

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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Matthew 22: 35-40;

Leviticus 23: 1-5;

1 Corinthians 11: 17-29; 14: 26, 32, 33;

Colossians 3: 1-4

NJH I have on my heart to consider the gatherings of the saints. The basis for them would affect every meeting that we are together, however small it may be. It speaks of, “where two or three are gathered together” (Matt 18: 20); the thought can be worked out in the smallest number as well as the largest number. I wondered whether these scriptures would open up a little what God's thoughts are as to gathering and the basis for it.

I read in Matthew 22 where I thought there was something of God's thoughts coming through. While it refers to the law, He speaks about the first and greatest commandment, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God”. The knowledge of God lies at the basis of gathering. The richest privilege we have is our knowledge of God as made known in Christ. Then the Lord immediately refers to the neighbour, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”. When we go to Exodus 12 where the Passover is introduced, the neighbour comes in there; you call on your neighbour if the eating is too much, v 4. That was not required when it came to the manna because there was a measure of understanding of what the measure of the household would require, so the head of the house went and gathered and nothing had to be left over; but in the Passover, if the lamb was too large for one, they would call on their neighbour. It is the first time that Israel acted together. They all did the same thing that night at the Passover.

When we come to Leviticus, it refers to “holy convocations”. A convocation is a gathering together. The Sabbath comes first as if we have to soberly sit down and weigh up the whole matter in quietness before the Lord as to what is involved in the feasts. The Passover is the first, it seems to lay the basis for the other feasts that are recorded there, “a holy convocation ... to Jehovah”.

Then I thought we could look at the privileges of gathering together in the light of Corinthians. It is good to remind ourselves that

for the quality of the gathering, we have to be occupied in the things that are above, “where the Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God” in Colossians.

ECB I think that would be very good, not only for us but for the Lord. One thing I noticed about the scriptures that you have read is that, apart from questions that arise out of the mixed conditions that there are at the present time, they all present it from God's point of view, what we might have to call an ideal way.

NJH There is no place in the world where we can say that the assembly of God is gathered together because breakdown has affected the smallest town and hamlet, but the truth of it is still workable.

ECB I think that very much. I think we need a wide view, then an understanding why the filling out of that wide view is not wholly possible in the present day.

NJH We have the loaf before us at the Supper, in 1 Corinthians 11. But in 1 Corinthians 10, the “one loaf” (v 17) is in our hearts. We are thankful for the Lord's presence. He comes in and He takes up whatever is available. It is what the gatherings together of the saints mean to the Lord.

DAB We had a very good word a few weeks ago at a burial on the “assembling shout” (1 Thess 4: 16), and our brother was suggesting that the use of that adjective conveys something of the tone of the shout and the feelings behind it. He went on to suggest that those feelings are evoked in the Lord's heart every time any of His people are together.

NJH It is the character of His voice dispensationally as to assembling. While we do not announce the breaking of bread, it has the character of the voice of Christ; it is the assembling effect. It will be literal at that time when the assembling shout will take place and the whole Church will be together, the first time it has ever been together. What it will mean to the heart of Christ!

ECB Is that according to the scripture you referred to in Leviticus, that we love God and we love our neighbour. You would not think that so much could be developed out of that.

NJH Exactly, and, you might say, He anticipates it. The Lord might

have said, 'There are all the commandments; if you break one you have broken them all', but it is the answer to the Hebrew bondman.

ECB This is very different from the Ten Commandments; this is the normal working of things in a people governed by their relations with God. God has Himself proposed a way in which that relationship could be maintained.

NJH It supersedes anything that went before. The Lord must have had that in His heart when He says, "the great and first"; and then He says, "the second is like it". What that means to God!

DJH Is this the same as John says in His epistle, "if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin", 1 John 1: 7. Is that the same? I was thinking of walking in the light; you spoke of the way that God has been revealed in Christ. We are walking in that light and then we can have fellowship together.

NJH It must start with God. It is no fellowship at all if it does not start with God, it must be that. God has been pleased to come out in Christ and maintain every attribute in doing so. That is amazing, brothers and sisters meeting together in the light of that; that is a tremendous thought.

DJH We have been helped to see that that word there, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin", is the basis. It is not that we *will* sin, although the blood is available if we do; but it is the basis on which we go on together.

NJH That is right, it is sacrificial. When we come to the Passover we will see that the blood was only applied once. In fact the first time they had the Passover it was somewhat shortened because of the haste which was required because their feet were shod and they were to be in movement. But they had the blood and the lamb, "roast with fire", Exod 12: 8. When it was celebrated later it was an extended matter because you have the feast of unleavened bread linked with it (see Exod 12: 14-20). The Passover itself, the lamb being "roast with fire", remains. I think that when the Passover is celebrated, what is striking is the intense heat that Christ bore directly in Himself. That is something to soften us in our approach to one another.

DJH The bitter herbs would all bear on that.

NJH Exactly.

ECB You would think from the inauguration of the Passover in Exodus that it was but a short step from the Passover into the whole of the promises of God. There was no question of forty years, no question even of eleven days journey, it was to be where God would have them.

NJH The manna only had application to a certain sphere, but the Passover goes through, so that we are softened to consider that the basis for holy convocation is in the sufferings of Christ.

RMB Could you say something as to what the difference is between loving God with our hearts, with our soul, and with our understanding?

NJH The difference is put there, "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy understanding". It shows the detail. When Mary met Elizabeth she detailed things in her being that were extraordinary for one that had not yet the Holy Spirit as we know it. She could speak of her spirit and her soul, and with understanding. I think having to do with God makes everything distinguishable in the person, the heart and the soul and the understanding. The whole person is claimed by God by loving Him.

HAH Would the heart and soul involve the affections, but the understanding would involve the knowledge of God in the soul, the way He has been revealed? The understanding would involve intelligence, but the other two would be more related to the affections and feelings.

DAB I was wondering whether the point may be the order rather than the difference between the three. God begins with the heart, not just because it is the seat of my affections but because it is the spring of my whole life. Anything that enters into the heart, even naturally speaking, very quickly influences the whole body. A brain is no good if the heart is not working; so God does not come in through the mind, but He renews the mind by coming in through the heart. I wondered if these other things, the soul and the understanding, come under that influence as the heart is renewed by faith into these new relationships.

NJH The word of God in Hebrews has a dividing effect in the soul and spirit, both of joints and marrow, Heb 4: 12. It goes right through; it is the having to do with God.

EFW It says, “love the Lord thy God”; I wondered if that brought in a distinctive feature, firstly as to our knowledge that He is our God, not just a God that we cannot know, but also it would do away with any other influence. He is the God over all.

NJH I suppose man fell through the affections being diverted, desire was there, lust springs from the heart.

ECB “All thy understanding” does not mean that you know everything, it means the fulness of what you have got.

NJH It is all you have, “all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy understanding”, all you have. Something of this is seen in the man in John 9 - he says, “One thing I know”, v 25. That is all you need to know. There was a fulness about that knowledge that set aside all that the Pharisee had.

ECB I think that is a very relevant scripture, “One thing I know”. You serve God with that, then you might have more another time, and then serve God with that.

NJH What he had grew in the man in John 9. He said, “who is he, Lord?”, v 36. It grew, all he had was held in relation to God. I think that is a good thing that has come into the reading, all that we have must stand in relation to God, “all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy understanding”.

AMcS The first commandment is Godward, and the second commandment is manward. Is the order important?

NJH I think so.

AMcS Both are important, but the first one is Godward and the second one manward, not the other way around.

NJH If it was the other way around it would become idolatry, “they gave themselves first to the Lord, and to us by God's will”, 2 Cor 8: 5. That will meet the way idolatry can come in, and we have known something of that where God is displaced in the heart. We must have God's place first, and then our relations are right with one another.

AMcS That is exactly the point that was in my mind; our horizontal relationships with our brethren are very much dependent upon our vertical relations first and foremost with God.

NJH Exactly. It gives a wealth to our relations together. It is not an impoverished relationship that we are set up in. We are set up in the richest relationship if we rightly enter into it because they are right with God.

DEB Could you say something about the commandment to love; nobody commanded you to love your wife, it was something that comes out spontaneously. I would like some help on being commanded to love God.

NJH Love is the most controlling influence in the universe; the eternal controlling influence in the universe is love. For instance the Lord says, “a new commandment” (John 13: 34) and then “my commandment” (15: 12), to love one another.

RHB I understand what has been said but husbands are actually commanded to love their wives in the scripture. It is not a very onerous obligation to have.

NJH It is an easy obligation, but I think it comes in because there are certain kingdom rules. He is speaking to a lawyer. We are under the obligations of love, and that is the commandment, that there is nothing else tolerated. It is the most blessed thing to love God and to love one another rightly but if we err the commandment comes into force.

DAB Again it is a matter of order, the effect of the commandment is to get things in the right order. Not that you might dispute whether you should love God, but you have got to put Him first. I wondered whether that is why it is put this way.

NJH We are in a world where there is hatred of God, “they did not think good to have God in their knowledge”, Rom 1: 28. That is the area in which we move. Thankfully we are morally apart from that, but that is the position mankind is in where God was immediately displaced in the heart of man, and therefore they hate what is good, they are haters of what is right. So, when persons come into the kingdom they become subject in the kingdom. It is a commandment of love, that you love God and love one another.

PM Does this establish the true place of man? It was manifested perfectly in Jesus but we are exhorted to take it on ourselves.

NJH The One that kept the law was the One that said, “I love”, Exod

25: 5. He is the only One who could keep the law. Nobody else could have kept it bar the Hebrew bondman.

JW We cannot carry it as a legal requirement - Romans 8 tells us that, "the righteous requirement of the law should be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh but according to Spirit", v 4. We can only do it in the Spirit's power.

NJH I am glad you brought the Spirit in. We are to fulfil every righteous obligation, and that involves our relationships with God as well as our neighbour. So it is by the Spirit we do it.

JW It is not a legal effort; we fail in that, but we have to judge the flesh in ourselves and it has been condemned to make way for the Spirit; "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us", Rom 5: 5. That gives us the lever in our souls to love God.

NJH "Shed abroad" means every part, as far as we will allow it. It will spread out, "all thy heart ... all thy soul ... all thy understanding" and "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts", that is how it spreads out.

DJH In the scripture in Romans 8 the requirement is singular, "righteous requirement of the law". This is the requirement.

NJH Yes, the obligation of love.

RHB Could you say a bit more as to the gatherings?

NJH The idea was in mind because the neighbour comes into the Passover. In Exodus 12 relationships are to be right with God and right with one another. It must be in your heart as the first thing. But then, in John's epistle, he says, "he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?", 1 John 4: 20. That is a practical word. We start with God, and I think that as we recognised our neighbour the whole wealth of our gatherings will be for the better.

PH Some may believe they can love God without the necessity of gathering together.

NJH I would say that is not in God's mind. I think the fact that the Lord says, "And the second is like it", means that the provision is there to have the neighbour. The only scriptural basis to be alone, as I

understand it, is leprosy. The leper had to be outside, and that is the basis where there is no demand on him to gather. The day of his cleansing may come in the mercy of God that could be provided, but at the moment he is cut off from the peoples. But, as far as God's mind is, if you love God, it is "with those", 2 Tim 2: 22. There will be persons to link on with to fill out what is in God's heart for you.

RMB If someone thought that they could love God without gathering together then that would not be with the understanding would it? God has made His mind clear on those matters.

NJH That is good. There is light as to it. That is a privilege. I thought as we sat down today, what a privilege in a broken day to see the brethren once again. We have it locally, we have fellowship meetings and we are thankful for them, but to see brethren you have not seen for a long time, what a privilege to sit down together! Are we thanking God in our hearts, even at this moment in the reading, that He has provided such a time? It takes away envy, jealousy, personal feeling that so easily can come in between one another, and if there is something where a slight adjustment is needed it is met according to God.

ECB It is true. It must be in the experience of all of us that if you meet another believer with whom we sadly do not have fellowship with at the moment, you still find that in them which you love.

NJH Exactly. Your heart goes out to them. Firstly, give them something positive.

ECB And you feel that you have gained by it.

NJH Yes, you go over it and you are thankful in yourself and, at the same time, you long in your heart that we might share together because that is what the gathering means, you are sharing together the holy things of God.

ECB Does not Paul's feeling of necessity to write 1 Corinthians 13 show how basic it is to the whole of local relationships? "The greater of these is love", v 13. "Love has long patience, is kind ...", v 4. There are all those kinds of things which we so easily fall into, but love is pure and it is the consequence of the Spirit in us that makes love of a divine character real in us.

NJH So, while you may hear things that may have a negative

character about some other companies, you are sad. It is all part of the Lord's ways with His own; He does not forget His sheep; He knows them by name. He will take His people through different ways, but coming together in the sense of privilege that the Lord has led us there. When they came to Exodus 12 they were going out after the Passover and the power of God was there on their behalf. What lay in the path was getting out of Egypt, and the power of the world being broken; it involved the power of God. Our gatherings should not have any taint of Egypt in them.

ECB It is very important to say that. Does it not link with what you have already referred to as to the Supper?

NJH You value those that are available because the Lord says, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you", John 15: 16. Divine choice is in it. That is the point in Corinthians, you cannot say to your foot you do not need it, 1 Cor 12: 21. But in a broken day we still have to maintain the rights of the Lord with those that are available. I believe that Mr. Darby said, if the brethren will go on with me, I will go on with them. We go on in the sense of privilege.

DJW The majority of our gatherings together are in the local setting and I wondered whether the significance of the neighbour therefore would be those who are nearest to us, perhaps what is local to us. As we sit down together week by week to remember the Lord out of affection for Him, we have those that are close to us as neighbours to share that with.

NJH In Exodus it says, "let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it" (ch 12: 4). So it comes down to the local meeting, working the thing out. It can be down to two or threes, the thing is workable. The neighbour, "loving thy neighbour"; it is something to be worked out.

MJM Is the announcement of our meetings, 'in the Name of the Lord Jesus' something that would bear on what you are bringing before us? Would it give an exalted character to our assemblings?

NJH You are bringing that Name into it. It is the responsibility to name the Name. It speaks of, "who names the name of the Lord", 2 Tim 2: 19. You are taking the Name of the Lord on and that is a privilege, but there is a responsibility in it. It is, "do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus", Col 3: 17.

AMcS Would you say that “names the name of the Lord” in 2 Timothy 2 is a responsibility? It is a responsibility of every believer; it is the pathway that every believer ought to take.

NJH It is one seal and, “The Lord knows those that are his”, 2 Tim 2: 19. Whatever insight Paul had in discernment, he says, “The Lord knows those that are his”, and the other side is, “Let every one who names the name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity”. That is the responsibility of every one of those that belong to Him.

DJH It has been said that that is the only basis for fellowship for all believers.

NJH We are on sectarian ground if we do not maintain that, we are no different. It is the responsibility of every believer and every believer should take it up.

JW I am very thankful for what you say because it is not presumptuous to take that ground; it is an obligation. It is the basis for fellowship and the basis for our gathering together in the present day.

NJH Thank God we have 2 Timothy in our Bibles because we would be all confused as to how to react in a day of breakdown. If we did not have the scripture you could have all opinions. Mr. Raven says that scripture is a safeguard to the people of God, NS vol 11 p 459. The mind of the Lord was to provide for our time when the breakdown was in the Church publicly. Everything seemed to be given up and we have 2 Timothy to guide us, give us an escape, or an exit, in a day of breakdown. Beloved brethren, while it is an obligation and a responsibility it is an immense blessing. If we did not have scriptural basis for walk, where would we be today?

DAB What you are saying could also be said about Matthew 18, “where two or three are gathered together”, v 20. That was not taken up by the brethren initially as a basis for discipline, but as a warrant for gathering. What I love in that passage is the Lord's word, “thou hast gained thy brother”, v 15. That provides a basis for fellowship.

NJH That is the obligation of love; we are going to get a neighbour; we are going to get some addition, “thy brother”.

DAB But then you have the two or three with whom the Lord meets.

NJH “Gathered together unto my name”.

ECB It might be profitable to remind ourselves, not to divert into it, that we are obliged to withdraw from all forms of iniquity even in our daily lives. Things creep into the company which are not really compatible with the profession of the Name of the Lord. You might even say it begins with dress.

NJH That is good admonition, it is very important because if you allow a little in then the Name of the Lord is under threat in the heart of the person. You could rightly say, 'where is that person with the Lord?' Feet washing would come in there if necessary and help, a word of admonition. I do not think there is as much admonition as there should be privately, and things come into the gathering that could be met in the household. I think the Passover was householdly and things could quietly come in there in the area of immediate affection and adjustments made, and the thing would never come into the public arena.

DJH I am glad something has been said as to the households. I wondered whether that was in your mind when you read as to the Sabbath. It says, “it is the sabbath to Jehovah in all your dwellings”. Is that an area from which we come in view of this assembling and what we are speaking of now, the practical side of things through the week and in our households would all contribute to the atmosphere as we come together.

NJH And as has been said, the 'in Lord' position is all the time during the week. I think the Sabbath coming in is important; the world is so busy it puts enormous pressure on souls. I am thinking of our younger brothers and sisters, there is enormous pressure on them, they need a Sabbath. You need to weigh the thing up quietly before God. I think it is the only way to maintain the convocation as holy, you have a Sabbath and there is a clear line of demarcation between the pressure of the day and the coming together of the saints. I think there is a Sabbath in the Spirit.

JW I was thinking of the Passover in connection with what has been raised as to judging evil, the Passover reminds us that evil has been judged, it has been judged in Christ, He bore it all. The initial partaking of it was with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, that means that I judge

in myself that which necessitated the judgment that Christ went through.

NJH Without the blood there was no difference between the Israelite and the Egyptian. God did not say that is a household of Israelites so the angel will pass by, no, the only differential initially between the house of the Israelite and the Egyptian was the blood. If we speak of sanctification, it started with God. When the stone was taken out of the quarry, that was the beginning of sanctification. That is what happens here, in principle God made the line of demarcation between the house of the Israelite and the house of the Egyptian and the angel of death passed over it. As you say, the basis of that was the suffering of Christ for sin.

JW The constitution in the saints to move out from Egypt was the appropriation of the Passover.

NJH Exactly. You need it for the journey, and to be preserved; and to get out of the world's system you are given this food.

WSC Is subjection needed in view of the holy convocation, hallowing the occasion and subjecting ourselves to each other? I was thinking of the whole first half of 1 Corinthians 11 is our subjection and headship.

NJH That is a good point. That is why I think these things are introductory to the setting in Corinthians. There is not that teaching when the Supper was initially given the night before the Lord's death, that introduction is not given; but when it comes to the local setting you have this introductory light as to where a person stands in relation to the Lord and the Lord's table.

In 1 Corinthians 11, we see that they had themselves before them in Corinth, and Paul has to say that it is not the Lord's Supper you are eating, they had themselves before them, and that was not the intent of the Lord. He says, "in remembrance of me". It is Christ that is brought before the soul in 1 Corinthians in the Supper, it is the Lord before you. You are not eating and drinking to excess, you are not thinking of yourself, you are holding yourself for the presence of the Lord.

RHB It says, "when ye come together in assembly", could you explain what the means for us?

NJH Primarily that is what the meeting is, it is an assembly meeting. We speak of a meeting of assembly character because if a judgment is arrived at it is a judgment that every believer should be committed to, therefore you can call it an assembly judgment; but when you come together in assembly you are in the light of the assembly, like no other gathering. You are in the light of that, and therefore immediately the Lord comes in you can have whole thoughts before you. The Lord has the whole assembly before Him. But the consciousness of His presence is vouchsafed to those who are faithful.

RHB We know as to the gatherings we have that there are other believers with whom we are not in fellowship who have something similar. I know that expression, “when ye come together in assembly”, was addressed to a church when the Church was still one outwardly, but there seems to be something suggested in that that should govern our gathering together and distinguish it. I was noticing recently in Acts 11 it says, “a large crowd of people were added to the Lord” (v 24), but then it says, “for a whole year they were gathered together in the assembly and taught a large crowd” (v 26). You get the assembly emerging in the Acts from what was simply a crowd initially as though the Spirit of God would make a distinction.

NJH I think it goes back to what we have said as in the Lord - there is an interesting reading on 'Where is the Lord in the Midst?' (James Taylor NS vol 77 p283), and the question came up in Germany as to the Elberfeld brethren and the ground they were on. It is an interesting reading to look at again, especially for our younger brethren too, that while every believer is known to the Lord, His Name cannot be identified where evil has been pursued in a matter. We have to be very humbled about it, but we have to make sure that all we do and say is under the Lord. If you do, it is not sectarian or presumptuous to say that we come together in assembly.

DAB That makes it all quite delicate because, if the principle is that the Lord can only be identified in a circle where evil is judged, then that places a responsibility week by week on all those in every gathering. It is all very well to say, Elberfeld is wrong, but I might be.

NJH We might lose that ground.

DAB I might personally.

NJH I might not be in the good of it. We have to be simple and genuine about it. It could be that the Lord might come in and I might not discern. John says, "It is the Lord". John had amazing insight and sensibility that the Lord was present. When we go back to the basis of the fellowship, was the truth stood for? You follow the truth that is linked with the Name of the Lord. If the ground is right I must be devoted to the Lord on that ground. If I am devoted to the Lord on that ground then the Lord will come and through feet washing another will feel the Lord's presence, and so the thing will swell out and the whole gathering is quickened in the presence of Christ.

DAB I was going to bring forward what you were saying just now - if I am exhorted to prove myself before I come, does that cover all that I am responsible for? I was thinking for example, our neighbours, people we live in the street with, they take account of households coming to the Supper. That is a point at which there is a check on what is unsuitable because the world is very quick to notice high talk and low walk. It is easy to take a theological objection to another company but then I have to be concerned that no moral objection could be taken to me.

NJH I think the jealousy of the Lord comes in there. We need to be conscious that, if we are on right ground, which is a great favour from the Lord, we have to be maintained in what is right, simple righteousness.

ECB Does not Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 say that when they came together in assembly, they were not properly together in assembly? He says, "I hear there exist divisions among you", and "each one in eating takes his own supper before others" and so on. The second commandment was not being held, they did not love one another.

NJH I am glad you have brought us back to that. He says that they were showing that they really were not in assembly because they had divisions amongst them, even though it says, "that the approved may become manifest among you".

ECB It is clear in this scripture that they were coming together formally on right ground, but actually they were not coming together in assembly. I am sure what you have drawn attention to in relation to the second commandment is fundamental in that.

NJH I think that the Lord may be directing us in that side, that you

have to be sure you are where you should be, and if you are there to commit yourself to the Lord. That will have an influence. There is nothing more influential amongst the brethren than doing what is right before God, and loving. I have thought about John - John was probably the youngest disciple, but there must have been something in John himself because they were quite a diverse group. Before the Spirit came Peter was self-confident and extrovert; he always seemed to be stepping further ahead than he should have been. There was such a difference between each one of them. The twelve became wonderfully served by Christ in resurrection for forty days, and then the Spirit coming upon them, and there was remarkable unity. They said to Peter, "and the apostles", Acts 2: 37. In other words any one could have been approached to get the word of the Lord. There was something about John which was especially attractive to the Lord, and he was, "the disciple whom Jesus loved", John 15: 23. He was in the circuit of love.

ECB We have been reading John locally and the impression I had from it is that in the chapters up to 10 the Lord deals in type with every issue that might arise. Every bodily weakness He deals with, and then He says, 'I am gathering my sheep'. But then He says, 'You will not enjoy this unless it is on the other side of death', and it is on the other side that we will all sit down together.

NJH The week starts with the Supper. It is celebrated in the wilderness, but immediately He comes in we are on new ground with Himself.

DAS Would the word in Revelation as to "they that wash their robes" (Rev. 22:14) link with what you have been saying as to the need to maintain constantly the moral conditions that are necessary?

NJH You get a sense of how jealous the Lord is; He loves us too much to let things pass. It is to encourage us, not to get us down, but to encourage the brethren; edifying means improving things amongst the brethren. Washing is a continual matter so that we might always be ready to be presented to the Lord.

In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul brings in the delivering up, "the night in which he was delivered up, took bread". It is not historical; Paul brings it right up to date.

JW We come together in the light of the assembly, but to experience

what the assembly is we really need to have right conditions, do we not? We can hardly experience what the assembly is if there is division.

NJH That should exercise us. If I am at odds with you, or you with me, it is a reflection on us because the presence of the Spirit involves a unity, a oneness, and it is a reflection on the Spirit's service for me to fall out with my brethren.

EOPM Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 says that, they were coming together in assembly, - perhaps formally, but there were divisions among them. But in Acts 20, "we being assembled to break bread", had in view everything being put right.

NJH We are apt to get obsessed with difficulties. We have to be exercised about them, but things should be met and we should cleave to the thought of unity. We should not allow any ill feeling in. We should go on together and work out the truth together.

RJF How and when do we prove ourselves?

NJH I think you are proving yourself all the time.

RJF I think that is so, but it is particularly in the light of the Supper.

NJH Yes, you are going to it, as well as coming from it; "let a man prove himself"; in a certain sense that should be a daily matter. The Passover is before you and you will remember that in the synoptic gospels the Passover is the end of the Lord's life. He says, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you", Luke 22: 15. He was in Jerusalem with His parents when He was twelve years old, but at the end of the synoptic gospels the Passover comes in, and it flows into the Supper. The sufferings of Christ are before you and I think you are proving yourself in the light of the sufferings of Christ.

RJF I wondered too if it links with the last scripture that you read as to, "your life is hid with the Christ in God".

NJH That is good. I think that is the great way to maintain things, having your eyes upward. 1 Corinthians 14 says, "Let all things be done to edification", if you have a word for edification, to edify the body of Christ. Could we say that all that we say is edifying the body of Christ?

DJH It is with a view to increase, an increase in what is for Him.

NJH I think so, improving conditions among us; you have a word to improve conditions and you must have the positive before the soul. It has been said that we need faith in the power of positive truth. While adjustment is touched on in most of the epistles, the writer always brings in something positive to feed the soul. We need that, it is a word, for edification.

HAH Brotherly relations would bear on the other part of the paragraph you read that, "God is not a God of disorder but of peace". I was thinking of the way you spoke of possible disturbance or concern, but if these things are met in love with the Lord's help then it makes for peace. Edification may be involved; perhaps someone needs adjustment: help to build them up, but then it leads to peace.

NJH It is how you do it, it is like feet washing, John 13. I think in feet washing you do not leave any impression of yourself. I recall that Mr Wigram said that you might unconsciously wash the feet of another. Mr Ernest Palmer, of this city, was like that; he conveyed something to you and you felt refreshed by it. You would leave an impression of Christ.

DJH The Lord Jesus says, "as I have done to you", John 13: 15.

NJH So it is, "For God is not a God of disorder but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints"; is that not wonderful!

ECB It is, but it is experienced. Do you not feel that we perhaps underrate the value of the experiences that we actually have? In the early ministries such as Mr Stoney and Mr Raven you get a lot about their personal experience. What I have learned of the Lord is bound to wash someone's feet; 'He could do this to you', you could say.

NJH Without His touch, without His service there is no difference. We have all been in the same institution suffering under the same malady. Some of us have had a little more healing than others. You want to try to convey to another that He has done it to me and would like it to be done to them.

ECB One impression I retained after the war, having served a long time overseas, is -

Long proved in secret help
With thee alone. (Hymn 160)

NJH That is good experience to draw on. In Colossians 3, where is

our outlook? “Seek the things which are above, where the Christ is”. The greatest sanctification is union with Christ.

PM “The things which are above” must involve relationships. That would colour our relationships here, we are enjoying those relationships with the Christ.

NJH In Colossians, the teaching is entering into new relationships. All other relationships ceased at the Jordan, and you go into spiritual relationships. That is what the truth of the Jordan involves, our death with Christ. You enter into new relationships and here you have an object before you, “where the Christ is”.

RMB A brother once said to me that if you have your mind on the things that are above your heart will soon follow. I thought that was helpful, and I wondered whether we should encourage one another, and especially our younger brethren, to read the Scriptures and to think about them, and to read the ministry and to think about it, and by the Holy Spirit they will find that their hearts will soon follow.

NJH It is good to bring that in because it is important that the young people know they have the Spirit. It is a vital thing. And to know that through the Spirit they have power to abstract themselves from every other claim on that mind, their precious mind. The enemy is making a bid on the minds of our young people. What they are trying to put into the minds of our young people seems to be getting more intense and more confused. They have a power in the Spirit, but they have got to use that power. The Spirit might be there, it might not be used; you have to use the power of the Spirit and have your mind on the things that are above, “where the Christ is”.

JSH Using is activity on our part, “seek the things which are above”. We had in an address recently as to putting our hand to the plough. That would be part of it, to set us in a right motion to “seek the things which are above”.

NJH That is good. It is the Spirit operationally in the heart of the believer. He is available so that there is the seeking, but you have got to dedicate yourself to it. I used to tell our young people at home, do not try too much, commit yourself to read a little and you will acquire a taste for it, and you will add a bit more and add a bit more again. That is how taste is developed in a young person. They need to do it: it will not

come automatically.

HAH Could you just say a word for the help of the young people, on the question that sometimes arises, 'How do I know that I have the Holy Spirit'? You will have a different interest and outlook; you know that it is not related to things in this world. And the first great thing is that you have a real sense of the love of God in your heart and you are free in His presence.

NJH It is the greatest gift. Speaking simply I knew I had the Spirit when, instead of getting up when it was possible and walking out the room when the brethren were speaking about the Lord, I wanted to wait, I wanted to be in the company of persons that were speaking about the Lord. I knew I had the Spirit then. That was just a simple experience.

HAH You would not be afraid if someone asked you whether you had a link with the Lord; you would be ready to say, 'Of course I have'.

NJH This was to affect the Colossian company, "have your mind on the things that are above". You cannot just sit back and say I have no responsibility. You have an obligation, as has come into this reading; you have a responsibility to seek and to have your mind on the things above, and that will in turn contribute to conditions.

AAC Do we come back to where we began, the commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy understanding"? There is activity in this, and it may be helps as to commandment. Matthew says, "On these two commandments the whole law and the prophets hang". We come back to one question in every aspect of our reading, and all the things that have entered into it. If there is anything that has come into my life, then I have to go back to the question, whether my heart, soul and understanding is really towards God. If they are, everything is right. This reading has illustrated the reference we have had from Matthew 22: everything hangs on God.

NJH That is a very vital point, it is the beginning of what is thorough and good, and we have to be maintained in it.

MJM Is the appreciation of the Lord Jesus in glory an assurance to us that we have the Holy Spirit?

NJH Yes, He links us with Christ where He is. You could have no link

with Christ where He is but by the Spirit. Think of these persons, “for ye have died, and your life is hid with the Christ in God”. You wait for a manifestation; you are not looking for it now you are waiting for that life to be manifested with Him in glory.

PM Then you have the final reference in that section to, “the Christ ... who is our life”. It opens up in that section. You are seeking the things where He is, then our life is hid with Him, then He is our life.

NJH That is a good touch to end on.

London

19th May 2007

Key to Initials

R M Brown, East Finchley; R H Brown, East Finchley; D A Burr, London; D E Burr, Colchester; E C Burr, London; W S Chelberg, Wheaton; A A Croot, London; R J Flowerdew, Sunbury; P Hazel, Bristol; N J Henry, Glasgow; D J Hutson, London; H A Hutson, London; J S Hutson, London; P Martin, Colchester; M J Matthews, Birmingham; A McSeveney, Twickenham; E O P Mutton, Walton on the Naze; D A Smith, Bexley; E F Woodford, Dorking; D J Wright, Havering; J Wright, Havering

GLORIES OF CHRIST

Jim Pye

John 1: 2-3, 14

Ephesians 1: 19 (from 'according') - 23

On Lord's Day morning we sang the hymn which says -

Supreme art Thou, as all Thy glories shine!" (Hymn 16)

and it affected me. I felt how weak and limited I am as to knowing all the glories of Christ. They are there, all shining now in heaven, every glory He has, every glory He has won, the glory of a Son, all shining there in heaven now.

I read here in John because it speaks of His creatorial glory. Some have said that He was Son before in a past eternity. I think that demeans the glory of who He is as Creator. I think they are losing something; they are losing the sight of the glory of who He is as Creator. It says in Colossians that He created the visible and the invisible things. It is only a hundred or so years ago that men realised that there were things that the natural eye could not see, yet they had been there for thousands of years. He was the Creator of that. You might say, 'Well, they are not very important; they are so minuscule they are not important'. They *are* minuscule but at the end of the First World War tens of millions more lost their lives in the great flu epidemic just with a small virus, a tiny thing that man could not see. It is the power of the creation, the power of the Creator God! Dear friend, who can fully speak of it? It speaks of it in Genesis, where you see the power of the Creator. He commanded and it remained fast. By a word things appeared and remained. What glory, the glory of the Creator!

It says in Hebrews that "he learned obedience", Heb 5: 8. I have often wondered about that. Recently I came across ministry which said, not that He learned obedience as we have to because our wills have had to be broken, while His will was perfect; but He had to learn obedience because He was used to command (FER NS vol 9 p 431). Think of that, the Creator commanding, and it stood fast, Ps 33: 9. What a Person the Lord Jesus Christ is! What a glory He has, glory as the Creator!

I cannot say any more than that, but here in John, it says, "we

have contemplated his glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father". The glory of incarnation! Another glory that we could say God did not have before, an added glory, the glory of coming in in manhood's form. What a glory that the Creator God should stoop so low and be manifest here as a Man, "full of grace and truth"! What a Person He is in His moral glory. Do we appreciate it, the moral excellence of this Man as He stood, as He walked, as He talked, as He healed men and women and little girls and boys? What a Person He was! Mr Darby says, 'The hand that struck the chord found all in tune' (Synopsis vol 1 p 118). How wonderful that is! Regarding others it says they went to their own home, but He went to the Mount of Olives, John 8: 1. In the temptations, the Lord, having been tempted for forty days, hungered, Matt 4: 1. You could say He had every right to turn a stone into bread, but then that would have been His will, not the Father's will. All these human perfections blended perfectly. In Leviticus 2: 4 it speaks about the fine flour mingled with oil, "Divine perfection in a Man", Hymn 20. God appreciated this order of manhood so much that the heavens were opened and He said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight", Matt 17: 5. Think of the eye of God - the eye of God is upon us every day and night. He sees what we do, what we think, what we say, what we are, but think of it intently upon Christ in His pathway and His walk here. How pleasing it was to God's eye to rest on that blessed Man! Well, this is His glory as a Man, a glorious Man!

I read in Ephesians because He is a glorified Man. The Lord has one glory, the glory of redemption, which He never had before. What a wonderful glory that is; He has redeemed to God out of "every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev 5: 9). He has redeemed them with His own blood. No one else can have that glory, none else but Christ. Dear friend, that belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, the glory of redemption, the power of redemption.

And He has the glory of being the Firstborn from among the dead. Who can we attach that glory to but Christ? What a glory, Firstborn from among the dead! So here in Ephesians verse 20 it says "the might of his strength, in which he wrought in the Christ in raising him from among the dead". Think of God's delight in raising this glorious Man. Men would cast Him into a pit with all the others, having no regard for this glorious Man, but you see how carefully His body was cared for, in a new tomb, and how God's eye must have been on that

precious body of Jesus. It lay in the grave no longer than was needed, three days and three nights, and then God in His power and His delight and His authority, raising Him from among the dead. We have Christ's perfect obedience even in death. He was "obedient even unto death", Phil 2: 8. Think of His obedience even in going into death. He says, "I have authority to lay it down" - "my life" - "and I have authority to take it again", John 10: 18. Even in death He waited on the Father. How wonderful, how glorious a Person is the Lord Jesus Christ!

All His glories shine; they are shining now in heaven. Think of that, think of the glory, the first Man in heaven! What a glory that is, the first Man in heaven. What glory He has! Think of Him being crowned. In the world, at the crowning of a king or queen, there is great pomp and ceremony. There is not much about the crowning of Christ in heaven in Scripture, but I do not think it would have been a quiet affair, the crowning of Jesus Christ in heaven, God crowning Him. Think of His delight in that Man! Not a crown of thorns as man gave, but a glorious crown. Here it says, "and he set him down at his right hand in the heavenlies, above every principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name named, not only in this age, but also in that to come; and has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the assembly".

Think of the glory of that, the glory of having a wife, the glory of the Bridegroom. It speaks of those that saw Him on the mountain who were "eyewitnesses of his majesty", 2 Peter 1: 16. Think of Him coming, dear friend, as a King, King of glory. We often sing of it,

Come, Thou King triumphant; all the earth is Thine"
(Hymn 386)

What a time it will be, all His glory shining, but it is shining now for us there in Heaven. We will one day fully appreciate it. Every nation and king shall bow down before Him and bring all their glory. Think of that, dear friend, but His glory is shining now. I feel I need to have a greater apprehension of it. The Supper, I suppose, is really where we would have the greatest apprehension of it. I am not saying that we cannot apprehend something in our own studies, in our own contemplation in this day amongst the saints. I think these glories are shining. They are there for us to take hold of and to contemplate as John did, to go away and just think about them, the glory of this Person. We are going to

have bodies of glory, and we are going to be able to fully apprehend all His glory. I cannot wait till that day. These glories are going to entertain us throughout eternity, they are inexhaustible, dear friend. The hymn speaks of man,

Whose little life is as a span,
Whose glory fades away (Hymn 150)

Dear friend, that is not Christ. His glory will be maintained throughout generations and generations to the ages of ages. So dear brethren what a wonderful privilege it is to be part of a glorious vessel here on earth, a vessel that is reflecting these glories now in this desert scene, as all His glories shine supreme.

May we have a greater sense and understanding and appreciation of these glories of Christ!

May the Lord bless the word, dear brethren!

Kirkcaldy

20 March 2007

RISING EARLY

Jim T Brown (Edinburgh)

Jeremiah 26: 5; 32: 33

There are some ten references in Jeremiah to God rising early, each with a different aspect. We have read two of them. It is very affecting to think that God in His care, solicitude and vigilance for His people would rise early to seek their well-being. Psalm 121 goes further, saying, "He that keepeth thee will not slumber", v 3. How wonderful, that the God who has taken us up for blessing will never slumber in His desire to preserve and keep us. He is "preserver of all men, specially of those that believe", 1Tim 4: 10. Whatever God does, He does with care and energy. What energy was expended in bringing the worlds into being. He divided between the light and the darkness, "And there was evening, and there was morning - the first day", Gen 1: 5). The evening comes first. It seems just to suggest that God was anticipating the morning. It is precious to think of God looking forward anticipatively to that day when the Lord Jesus - He who is the true Light, coming into the world to lighten every man (John 1: 9) - would stand on the earth which He had created. Then there was evening, and there was morning a fourth day when He set the great lights in the expanse of the heavens, "the great light to rule the day, and the small light to rule the night", Gen 1: 15, 16. What holy feelings would be in the heart of God as He looked down on that fourth day as the sun rose to its zenith, anticipating a day when the millennial glory of the Lord Jesus would shine in unrivalled, unchallenged supremacy. Joshua speaks of a day when the sun stood still in the midst of heaven. It "hasted not to go down about a full day" (Josh 10: 13). That might be likened to our day when the light of redemption shines for all, but then the great millennial day will be glorious when "shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (Malachi 4:2).

How touching it is that these features were displayed in relation to the life of the Lord Jesus here on earth. It is a wonderful display of love that the Father would rise early, speaking reverently, to open the ears of His Well-beloved. Isaiah says, "He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed", Isaiah 50: 4. What a blessed manifestation we see of that unique relationship, that the Father would rise early to open the ear of His Son to impart the thought and direction for the day; and He ever dependent, ever in

perfect harmony with the Father's will, the Father's mind, fully responsive. Then, too, we have these holy expressions of mutual love as He continued His pathway. The Father took no slumber, no sleep on these precious nights of unbroken communion when the Lord Jesus was abroad on the Mount of Olives. But then came that terrible night when the Lord Jesus was captive, betrayed by Judas, and taken first to Annas, then to Caiaphas, and then to Pilate. The Lord Jesus would have no sleep on that awful night. Think of the Father's eyes looking with holy, unwearied vigilance on that appalling scene when He, who was sin apart, was suffering so cruelly, so violently at the hands of men. But oh, what a wonderful moment is brought out in Mark's Gospel so blessedly, when the Lord Jesus rose from the grave! Mark brings in the touching reference, "And very early on the first day of the week they come to the sepulchre, the sun having risen" (Mark 16:2), but they found the stone rolled away. These bereft souls had risen early to come to the tomb to see a dead Jesus, but the Father had risen even earlier to raise His well-beloved Son by His glory. How affecting it is to contemplate the Father rising early for such a purpose!

This feature was seen in the life of the Lord Jesus down here. It is fine to go through the Gospels and ponder these references when Jesus rose early. In Mark 1, there He was, the sun had gone down and they brought to Him all that were suffering and those possessed by demons. "The whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many ... and he cast out many demons, and did not suffer the demons to speak because they knew him", v33, 34. Then, after that evening spent in holy, patient service, bringing relief to the helpless, hope to the hopeless, and healing to the sick, it says, "And rising in the morning long before day, he went away out and went away into a desert place, and there prayed" (v 35). These wonderful footsteps of the Lord Jesus provide a Model indeed for each one of us! And then in John 7, what a wonderful day that was, "In the last, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried" (v37). What energy He expended on that day. The chapter ends, "And every one went to his home", and chapter 8 begins, "But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple". God as it were rising early, expressed in His blessed Son! How affecting to think of these holy matters.

So Jeremiah has in mind that these precious features should

find a response in ourselves. God, as we have read, rose early to send His prophets. The people did not hearken to these overtures, but the desire is that there might be a response in us to the holy endeavours of divine Persons to secure an answer in conformity to God's own blessed thoughts. Many of those in the scriptures whom God has used have had this attitude of rising early. Of course, it does not mean simply getting out of bed early in the morning - that may enter into it! but it implies an aptitude and a commitment to divine things, which has its reward. Abraham, for example, on that momentous morning when God said, "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah" was immediately responsive to the divine commandment. It says, "And Abraham rose early in the morning", Gen 22:1-3. Then Joshua rose early as he left Shittim and came to the Jordan, Josh 3: 1. They were in sympathy with the divine will and responded with alacrity to it.

But in this second scripture, it is affecting to think of God teaching, "though I taught them, rising early and teaching, they hearkened not to receive instruction". How wonderful it is that the mighty God should condescend to teach His people. Such a disposition found a perfect expression in the Lord Jesus. See Him as He gathered His own and the crowds around Him, teaching them the wonderful things of God. The feature of teaching continues to the present day exemplified in the great body of teaching that has come to us throughout the dispensation. It continues today in order that there might be a commensurate response in the hearts of believers to what God has in mind for us according to His great purposes and desires. There is an interesting reference in Acts 13 where Elymas, the magician, seeks to divert the proconsul from Paul's teaching. Paul intervenes very decisively, with the outcome that, "Then the proconsul, seeing what had happened, believed, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord" (v 12). That is, the teaching of the Lord was continuing through the ministry of Paul, confirming that the idea of God teaching is maintained in the present dispensation. That is very comforting. So, how fine then it is to open our hearts to the teaching and to be, as Paul exhorted Timothy, "nourished with the words of the faith and of the good teaching which thou hast fully followed up" (1 Tim 4: 6). We have bookshelves full of books and the great desire would be that we might assimilate the teaching they contain and also, of course, imbibe the teaching which we receive in our gatherings together. As we get older

we begin to value these things to a greater degree, and I would encourage young believers to commit themselves to reading just a little bit every day of the great course of instruction and teaching which has come down to us through the labours of devoted men. The Proverbs say in relation to wisdom, “they that seek me early shall find me ... and I will fill their treasures”, Prov 8: 17, 21. How fine if our treasures can be filled early with these precious thoughts which God has vouchsafed to His church in these present days.

I leave these thoughts for consideration, I am just affected that God, in His assiduous care and solicitude for His own, should rise early. May He have a response to His early rising. For His Name's sake.

Edinburgh

15 May 2007

JUSTIFICATION

John N Darby

Hebrews 10 v 1-25

There is a difference between the way God presents justification in the epistles to the Romans and to the Hebrews. In the epistle to Romans, it is a question of justification as before a court; man is guilty and the blood of Christ justifies us. Moreover, Christ is risen and he who has faith has part in that resurrection. In the epistle to the Hebrews, justification is presented as giving us the right to come before God. The two characters of this justification are different, for entering the presence of God as a worshipper is different from entering as before a judge.

There were sacrifices through which the people drew near to God. If there is judgment, we need to be cleansed to appear before Him; one must be clean to present oneself before Him as a worshipper. The first thing which was met in the tabernacle was the brazen altar, the altar of burnt offerings, where victims were offered, types of Christ. Cain brings as offering to God the fruit of his work. He wishes to come before God as he is, and regards himself as entirely honest. God knew that, in his thoughts, this suited Cain. But Abel recognised that blood was necessary; he presented a propitiatory victim; faith made him recognise that, as a sinner, being driven from God's presence, he could not present himself as such before Him, without blood, without a dead victim as expiation and propitiation; without blood-shedding there is no remission. God must be true and we must appear before Him without sin. We must be true and appear before Him as sinners; and this is what is resolved in Jesus.

The efficacy of the blood of Christ is presented to us here to this end, that we should be able to present ourselves before God to worship Him. It is not sufficient for us to be justified as guilty; we must also worship God. The purpose of this epistle is to show us that we can appear before God without conscience of sin. To be set apart for God, sanctified, sins must be removed.

There are three things here: the will of God, the work of Christ and the testimony of the Holy Spirit. The will of God, which sanctifies

and purifies us so that we might approach Him, must have its effect, otherwise man would be more powerful than God. There must be the accomplishment of this will, and the work of Christ is its accomplishment; there must be the testimony of the Holy Spirit for us to know it. I must know that my debt is paid; if I do not have this knowledge, I cannot but flee the presence of my creditor.

Christ came to do God's will. This will was that the Son might come to accomplish the work. It was not God's will that man should present himself before Him as Cain did, without blood, but that the Son might accomplish this will. "I have completed the work which thou gavest me that I should do it" (John 17 v.4). "For as indeed by the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted righteous" (Rom 5 v 19). The Holy Spirit bears witness to our souls that Christ perfectly accomplished the work the Father gave Him to do. We have the certainty that the debt is paid.

God's will was to save us; this will was that His Son should save us. I have the certainty that the Son has accomplished that will, that the Son removed all my sins. I am without conscience of sin; although I know that I am a sinner, I have the consciousness of no longer having sin before God. It is the only thing of which I should be conscious by the Holy Spirit in drawing near to God. I acknowledge the debt, but I know that it is paid. To have no more conscience of sin is the normal state of the Christian. God wanted to save us; that is the first thing. Then God reveals to us what He has done. It does not simply remain a matter of will; He has accomplished this will and He has given His Son. He has sent the Holy Spirit to convey to me the assurance that this was God's will and that He has accomplished it. My certainty rests on this testimony rendered by the Holy Spirit to the work of Christ.

What is this testimony? Here, it is that Christ is seated at the right hand of God. The priests offered new sacrifices every day, because there was no remission and the consciousness of sin remained. Every time a Jew sinned, a lamb had to be sacrificed. Christ offered one sacrifice for sin and sat down at the right hand of God. Having done everything, accomplished everything for ever, He sits down, while the Jewish priest stands always and does not rest. The Christian who feels constant fresh need of expiation, and thus retains consciousness of sin, is to this extent a Jew and not a Christian. Here is

how Christians are found in God's presence to worship Him.

When a Jew drew nigh to the throne of God, there was a sacrifice to offer. But the Christian is already introduced into the house by sacrifice; the sacrifice is behind him. I have passed the altar of burnt offerings and am come into the holy place. I no longer have the altar of burnt offerings between God and me. At Christ's death, the veil of the temple was rent. The action which rent the veil and opened access into God's presence has taken away my sin. Without this, the open sanctuary would make me flee in fear. But I have full liberty to enter into the most holy place. It is the Holy Spirit who bears witness of it to us and gives us the certainty of it. The blood of Christ introduces us into God's house. It is there that we find holiness; it is there that we understand sin and have horror of it. It is there that, having the sense of the purity in God's presence, we hate any blemish.

Let us approach Him in full assurance of faith, having the certainty of this perfect work of Christ. The Holy Spirit will warn us, will chasten us perhaps, but as children who have access to the Father's throne.

Is it really our desire to approach God? It is impossible if we keep anything forbidden. With anything forbidden, there is no desire to come into the light as God is in the light, for God probes our depths. How good if God could be pleased with what pleases us! But with forbidden things, the heart is not upright. It stops on the way before arriving at the throne. Nobody can come before God with his sin. Approach must be by the blood of Christ, without consciousness of sin, through the rent veil, the death of Christ. With a good conscience, the more we are in God's presence, the happier we are. We cannot doubt the excellence of Christ's blood; we are at ease in God's house, and we have at the same time the consciousness of what we are and the consciousness that He has removed all our sins.

Translated from "*Le Messager Evangelique*"