waters of Marah, speaking of the life of Jesus given up. Then they come to this point, to Elim. I do not think in Elim we get a figure of the Holy Spirit personally, but we get something which is springing up. I think that many of us may have found that in our experience. We have come to the Lord Jesus and committed ourselves to Him and we find ourselves in a circle which we may not be able to explain, but it is evident that there is something working, something springing up, a circle where you feel safety and where there is that which is to be enjoyed. I think it was very gracious of God that they should experience this at the outset of their journey. He was giving them a foretaste of what they were to arrive at, but how much could they say as to these twelve springs of water, or the seventy palm trees? Nevertheless God brought them there and gave them this assurance that there was sufficient in divine provision to see them through.

In chapter 17 they learn that if they are to walk here (and the wilderness refers to the world that the believer has to go through: it has become a wilderness because Jesus has died) they need to be sustained. They need a power to maintain life in this scene. That power is available in the Holy Spirit, given because the Rock was smitten. How blessed it is to take account of the sufferings and death of Jesus in that way. He was smitten in order that we should receive the Holy Spirit. What a wonderful and blessed aspect that is of His death.

Then, as they go on, God speaks to Moses and says, 'You cannot go through alone; you need one with you in the journey'. In

chapter 23 it is a question of guiding them and going before, meeting what they were going to encounter. Think of the Holy Spirit in that respect, He guides the saints, "mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in". That is His objective, not to keep us in the wilderness but to bring us into God's full thoughts. If that is to be reached it requires that there should be exercise on our part.

In Numbers 21, there is exercise in the digging of the well and the Holy Spirit personally comes on to view: they take account of Him in type, "Rise up, well! sing unto it", and from that point there is movement onwards. I do not think we hear of the cloud after that - they have arrived at something in their own souls which enables them to move on to the full thought of God's purpose. How much we can say of that is a question.

I wondered whether this line would be profitable for the brethren today.

ECB I am sure your last remark is right. The real question amongst us is, how real the life of the Spirit is in us.

AM That is my exercise. If you take the setting at Elim, it is easy enough to go on with a form of teaching and so on, but here there were springs of water, something springing up. I think we are to experience that more often, there is something springing up and it is not just the words, there is something there.

ECB There comes a point when the people manifestly feel a need. How much have we felt the need of some power other than what is in us which would only be of our own minds.

AM They felt the need for being sustained in life when the rock was smitten at Meribah. They felt the need for guidance that they should move forwards and they felt the need for the power to enter into the land in Numbers 21. They were exercised as to that.

ECB It is interesting that God promises the manna every day, but He did not promise the water every day. Nevertheless you can see that they had the refreshment of the water every day.

AM It does not even say that they drank of it, but it was there. It was available to them and they could drink. Paul tells us, "all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed them", 1 Cor 10: 4. It was there every day, it was available.

ECB That scripture merges thoughts of Christ and of the Holy Spirit for the believer. The rock was the Christ, but the water was the Spirit.

AM In order that the Spirit should come it was necessary that the Rock should be smitten.

DJH The seventy palm trees you spoke of are brought in where these things are present. Would that be where there is a sense of victory? I was wondering about coming through the exercises of Romans 7 in the history of the believer, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v 25)? It brings into a company but it is in relation to a blessed glorious One who is victorious. God gives us the victory. Is that implied here?

AM What a thing that was, the seventy palm trees, as they set out upon the wilderness journey where everything was marked by death and yet they came to this point where there were seventy palm trees, suggesting the overcoming of what was outward. All the outward circumstances would point to there being no life, but there was that which was overcoming and I wondered whether we are to be like these palm trees. I was thinking of the overcomers in the Lord's addresses to the assemblies.

DJH That is also connected with hearing, "Let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies" (Rev 2: 7), it is to bring in the current power and refreshment and all that the Holy Spirit would bring.

AM We can come to this point and we can see the springs of water and we can see the palm trees - look around this room, there are saints here who have overcome, saints here who have been through much pressure, and they have overcome and they are victorious in the midst of pressure, and you look upon them and you say, I want to have a part in this.

DAB There is a wonderful sense of victory in a soul's experience when it achieves satisfaction. That is perhaps like this oasis here, at last they were satisfied. We speak of a lot of exercise, but what it is to reach some satisfying conclusion. I was thinking of the young people who give a lot of thought as to whether they should break bread; there is a wonderful sense of victory in the satisfaction that comes from making that commitment.

AM That is right and although this was just an opening experience for them in their pathway, it was an experience that they had. They

were in the wilderness and as in the wilderness they would not gain the respect of the nations around. They were a despised people, but nevertheless they are getting this early evidence that God can provide for them and even if they are in the wilderness they can be there in victory and taste something of what is springing up.

DAB I had not noticed before in Numbers that that song is not given in the passage where the well was provided. It is as if the blessing and the joy of it got carried through the whole of the rest of the wilderness experience.

AM I think so. I had wondered whether God was giving them a sense of what they were going to arrive at at the end of the wilderness. They actually arrived at that through exercise. They had to dig that well, there was something wrought in their own souls, but at the very beginning of their experience, God was saying, this is what I have in mind that there should be something springing up.

DAB It was not just left behind like a hole in their history, but they are able to carry the joy of that well through the rest of the journey.

EOPM This would have been normal in Elim. It is a wonderful standard for our localities. Someone comes to a locality and there are twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees.

AM Most of our localities do not have seventy, but these conditions would be normal. I think we should look for that. I think that I, at least, suffer from a very great danger of accepting what is common as being normal, but it is not. We need to cling to what is normal, we need to hold God's thoughts in our minds and not be satisfied with what is less than that. What we see here in Elim is that there was that which was springing up for the refreshment of the saints and there are those who had overcome, had experience with God and they were providing an atmosphere, an environment, in which the saints could rest.

EOPM We have often been reminded that the assembly and our local companies are practical spheres of salvation, but this is it. If those young in the truth or young in years find this they will not want to go elsewhere.

AM That is true. So when we come out in the evening it is maybe just two or three of us, but is there something which has been formed through experience with God, is there something which is springing up? I feel for the sisters, they come to the meetings, and they come

faithfully, and they are a great support, but they cannot contribute audibly. What do they receive?

JW Does this show what we find as we accept the wilderness?

AM We have to learn what the wilderness is. We learn what it is first by going through the Red Sea. The world has become a wilderness because Jesus has died. The One we love, the One who has saved us, and has the greatest blessing in mind, has no place in this world:

This world is a wilderness wide (Hymn 139)

It becomes a wilderness to us, and then we find in pure grace God makes provision for us.

EFW Would you say a word as to why it says, “I am Jehovah who healeth thee”, Exod 15: 26? We may feel that we do not need healing. It is an unusual word which comes in just at that point.

AM It follows the water of Marah, they were bitter (see Exod 15: 23). We may have experienced that Jesus has, through His death, made a way for us out of this world, but we still go through this world and sometimes the experiences of life can be bitter. You see that Jesus has been here, you see that another Man has gone through this scene, He has experienced what we experience in life and it brings in healing. The water becomes healed; but He heals too, “I am Jehovah who healeth thee”. The circumstances through which we pass should not leave bitterness in us, but He heals.

EFW I have been weighing over the end of that verse because there is a good deal of need for healing at the present time. There are sorrows, difficulties, and to know and experience a God who heals is something that we really need.

AM We prove it individually, but we should prove it together, “Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? Why then is there no dressing applied for the healing of the daughter of my people?”, Jer 8: 22. That is something we should prove, we come to this place where there is life in evidence, there is what is protective there. It should be a place where healing is known.

DAB In connection with what has been said, I was struck as you were speaking at the beginning that the very same thing that makes the world a wilderness releases the resource for the believer to pass through it; that is, the death of Christ does both.

AM Yes it does, you are thinking of the smitten Rock?

DAB We sometimes get held up over the idea that the world is a wilderness and we think that is going to make things difficult but the very thing which made the world a wilderness releases the resource to get through it.

AM God is not unfair to His people. He is extremely generous and if He takes us out of Egypt and puts us into the wilderness - in other words, if He works in His own sovereign way in our souls so that we can see His answer to all the wickedness that has come and we can put our faith in the work of Jesus and see that the whole world is condemned in the light of His death - then He will provide what we need. So the Rock had to be smitten.

NJH The death of Christ lies at the beginning of the wilderness and the end of the wilderness and we have types of it in between, but are experiences of the wilderness not meant to bring us in some sense to the life of Christ?

AM Yes.

NJH It is something to come to eventually, making way for another order of life that the Spirit will sustain in such conditions. It is the life of Christ in the saints.

AM Is that not typically the life which was seen across the Jordan? They went across the Jordan, they had another power there. One order of man had gone completely in the Jordan, the twelve stones show us that. The twelve stones came out of the Jordan; it is the life of Jesus in the saints.

ECB Is the experience at the end of chapter 15 and beginning of chapter 16 an initial experience? There was never bitter water again.

AM There was not. I suppose it should be so with us.

ECB I wondered whether that was part of the lack among us. What has conversion actually meant to us? Or has there been conversion? Or do we just accept what is said in the meeting?

AM. For the children of Israel it was a definite thing - they either put their faith in that Passover lamb or they were lost. Conversion should be as real as that to us. I think there has been a general exercise that the gospel should be preached to that end, that souls are converted.

The children of believers should know what it is to reach a point in their own history where they change their course and their conversion is genuine. That way you never look back.

ECB I wondered if the experience of Marah is bitter, and whether the experience of Elim where there is divine supply, fixed and settled, is not something that we need as a base for our growth in Christian life. The wilderness is not part of God's purpose.

AM His purpose was to bring them in, He had another land in view - the land that He promised to Abraham. For us it goes right back before the history of time. When you get to that land you find there is a city that existed before Zoan in Egypt (see Num 13: 22). All the antiquities of Egypt could not compare with what God had in mind in His purpose. The wilderness is our way of reaching it.

PM Have you some thought as to why the smitten rock comes immediately after the manna?

AM I think God in giving the manna is giving them the kind of food that He enjoys. There is that which is kept before Him and He wants His people to come into an appreciation of that, but if we are to do so we could not do that with our natural taste, "when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him", Isa 53: 2. It is necessary that the Holy Spirit should be given.

PM I was tracing God's experience with them in the wilderness. Does God provide us with an order of man that does not belong in the wilderness, and He forms that in us; and immediately I have to come to it that if I am going to appreciate that order of man, Christ had to be smitten in order that there might be resource and power for me to value Him?

AM That order of man, as far as He was concerned, could have lived forever, but if I am to come into any appreciation of that He had to be smitten. He said Himself "It is profitable for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you", John 16: 7. The way in which He went was that He was smitten.

ECB In regard to what has been asked, is the experience of the smitten Rock necessary for us to appreciate the manna?

AM I wondered that, it comes in immediately afterwards. When the manna is given we get the Spirit's comment as to it. He describes it and

tells us what it tastes like, but then the rock has to be smitten so that we should come into the appreciation of it.

ECB I was thinking also of, “the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified”, John 7: 39. I wondered whether something of that entered into it. You might say, the life of Jesus on earth is not the means by which we receive the Spirit. His death is needed, but the grasp of what He is where He is now glorified is the basis of our having the Spirit. It is the culmination of the exhibition of that life on the earth.

AM What was seen in that life was what God intended to be seen in the life of all His people; the moral excellence that was seen in that life was what God had in mind for man. And yet it was necessary that He should be smitten, and that He should be raised and installed in His present position, if the Holy Spirit should come at all that we should enter into it.

ECB The life of Jesus being manifested in our mortal flesh implies not only His life here but His glorified life. There is one life of Jesus, what was exhibited here, but we do not know Christ after the flesh, and we are dependent on the Spirit for the maintenance in our souls of the life of Jesus glorified. Has there not been much failure in Christian history in the attempt to imitate the life of Jesus on earth, whereas the life of Jesus in glory, that is the power of the believer?

AM To imitate that life on earth must be doomed to failure because it is recognising the man that He came to set aside.

DJH What do you see in the reference to Moses standing on the rock (see Exod 33: 21)? Would it involve anything of what we are speaking of now, that is not exactly the rock that was smitten? I suppose they are connected, but he is standing on the rock. Does it relate to the present position of Christ, but then we have to realise that that One has been smitten in order for the water to flow?

AM That is good - His present position. I suppose Moses here was identified with the rock, he was standing upon it, he would be identified with it, but in order that the water should flow that rock had to be smitten. The Lord is now in a position where He is beyond that, but as down here He was smitten. The people took account of Him as smitten, but this is really beyond what men could take account of. They say, “we did regard him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted”, Isa 53: 4. That is what men took account of, but this is beyond that, He was smitten of

God in order that there should be the pouring out of the Holy Spirit to man.

DJH The Spirit has come from Him glorified. I wondered whether that related to his standing on the rock in that sense.

JW Is it affecting how God meets the condition here in grace on His part? The sufferings of Christ involve that the very murmuring that was in my heart had to be met by God so that the Spirit might be available to us.

AM The people here murmured against God, they had already had the evidence that God would provide for them, but they murmured. Natural man would have said, the people should have been smitten, but no; what grace it is that the Lord Jesus has come in and He has been smitten. Here it is not His death on account of sin or anything like that, but it is what He went through in order that the gift of the Holy Spirit should be poured out upon men and women. How wonderful that is because, the Holy Spirit having come, there is that formed in individuals which is pleasing to God, which does not murmur.

DJH We were speaking of conversion, it is in view of receiving the Holy Spirit. I was thinking how Peter speaks of that in the Acts, "Repent, and be baptised, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins, and ye will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit", Acts 2: 38. He does not say, 'Your sins will be forgiven'. It would be so of course, but, "ye will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit". We must not stop short of that must we?

AM No, otherwise how are we left? We are left with just our own power here. We say, everything will be all right in the future, but what about today, how am I going to get through the world today? I need resource. Here what the people needed was in view of sustaining life.

DJH I was thinking of the importance of that coming into the end of the preaching of the gospel that the forgiveness of sins is not the end, it is very important and basic but it is not the end. The end is that we should receive the Holy Spirit and thus be able to live here in the world where Jesus died.

AM So they had the wilderness before them, how were they going to go through it? There was the means available. Most of the wilderness was before them. The book of Exodus only covers the first year, thirty nine years were ahead of them, how were they going to go through?

They were to walk according to the Spirit.

PJW Where does the matter of desire fit into your exercise?

AM I think what we have in this scripture is that there was a need. They felt the need and I think that is a point that God would bring us to in our soul's history, that we feel a need. Then the water having been made available, the people would want that resource. That takes us on to chapter 23 where they would want a resource to get through and God provides that for them. Moses was not content that the people should lead a nomadic existence in the wilderness with no prospect. How are they going to get through that wilderness? They need some resource, not only to sustain them in their thirst but to guide them, and I think we see in Moses the recognition of the need of the people and his desire that they should be provided for.

PJW I was thinking of the woman at Sychar's well. The Lord said to her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that says to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water", John 4: 10. I wondered whether He was seeking to provoke a desire in the woman for the Spirit.

AM That is right because it goes beyond need, if it was just need she could have gone out to that well every day for the rest of her life but she would not have been satisfied, but He was creating a desire for something that was greater.

DAB If you speak of them getting through, where were they going? That is the spring of desire, to know where you are going.

AM Moses had that, "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance", Exod 15: 17.

DAB I was thinking of Caleb; he had no thought of being dehydrated by the wilderness: he wanted to be fit enough to possess what God had set before him.

DEB The question at the end of verse 7 is a telling one for us even today, "Is Jehovah among us, or not?", Exod 17: 7. If He is, there is no alternative but to stay where He is. If He is not, that raises a serious exercise as to why that should be.

AM Exactly. We know one another, and most of us have been brought up in fellowship, and we have known the terms of the truth, we have been taught them from our earliest days, we have heard

wonderful things spoken about, but that is not the point: “Is Jehovah among us, or not?”. There was the evidence, the water was flowing and they could draw upon that resource. God is here in the Holy Spirit.

AMcS Do we get something of the Lordship of the Spirit in chapter 23?

AM Are you thinking of the expression, “Be careful in his presence”, Exod 23: 21? We may take account of His gracious service and wonder at it but it does not in anyway obscure the greatness of the One who carries out the service, “Be careful in his presence”. I think it should affect even the way we speak about Him. He is the Holy Spirit. In the way we refer to Him, we recognise something of the greatness of that blessed One, a divine Person, and yet He is here and He is guiding the people.

AMcS Even in a meeting like this the Spirit would be searching all things, “even the depths of God” (1 Cor 2:10), and it is important in our contributions that we feel our way and wait and see what the Spirit would draw out.

AM I think so, and we can be very thankful for that too.

NJH The name, the Holy Spirit, does not stress His authority, but do the Father and the Son not stress it? For instance in John 14, 15 and 16, the Spirit of truth and the authority He carries in His person?

AM Divine Persons are jealous for each other. The fact that the Holy Spirit does not stress His authority is a testimony to His grace, but such grace must be divine grace and it in no way diminishes the authority of the One who is here.

PM Do you get both the protective service of the Spirit, “to keep thee in the way” and His authority in His guidance, “to bring thee to the place”, Exod 23: 20? Both are needed together.

AM That is right. The children of Israel had a very chequered history and in reading this section, “to bring thee to the place that I have prepared”, think of the grace of the Holy Spirit, (taking the angel here as a figure of the Holy Spirit). Think of the occasion at Kadesh (see Num 13, 14). The children of Israel had journeyed through the land so far and they got to Kadesh, and they said, 'no we do not want the land' and God said, “turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness” (Num 14: 25). Think of the grace of One who went with them, even though they had rejected the divine testimony, they had rejected the evidence of the

goodness of God and His great thoughts in purpose and they said, 'no we do not want that', and yet still He brought them to the place that God had prepared.

JW Would the reference to the angel in this section point to the Spirit as in the assembly personally? It brings before us the need to have the light of the assembly and the presence of the Spirit in the assembly.

AM Does that not really distinguish the assembly, that a divine Person has taken up His abode in that vessel? There was one angel here. When it came to the drinking of the smitten rock the people could drink as individuals, each one could drink, but here was the company and there was one angel to guide them, to bring them into that place. The Holy Spirit has a sphere in which He can operate.

JW The Spirit is totally in the assembly: no believer has the Spirit totally. It brings out the fulness of resource that there is in the Spirit.

AM It brings out the greatness of what is here in the assembly. I did not mean that the Holy Spirit is not able to operate outside of the assembly - He is a divine Person, He is sovereign, He can do as He will; but it brings out the greatness of the vessel that a divine Person is dwelling in it.

JB To each of the assemblies in Revelation 2 and 3 there is reference to hearing His voice. Do you think that would bear on us now in our own current working out of things in our histories?

AM How do we hear His voice? In the addresses to the Revelation there is no suggestion that at any time He is not speaking, "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies", Rev 2: 7. That voice is to be heard. How do we hear it?

JSG I was wondering whether the verses in Isaiah 63 that refer to Moses help in the enquiry. It says, "Where is he that put his holy Spirit within him, his glorious arm leading them by the right hand of Moses" (vv 11,12). I wondered whether there is a suggestion there of authority in the Holy Spirit and how the one who was appointed to lead them as a man, Moses, really was controlled and guided by the Holy Spirit.

AM In that section the wilderness is a place where the hardships are overcome, "dividing the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name, - who led them through the depths, like a horse in the wilderness, and they stumbled not?" (Isa 63: 12,13). They were in

victory as they went through, “As cattle go down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah gave them rest” (v 14). What a blessed touch that is that there was One who is able to bring the saints through so that they do not stumble. They come into conditions where rest can be enjoyed.

DAB To go back to your question, Christendom as a profession has not listened to what the Spirit was saying. There is such a clamour of voices in that profession and we need to clear our ears of all those things and hear what the Spirit says. They have not been careful in His presence.

AM No they have not. In His grace there is still the character of a soft gentle voice that can easily be drowned out by the clamour of other sounds.

DAB I think our more recent experience illustrates what we are saying, that as soon as other voices can be silenced there is a wonderful progression, “to bring thee to the place”, Exod 23: 20. We can hear the directions.

AM We need to be exercised, we must never become complacent. We need to be exercised that we keep our ears attuned to that voice.

DJH It says, “what the Spirit says to the assemblies”. Is that also an answer to how we hear it? It is something that He would speak as we are gathered together in our localities, not that we claim to be the assembly of God in a place, but as in the light of that and as in dependence upon Him we would hear what He says.

AM I think so. I am sure that every one of us here has had the experience of coming to a meeting, and as the brethren are speaking over the scriptures something comes out and you think, 'I have never seen that before'. And it is something precious - you would not forget it; get home and write it down, work at it, follow it through the scriptures and pray about it so that it becomes built into your soul. The Spirit has said something.

RWF Are those precious things to remain precious to us? I wondered if this is one of the great aspects of the service of the Spirit that what we have learnt is retained. There is reference here to sickness, “I will take sickness away from thy midst” (Exod 23:25), “I am Jehovah who healeth thee” (Exod 15: 26), that initial impression is to be retained and that can be done and is willingly and readily done, by the Spirit. The experience we have then becomes cumulative.

AM It must. What we receive from the Holy Spirit has come from heaven, it has come from a divine Person; He has brought it to us. Therefore at no point in future years can it be regarded as commonplace; it has to be retained and treasured, “things new and old”, Matt 13: 52.

NJH Where do we get the ear? It is one thing to stop the voices that surround us and confuse us if we listen to them, but is there any link between the ear, “He that has an ear” (Rev 2: 7), and “ears hast thou prepared me”, (Ps 40: 6) which was unique to Christ and His reception?

AM I think we see that distinctively in the Lord Jesus, but what we see is that God intended man to be a receptive being, receptive to His own words and thoughts, “ears hast thou prepared me”.

NJH The Spirit of God, as we know, brings that scripture forward as, “thou hast prepared me a body”, Heb 10: 5. I wondered whether the ear must involve that the whole person is in some receptive mode or subjection to the word to hear what the Spirit says?

AM I think so. I have sometimes wondered about Paul when he was on the Damascus road. According to his account to the Jews, after he heard the voice, he said, “What shall I do, Lord?”, Acts 22: 10. It was a simple question. I have wondered whether Paul started every day afterwards with that question, “What shall I do, Lord?” It is good just to turn in simple dependence in prayer to get some sense of direction. We see that in his service as he gets the Spirit's word among the saints.

JTB Is there a practical expression of this at Philippi, “having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia” (Acts 16: 6), and then they were prevented by the spirit of Jesus from going in another direction, but they came to Philippi where Lydia was, “whose heart the Lord opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul”, Acts 16:14. Her heart had been prepared, it seemed that her value was being prepared for these movements of the Holy Spirit.

AM There was the Holy Spirit's sovereign work in Lydia, working in her heart before she even received Paul; the Holy Spirit worked there so that that heart should be ready.

JTB Having been sensitive to the spirit of Jesus, they heard the Macedonian man speaking, their ears were attuned to the speaking of the Spirit.

AM That is good.

ECB Does not this section bear very much on what is being said because it goes on to say, “if thou shalt diligently hearken unto his voice” (v 22). I wondered if the two parts of the earlier remark are not important and challenging; that is to say, as to being careful in His presence, and whether failure amongst ourselves does not result from our not being careful because we are not sufficiently attentive to the Person of the Spirit and we are not diligent.

AM It does not say what they are to be careful about they are just to be careful.

ECB Because you have to maintain your relationship with Him. I wondered whether “diligently hearken” did not bear on what has been said earlier.

AM I think that is good, “if thou shalt diligently hearken unto his voice, and do all that I shall say”. The Holy Spirit here is conveying the mind of heaven.

ECB Do you not think that if they had remembered this counsel they would have found that it was eleven days journey and not forty years!

AM Yes.

HAH It is beautifully said of the Lord Jesus that, “He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed” Isa 50: 4. Do you think that is important that before we hear other voices we should have some sense of hearing the Lord's voice?

AM I think so. In the morning we start the day in prayer and we read the scriptures. It has often been said that when we read the scriptures we ask the Holy Spirit to show us something of Christ. Read the scriptures slowly, read them thoughtfully and prayerfully because then you are opening your heart to receive some communication.

In Numbers 21 they are at the end of the journey. They have arrived at the crucial point: they are about to move forward. They had the experience of the brazen serpent, they have seen that man in all his natural condition has been condemned. God has condemned sin in the flesh, that is all gone before but then how are they going to move forward? There is the well, “that is the well of which Jehovah spoke to Moses”. Think of God speaking to Moses. It says, “And Jehovah spoke with Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend”, Exod 33: 11.

He spoke to Moses at some point and said, 'I have a well in mind for the people'. What this meant was that the people had to be in exercise about it. A lot of what we have said today has centred on God's gracious provision. He provided the springs of water and the seventy palm trees. He provided the water flowing as a result of the rock being smitten. These things have been provided by God but here there is a well and they had to dig it, they had to be in exercise as to themselves about it.

DAB I often enjoy the thought in relation to the man who dug and went deep and laid his foundation on the rock (see Luke 6: 48) - who told Him there was a rock there? He dug in faith and what He found was Christ. These men dug in faith, who told them they would find water? They believed God's word to Moses that there would be water here if they exercised themselves to take advantage of it.

AM That is right, the word of God had come, the word of the lawgiver, and they accepted that. They might have said, 'what evidence have we that there is water there?' But they dug it out with their staves, doubtless some suggestion there of their experience with God, and worked that the water should be free, that it should not be blocked.

PM Is there some experience of this in the local reading? "Assemble the people, and I will give them water". Something has to be worked at in the local reading and God provides for His people and the result is that there is response to divine Persons.

AM Here the figure of the well is a figure of the Holy Spirit Himself and there is a response in song. What joy this would give to the heart of divine Persons that there should be a response in song. When we sing it involves joy and uplifting of hearts. That is what we find here.

HAH The staff was not the usual implement for digging a well. I wondered if it indicates what they had arrived at in experience and therefore they were ready for it.

AM I think so. Man naturally would say, there will be an easier way to do this. But no, there is no easy way. The only way in which the Holy Spirit Himself comes before us in this way is a result of deep soul exercise in ourselves and you work away at it.

DJH They had arrived at something by experience, it is the princes and the nobles that are digging.

AM I suppose they can be taken account of as nobility because of the way they dug. Is that not really what makes a noble? Experience with God. Israel received his name when he had experience with God, he was a prince of God. Here these men had had experience. Their staves were there and they were prepared to dig in order that the well should be freely available; and the word is, "Well which princes digged, which the nobles of the people hollowed out".

HAH Jacob was made noble and he worshipped on the stop of his staff (see Heb 11: 21).

AM He ended his days as a prince. He did not depart from that, he had had experience with God. He needed that staff after his experience - he limped, he was a lame man, he could not walk without it, but what might outwardly have been seen to be a disability for him becomes the ground on which the service of God takes place.

DAB It is a question perhaps with us all - because we all have influence, the staff would also represent these peoples' influence whether there is any application of my influence to facilitate the enjoyment of the Spirit's presence among the people of God? I do not want to be negative, but think of the kings in Corinth, they were using their staves as rallying points for party spirits to the point when even the Lord's Supper had been displaced, but here these nobles and princes are using the tokens of their authority and influence to bring the Spirit among the people of God.

AM So that what I have is to be used in order that the saints should be able to partake of the blessedness of the springing well.

JW What is the significance of, "the word of the lawgiver"?

AM I thought the word of God had come, they had answered to the word.

JW I think what you say is right; their exercises were under direction, "the word of the lawgiver".

AM In a sense the situation was changing here, Moses with all his authority had led them through the wilderness, but they are going to look on to a point in time when they are going to need another kind of leadership and that was going to be a spiritual one. Moses has taken them to this point and now they have the springing well, they are going to be led on. It awaited Joshua to complete their journey, but they have

here the resource in the springing well that they should continue.

JMW I was wondering whether we find in these exercises that God has gone before. In your earlier scriptures it is, “I will stand before thee there upon the rock”, and then he says, “I send an Angel before thee” (Exod 23: 20), and here we get “the word of the lawgiver”. There seems to be some sense in which God has gone before in relation to the provision that is necessary?

AM I am sure that is right. How far back has God gone in relation to the provision? It goes back to divine counsel. God has provided everything in His ways that His purpose should be fulfilled and they start moving on now towards the land in order that they should enter into His purpose, that they should, “apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height” (Eph 3: 18), that is the sphere that they are moving to. God has gone before to provide for them all that is needed that they should be able to enter into that.

ECB There is remarkable liberty in this exclamation, “Rise up, well! sing unto it”? It is almost as if something of the work of God is breaking out in them. You would like to hear that in a meeting would you not?

AM Yes, and you might have thought that it was Moses who said this, but this was the people, “Then Israel sang this song”. Is that not blessed that the company was there, there was something springing up, they had arrived at something and they were going forward into the land of God's purpose, “Rise up, well! sing unto it”.

ECB I think they had arrived at something about Moses as well as about the well. “The word of the lawgiver” (Num 21: 18), there is great respect in that, a man who had been with them all the way, you get an almost idealistic picture of Israel here.

AM I think so and there is respect for one another too. That is good - the well is here as an object before them, “Rise up, well! sing unto it”. There is the well in all its immeasurable resource, but then there are princes, nobles, Moses the lawgiver, there is respect for one another, each one taking account of each other in a fresh light.

JW Does this bring out the way the Spirit is to have a place in our affections? We have been speaking of the resource there is in the Spirit. If we prove that He is to have a place in our affections, that would help us to practically recognise the Spirit and to make progress in this way.

AM When you think of His untiring service, which is another aspect altogether, and you see the greatness of the One who it is, then your heart goes out to Him. What grace He shows. How patient He has been with me, and your heart goes out to Him.

AMcS Could you give us your impression as to verse 20? I know what you have been expressing about going into the land which is very full and real but here they look back over the surface of the waste.

AM I was very thankful for the reference to the hymn:

We've no thought in the waste to abide (Hymn 139)

The people have reached a point now, they can look back and see God's ways. People might say, How have you got through that wilderness? How did you do that? God has led us through. Divine Persons have been active, the angel was there, the Holy Spirit has been guiding them and keeping them in the way, and you look back over the waste and say what a wonderful service this has been that has brought the people safely through.

AMcS There is an expression in Hebrews 12 as to the "afterwards" (see v 17). The chastening had been very real in their experience, and so has it been with us all, we have proved that, but there is an afterwards where you can look back and be thankful.

AM It is a great encouragement to lay hold of that, "afterwards".

DJH I thought of that word too, the Lord Jesus said to Peter, "What I do thou dost not know now, but thou shalt know hereafter", John 13:7. We pass through these experiences and perhaps do not understand, but there is a "hereafter", an afterwards, when we shall know.

AM "To those exercised by it", Heb. 12:11. We have the experience, we accept that it is in the Lord's hands. At the very lowest level we say we cannot argue with that, but there is more than that. We know that He is working something out through it. He has His own plan and afterwards there is what is fruitful for Him.

DJH It had formed these princes and nobles.

PM They only look back after they have sung. They were no longer their object, there was another object and they could look back as having another object.

AM It was safe to look back now. The whole period of their wilderness history had been characterised by looking back to Egypt, and that just brought in death and sorrow, but here they have an object before them and they can look back and see the wonder of God's ways.

DAB Moses says that in Deuteronomy, "thou shalt remember all the way which Jehovah thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness", Deut 8: 2. What they would remember was not that the miles from Egypt were increasing, but they would remember the way that God had nourished and looked after them, and they would see why.

AG Song of Songs speaks of "thy stature is like to a palm-tree" (ch 7: 7), I wonder whether that is the effect of overcoming. It will be seen in the earthly remnant, but it should be seen in me now.

AM Yes, that is right, that is very suggestive.

London

18th November 2006

Key to Initials:

J.T. Brown, Edinburgh; D.A. Burr, London; D.E. Burr, Colchester; E.C. Burr, London; R.W. Flowerdew, Sunbury; A. Gray, Redruth; J.S. Gray, East Finchley; N.J. Henry, Glasgow; D.J. Hutson, London; H.A. Hutson, London; J.B. Ikin, Manchester; A. McSeveney, Twickenham; A. Martin, Buckhurst Hill; P. Martin, Colchester; E.O.P. Mutton, Walton on the Naze; J.M. Walkinshaw, Bexley; P.J. Walkinshaw, Gillingham; E.F. Woodford, Dorking; J. Wright, Havering

DEVOTION TO THE LORD JESUS

Andrew Martin

1 Samuel 17: 57-18: 4; 20, 21 (to "... upon him); 20: 18-23, 35-42

2 Samuel 19: 24-38

Ephesians 6: 24

David is a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus in many respects. He is often a type of a believer too, but I want to speak about David as a type of the Lord Jesus. I have read about people who loved him. I hardly feel qualified to speak of the subject, but I have an impression to speak of devotion to the Lord Jesus. How devoted are we to Him?

Where we first read in 1 Samuel, David had returned from his great victory, when he met the one who had the power of death in figure, and annulled him; annulled him by using his own power. 1 Samuel 17 is a marvellous picture of the Lord Jesus meeting Satan in all his power and overcoming him. He went down in lowly grace into the valley. He stooped down and chose those stones. He would not go in man's power, he would not go with anything that would impress. He says as to Saul's armour, "I cannot go in these; for I have never tried them", 1 Sam 17: 39. They had not been tested. What had been tested was perfect obedience and confidence in God: that had been tested and had not been found wanting. So he went down and in lowliness he met the enemy of God's people; and brought him down. Then he drew out Goliath's sword, cut off his head and killed him completely (see 1 Sam 17: 51). The very power of death, that which Satan used to hold men in bondage, was what the Lord Jesus used to annul him that had the might of death, He used his own power. No wonder later in the history he could say that there is none like that sword (see 1 Sam 21: 10).

Here David is returning, his moral features just the same. Who would have known that he had just overthrown the great enemy of God's people as he came back in simple grace, except that he had the head of the Philistine in his hand, the token of his victory? What is the token of the victory of Jesus? It is Himself in glory and the Holy Spirit as having come indwelling the hearts of believers. There we have the evidence of His victory. David was there, and all he said to Saul in answer to his question was, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite". He does not even claim a name. What grace! Every moral excellence that was seen in Jesus still shines out in His glorious position, seated at God's right hand. No feature of moral excellence

has been laid aside; He retains it all there, shining out in the realm where He belongs. It may no longer be shining in a scene of adversity but it is shining out to be appreciated by God and appreciated by the saints. It says that with these few words, “the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul”. There was a man who had a sight of Christ in glory and it so affected his heart that it says, “Jonathan loved him as his own soul”. Has everybody in this room got a sight of the Lord Jesus in glory? We all know about that pathway of humiliation and devotion to the will of God, we all know that He went to the cross for you and for me, that He might bring us to what was beyond this world. He came into this scene that He might take us to what is beyond it, and in doing so He had to take upon Himself our sins and He had to take upon Himself everything that lay upon mankind, the very condition of man, He had to take it all upon Himself, and He had to give an answer to God on behalf of us, but now He is in glory. God has raised Him and placed Him at His own right hand and He is there to be an object and we present Him in the gospel as an object of faith for men. I trust that everybody in this room has reached that point in their life when they have said, I have to turn away from myself and turn away from this world, and I want one object before me and it is a glorious Man in heaven. God has set Him there as an object for faith, but more than that, God has set Him there as an object for your heart.

Here we have David in his triumph over Satan and there is one there who gets a sight of him:

The sight in heaven is glorious

(Hymn 212)

He gets a sight of the triumphant and victorious One and it says he, “loved him as his own soul”. Beloved, let a sense of the Lord Jesus in all His glory and excellence and worth fill your heart; there is nothing like it. There is none that can compare with Him. It says, “loved him as his own soul”, the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David. It goes on to say that Jonathan divested himself of his natural dignity, “even to his sword” what an amazing thing! We read earlier in this book that there were only two people in Israel who had swords because the Philistines had stopped all the blacksmiths. Jonathan was one of them; but he said, ‘David is the one who can rightly use the sword, it is for David’. The conflict was his, Israel had come into the triumph of it just as we will in a coming day when Christ rides out having taken vengeance on all God’s enemies, and He will ride out with that garment dipped in blood. The conflict was His, but the armies of heaven will

follow in white garments, sharing His triumph. Jonathan is saying, 'Let David take the sword, the conflict is his, this is the man for me. There is one man who is exalted in glory and he is the man for me.' Have you come to that point that whatever may attach to us naturally, whatever natural dignity we may have it all has to go before the excellence and glory of the One who is there, seated at God's right hand. Jonathan "loved him as his own soul". At this stage Jonathan would put nothing between himself and David.

Then we have somebody else who loved him, Jonathan's sister, Michal. It says she loved him but not as her own soul. It says, "Michal Saul's daughter loved David". She could admire him, she saw the beauty of that one, that he was excellent. The scripture speaks of that when he first comes to light, "ruddy, and besides of a lovely countenance and beautiful appearance", 1 Sam 16: 12. She loved him. How many of us are like that, we might admire Him - it is one thing to admire Him, but it does not say of Michal that she gave up anything for David, far from it. If you turn over the page you will see that when it came to her own safety she was prepared to misrepresent him to her father. She was prepared to say that he was a different kind of man from what he really was. What sort of love was that? She could not help admiring him, but there was not the devotion of affection. The word in Ephesians is, "Grace with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption", Eph 6: 24. I think it is clear that Michal put herself first.

Jonathan went further, but as to Jonathan the day came when there was a test. David was rejected. Jonathan had a place in Saul's world, but David was rejected. I had an impression when we were reading this chapter locally that Jonathan had a real test here, and I think that he knew it and felt it. I think Jonathan knew that his love for David, though so great, had its limits. I do not want to speak critically of Jonathan because he was a real genuine believer, a real lover of David, but here David's place in Saul's house was empty. He no longer belongs in Saul's world. What was Jonathan going to do? Jonathan said, "abide by the stone Ezel". There is a point that we have to come to in our lives. This stone means departure or separation, it is one of the milestones in our lives. I have spoken about Jesus in glory and seeing Him there and letting Him fill our hearts in His present position in glory. That is one of the great milestones. Another is that we have no part with the world from which He has been rejected. That is what the stone Ezel means, separation, departure. Christ has been rejected from this

scene, and we have to come to this stone, we come to it in our experience. It is not something we just grow into, it is a point we have to arrive at in experience. Have we all arrived at that, have we all come to it in our experience that there is a world that is going on to destruction, a world in which Jesus has no place? There is another world, apart from this order of things all together. The test comes by "the stone Ezel". Jonathan says he will shoot the arrows and he says I will get the lad to pick up the arrows. If I say, "Behold, the arrows are beyond thee", it is true, there is no place for David in my father's house. Jonathan went into the field and he said to the lad, "Run, find now the arrows which I shoot. The lad ran, and he shot the arrow beyond him. And when the lad came to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad and said, Is not the arrow away beyond thee?" Poor Jonathan, the arrow had gone so far, how far was Jonathan's love prepared to go? "Is not the arrow away beyond thee?" Is it not further than that? Has my love not gone further than that? The lad stopped, the lad had reached the arrow, Jonathan was saying, surely my love is going to go further than that? "Is not the arrow away beyond thee?" No the arrow was not beyond him, Jonathan's love had its limits. Jonathan's love was so true, so real and so valued by David, he was one who might have felt that this love would cleave to David, but he said to David, "Go in peace". He does not say I am going with thee. The arrow did not go beyond that place, his love for David was real, but he says to David, "Go in peace". The chapter ends, "And he arose and departed; and Jonathan went into the city". Does that mean he did not love him? Of course it does not. Maybe he felt that if he went into the city he could make things better for David, but you cannot change the world. You cannot change the world from which Christ has been rejected. He remains rejected, and if you go into the city in this sense, and maybe seek to change things on behalf of a rejected Lord, what you find is that you become part of the city. You do not change it, you become part of it. The world is willing to accommodate anything apart from absolute devotion to Christ. It will not accommodate that.

We see that in Mephibosheth. Here is one who was in Absalom's world and David had been rejected from that. Mephibosheth said, 'I have no part in this world, I am not going to make myself respectable for this. David is in rejection.' It says, "he had neither washed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed". He was saying, 'why should I adorn Absalom's world, why should I adorn the world from which Jesus has been rejected?' What part has a believer in doing that? The believer's part is nothing less than total devotion to Christ. In the scene of His

absence, He is looking for no less a standard than total devotion for Him. Mephibosheth was one such. Things were said about him which were not right, but he says, 'What does it matter, what have I anyway? I am here as a vessel of mercy, I would have nothing if it were not for the mercy that has been shown me, why should I not be devoted to the one who has displayed such mercy?' Mephibosheth says to the king, "Let him even take all", 2 Sam 19: 30. He says, 'I am not looking for a place, not even looking for a place in David's realm'. He was just there as a vessel of sovereign mercy. That is all we could look for, sovereign mercy. What devotion there was in Mephibosheth - I think we see in him one who loved our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption. His love for Him was not looking for anything in return; his love was for his own sake and his appreciation of him in his own world.

We have another man, Barzillai, who was a great man in his day; he had entertained David in the time of his rejection and helped him, and David tells him to come over. But Barzillai said, I have declined, I am not what I used to be, I cannot discern these things. That is what happened at Ephesus, the apostle says, "Grace with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption". What happened? They became like Barzillai, they declined, they left their first love. The Lord has to speak to them about that, He says to them that they had so much which was commendable in Ephesus, they hated the works of evil men, judged those who were doing wrong, kept themselves positionally right, but what about your love for me? That is what He is saying.

Beloved, I do not want to end with Barzillai, I do not want to end with a negative note, let us take account of Mephibosheth, this great lover of David, the one who asked for nothing in return. He loved him for his own sake, he loved him for all that he had done and loved him for what he was. May we be here faithful. If we are to be here faithful to the Lord Jesus in a scene of His rejection it is not because we know what the scriptures say about the pathway of a believer. If we are going to be here faithful to the Lord Jesus in the time of His rejection it will be through total devotion to Him. What pleases Him should be uppermost in my life, what is in keeping with Him should be my occupation.

A simple word, but may the Lord bless it.

London
18th November 2006

THE CUP

Jim Gray

Luke 22: 14 - 20;
1 Corinthians 11: 23-26;
Ezekiel 36: 24-28

The Lord Jesus was brought up as a Jew. He was born into the Jewish family of Joseph and Mary. He had other brothers and sisters in that family, so it appeared. From what was apparent He became a carpenter under His father, Joseph. I am sure He attended many Passovers in His lifetime here. There would be a Passover every year. I am not speaking now of the moral application of the Passover, but of the literal thing. He would celebrate the Passover with His family. How often he celebrated it with His disciples I do not know. Maybe you could work it out from the accounts in the gospels, the synoptic gospels, but for His three and a half years of public ministry, I would suggest He celebrated the Passover with His own, with His disciples. It would be customary, and He seems to have accepted what was done by them at that time. We were speaking informally after the meeting on Saturday about the cups that were on the Passover table. One brother thought there were four or five cups on the Passover table. Whatever number there were, the Lord accepted that. Someone suggested that they sang about four or five psalms from Psalm 114 to Psalm 118 - I say this for the interest of the young people. They sang those Psalms at the Passover celebration.

But this Passover was to be the last Passover He would celebrate with His own, and it was distinctive: "He placed himself at table, and the twelve apostles with him". Just before that, in verses 7 and 8, it says, "And the day of unleavened bread came, in which the Passover was to be killed. And he sent Peter and John saying, Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it" as if it was characteristic of Him. But this Passover was a special one: "He placed himself at table", and He celebrated the Passover. I think what He says would be distinctive, even in regard to the Passover, when He says, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer". That was in the Lord's heart: He was going to suffer; He was going to die; He was going to be God's Lamb, "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world", John 1: 29. "With desire I have desired" - what intent there was in that, it is emphasised - "to eat this Passover

with you before I suffer". I think they would be paying attention to that, and then He says, "I will not eat any more at all of it until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God". Now for the young people's sake, as far as I understand it the kingdom of God was anticipation of the Christian dispensation. In other gospels it is a little different, but I do not go into that tonight. "And having received a cup", that is one of the Passover cups. He maybe gave thanks at the other Passovers, but I do not think He said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves. For I say unto you, that I will not drink at all of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God come". He knew that His death was to take place. The kingdom of God, as I have said already, involved the Christian dispensation. That is what is set out in Luke's gospel.

And then He takes a loaf, "when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to them, saying ...". Now, that is a departure from the Passover. The Passover was no longer going to be celebrated by Christ. He had no intention really that it should be celebrated any more by His own. Maybe they continued it over in the early days of the Acts, I do not know for sure. But I think the Lord was drawing attention to a departure from the celebration of the Passover literally because the kingdom of God, involving the Christian dispensation, is what He had in His mind. It says, "And having taken a loaf, when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me". What a momentous occasion that was, that He should say that!

"In like manner also the cup, after having supped, saying, This cup". That is what was in my mind, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you". It is not the Passover cup. He received a cup in verse 17, it is one of the Passover cups, but having taken a cup - He took a cup that was on the table - He says, "This cup". It is distinct from everything else. I wonder if we are affected by "This cup". The celebration of the Lord's Supper has come down to us - I will continue to speak about that in the setting in the Corinthian epistle. But "This cup" - The Lord Jesus said that, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood". He actually said that, and they would be paying attention to Him. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood". Everything was going to be established on the basis of "this cup", not the Passover cup, but "this cup".

I omitted to read a verse in the Acts 2: "And they persevered in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles" (v 42) - that is the disciples

that were secured as new believers - "in breaking of bread and prayers". And then verse 46, "And every day, being constantly in the temple with one accord, and breaking bread in the house, they received their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people". What I want to show, particularly for young people here, is that in the early days of the Acts they broke bread in the house. They realised it was separate from the temple: "every day, being constantly in the temple". They did not break bread in the temple. They broke bread in the house. They were grasping something of the distinction of the Supper, that it was not convenient to break bread in the temple setting or the synagogue. So they broke bread in their houses, and they would know something of the Lord's presence in the simplicity of their hearts, just like the two on the way to Emmaus when they broke bread: "he was made known to them in the breaking of bread", Luke 24: 35. That is what He did, even the act of doing it drew to their attention that it is what Christ had done. "Breaking bread in the house"; there was no local assembly. One place at this point would be Jerusalem and there would be many disciples there, thousands of them. Somewhere it says what the numbers were. They broke bread in the house and in the simplicity of their hearts remembered the Lord Jesus. What light they had we do not know. They recognised Him as their Messiah, whom they had rejected and crucified.

Well, in 1 Corinthians 11, I want to tell you - these are simple matters known to the brethren here, maybe even the younger people, but bear with me in the simplicity of it - Paul did not receive the instruction of the Supper from any of the apostles. He must have known about it, known about them breaking bread in the houses. Yet when local assemblies were coming onto view, and the first one established was Antioch, the Lord Jesus gave this to Paul personally from heaven. He must have had an appearing of the Lord to him. He says, "For I received from the Lord, that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, in the night in which he was delivered up ...". Think of that! I did not read of it in Luke's gospel - maybe I should have - but Judas was still present, according to Luke's account of it, bringing out that it was the night of His delivering up, "the night in which he was delivered up". That is what it was. We celebrate the Supper, but when the Lord instituted the Supper, He instituted it "in the night in which he was delivered up". Now, He has given it to Paul in relation to the local assembly: not in relation to the houses, but in relation to the local

assembly. So we do not break bread merely in connection with our houses. We break bread as gathered together in the local assembly and he says it was “the night in which he was delivered up”. “The Lord Jesus, in the night in which he was delivered up, took bread, and having given thanks broke it, and said ...”. It is a fine title - “the Lord Jesus”. When we come together, no matter what locality you go into, and the Supper is being celebrated, I think that almost invariably the first two words that are said are 'Lord Jesus'. That title is customary among us; it is an assembly title; and it is persons who are filled with the Holy Spirit that can say these words, 'Lord Jesus'. If you can say, 'Lord Jesus', dear brethren and dear younger brethren, in all the affections of your heart, I think it is a sign that you have the Holy Spirit. Only persons filled with the Spirit can say, 'Lord Jesus'.

So he says, “the Lord Jesus, in the night in which he was delivered up, “ - that touches the heart of the believer - “took bread, and having given thanks broke it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me”. Then again, “In like manner also the cup, after having supped” - He had finished with the Passover cup and the Passover meal; He says “This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me”. “This cup”: does it affect our hearts, dear brethren? When we celebrate the Supper, the loaf is there, but I want to draw your attention to the cup, “This cup”. In the shedding of Christ's blood, remission of sins, redemption - all are included in His work - His body also is involved in it - but “This cup is the new covenant in my blood”. That cup that is before us is an expression of divine love in its fullest extent, God's love expressed in Christ, “This cup”. I wonder what we feel about that. It is good to participate. “This cup is the new covenant in my blood”. It is going to lay the basis for everything that God is going to do.

I read in Ezekiel to show how God can put a new heart and a new spirit in the Israelite in a day to come because the Lord Jesus has laid the basis for the fulfilment of the new covenant in His death. He has borne the curse of the law. He has borne all that related to Israel as a nation, and how they failed! He has laid the basis for God to come in, as I read there, “And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you”. God is going to do that to the nation of Israel that He takes up. The remnant of the nation in a day to come He will take up and the basis He has is in this

cup: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood". But we come into the blessings of the new covenant. That covenant is going to be made with Israel in a day to come, the remnant coming into the blessing of it, having a new spirit and a new heart and God putting His Spirit within them in the manner in which He will do it. But "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" has an effect upon me, forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, all as a result of the Lord's death and "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" - precious, precious blood of Christ.

It is not a cup of sorrow to us. The Supper is not exactly an occasion of sorrow to us. We may be affected by the fact it was "the night in which He was delivered up" and He has given His body for us, but this cup is a cup of joy, it is "the new covenant in my blood". The work has been done. Christ has done the work completely so it is a cup of joy. He is not desiring that we be sorrowful, not at all. It is a basis of joy that will be there eternally. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood", everything is cleared, the moral history is all gone. It involves the death of Christ. I do not go into the other parts of His death, such as the atonement, at this time. It is a cup of joy. We should celebrate it and be affected by it, and the heart is touched, the believer's heart is touched, by the fact of that expression of love. There is no love like it, divine love expressed in the Lord Jesus, and it is there concentrated in the cup. The loaf is more the expression of the will of God in His body. The cup is an expression of love, love that we can hardly comprehend, but we know something about it because we know the love of Christ and we know something of the love of God because He "has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father", Gal. 4: 6. What intense affection is ours, dear brethren, in that matter of "Abba, Father", an expression of intense affection in relation to the God who is known as our Father, "Abba, Father", an intense form of the word "Father". Words that are not translated bring out intensity in their meanings and "Abba" is one of those words, "Abba, Father". So it springs from the heart of the believer that is affected by "This cup is the new covenant in my blood". What a matter for us to contemplate! Let us look on that cup and appreciate it, be intent as the emblems are partaken of, both in the loaf and in the cup, be intense, look at them, and think about them, and Christ comes into your heart. Both of these matters in 1 Corinthians 11 bring out "remembrance of me". Luke does not tell you that in the cup; he tells you that in the loaf, "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me", but He does not say that in the cup, but the Lord Jesus said it to Paul in the cup. He says

not only in regard of the bread “in remembrance of me” but in the cup also “in remembrance of me”. It is a double intensification of the thought of “remembrance of me”. It means that the believer's heart and mind and affections, his soul and his spirit, are so engaged with the thought of what is in that cup that he makes way for the Lord to come in and make Himself known in the heart and the affections.

May the Lord help us with these few words for His Name's sake!

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