

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

SECOND SERIES

No. 79

October 2013

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RESPONSE TO GOD IN SONG

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AM I think we had a distinct sense this morning of having part in a response to divine Persons in singing. As we gather together for the Supper - we have said it so often, we know it well - we gather together in the wilderness. But we started with the words:

Jesus our Lord, of Thee, the King,
Our song shall ever be; (Hymn 150).

As the service proceeded, the spirits of the brethren were caught up in response to divine Persons in song. That is a very blessed thing. In the old dispensation, God waited a long time before He had a collective response in song. There was the song of redemption in Exodus 15, but really the service of song awaited David. I think God was waiting for that because it is an exalted level of response that He receives in song.

In the Song of Songs where we read, the Beloved speaks. There *is* what has gone before. "The winter is past", He says. He has gone through the winter; He has experienced it; He has known what it is to experience the cold.

The winter is past,
The rain is over, it is gone.

All the circumstances that the Lord passed through in flesh and blood condition are now complete; they are over. He is now in another condition altogether and, typically, He says, "The time of singing is come". There was a sense this morning - it was expressed in thanksgiving more than once - that something has begun that is eternal: "The time of singing is come". He goes on to speak about the fruit that there is and what is fragrant to Himself, and then He says,

Let me see thy countenance,
let me hear thy voice.

The Lord has received, on account of the way He has been, that which is so pleasing to His own affections and He says, "Let me hear thy voice". How precious that is!

But then we had a very precious touch this morning. The Lord has gained the assembly for Himself, but it is as if He would take account of the assembly and say this is a vessel that is suited to the praises of God. So He says, “in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises”. Think of the desires of the Lord that there should be an answer to God, and the very vessel which answers to His own affections is the vessel in which He can lead in the praises to God. How great the assembly is! Let us just ponder that as we speak together: there is a creature vessel of which every one of us here who knows the Lord and has received the Holy Spirit forms part. Every one of us forms part of that vessel, and it is a creature vessel which is capable of satisfying the heart of the Lord Jesus and is capable of satisfying God in the way of response. How wonderful that is! He says, “in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises”. Think of Christ Himself, His voice being raised! He leads in the response to God, and God is satisfied. In the prophet it says, “he will rest in his love; he will exult over thee with singing”. That is an extraordinary expression. It is not there exactly in what He hears, but He will joy over His own with singing. You think of the saints being caught up together in a oneness with divine Persons in this great chorus that is eternal in character.

So the psalmist says, “Let everything that hath breath praise Jah”. The whole universe ultimately will be responsive to God, “everything that hath breath”. Think of that, every family, the assembly, of course, the greatest of them all, but “everything that hath breath” praising Jah!

These are the thoughts that have been in my mind since we had the occasion this morning.

EJM It says in 2 Chronicles 29, “Hezekiah commanded to offer up the burnt-offering on the altar. And at the moment the burnt-offering began, the song of Jehovah began, and the trumpets, accompanied by the instruments of David king of Israel”, v 27. Do you think at the moment the burnt-offering began, we come together in limitation and smallness, but as soon as the burnt-offering is offered up, the service of God begins? In song we are really lifted into it, are we not?

AM That is good. Yes, we are, and as that chapter goes on, we find that towards the end there are the drink-offerings, v 35. That is really like the pouring out in song. It is like the voices of the saints being lifted together in song to God. It is good to draw attention to Hezekiah,

because that was a day when things were not in their pristine glory, but the service of God was maintained. The instruments of David were there; the burnt-offering was there - Christ in His devotion to the will of God, in all His perfection going even into death - and the service went on in song.

RB They started to sing as they were leaving the wilderness in Numbers 21. They had the exercise of the red heifer just before that so their hearts were free; and their spirits were free to lift them up and cause their hearts to sing ere they left the wilderness.

AM That is right. They were singing to the well: "Rise up, well! sing unto it", v 17. There are three songs in the wilderness. There is the song of redemption:

I will sing unto Jehovah, for he is highly exalted:

The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea, Exod 15: 1.

Then there is the song to the springing well, and after that we get the song of Moses: "And Moses spoke in the ears of the whole congregation of Israel the words of this song", Deut 31: 30. He is going over all of God's ways, His ways with the people. You get that at the end of Deuteronomy. Think of how in every circumstance God was receiving a response!

RB You come to the Supper with a song in your heart.

AM Yes, you do. We often pray at home that as we come up to the Supper, as the saints come together, there may be a springing up of hearts, in response to divine love.

GBG Do you think it is unifying? In 2 Chronicles 5, when Solomon had finished building the house of Jehovah, it says, "it came to pass when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one voice to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah", v 13. We experience that. We are all different in character, but we are unified in our spirits, are we not?

AM That is right. There is variety, and that is good, but there is a oneness about it. That is a marvellous section because what you find there is that even though it is not the present dispensation, what is official comes to an end. It can no longer function. The service is carried on by One, the Son: "Then said Solomon", chap 6: 1. The service is carried on by Him. You might say He has unified the whole

company, and the service continues under His guidance.

GBG Love does that. Love cannot be official.

AM No, indeed. That is right, and so we are drawn to Christ. We were drawn to Him initially, but we are continually drawn to Him, and we are drawn to Him as He leads in relation to the service of God.

JS Does the first hymn have a bearing on that? We are occupied with the Lord Jesus together and we are set together in a responsive way in the sense of praise to Himself immediately, do you think?

AM I think so. I am glad you have referred to that. I do not say this critically, because no one has less right to be critical of the brethren than I have, but I do appreciate it when the first hymn is addressed to the Lord. Occasionally we may have a hymn or a song which is not directly addressed to Him, but there is something that sets the saints together in relation to the Lord when it is addressed to Him, do you think?

JS I think so; so we started with number 4 this morning:

Thine is the love, Lord, that draws us together,

and we are drawn together to Him in our links with one another. We come from different places and different situations, but He is before us and our affections are drawn out.

AM Yes, that is right; so the saints are united. Even before they have the sense of the Lord coming in, the saints are united together in relation to Him. So He comes to a company that are gathered together for Him.

GAB When the Supper was inaugurated, it says, "And having sung a hymn, they went out ...", Matt 26: 30. There were places the Lord had to go where they could not go, but there He takes them with Him. I was thinking of what you are suggesting, that the Lord finds something there that He can use in regard to the service of song to the Father and to God.

AM Yes, and that is a very affecting thing as it came at the end of His service down here in flesh and blood condition, and there was that circle, those few souls, all His own work, and He could engage them in song. Would you think that that would be to the Father?

GAB I suppose it would be. We do not really know, of course. It has been said it might have been a psalm. I have often thought it probably

was a psalm but in New Testament terms it is called a hymn, which takes you on to another level, does it not?

AM I was quite impressed in the interval, in looking through, the number of headings to the psalms where it says, "A Psalm: a Song". So a psalm could be an up-springing of heart as well.

RG Mr James Taylor once said, 'It does not say who gave out the hymn, but I have no doubt the Lord did', vol 37 p59. The Lord is in control because there is an environment for this kind of singing to proceed, do you think?

AM That is right; so He is the Minister of the holy places, Heb 8: 2. He leads us. He is in control as we come to the Father. It is not a legal control; it is His headship. We are led by Him, and it is in view of the Father receiving His portion.

RG That is good, because it is fine to have a song, but it is finer to have a place to sing that song that is suitable to the song. So Hezekiah says, "And we will play upon my stringed instruments all the days of our life, in the house of Jehovah", Isa 38: 20. At one point in the psalms they said, "How should we sing a song of Jehovah's upon a foreign soil?" Ps 137: 4. But when you are not on foreign soil, when you are in the house of Jehovah, when you are in the assembly light too, then the singing can proceed and give God pleasure.

AM That is good. It is in His own environment. We can come into the presence of God without fear. It is His own environment, and hearts can be lifted up in song.

EJM Have you some thought as to the turtle-dove here?

AM Not particularly. Say something. You can help us about that.

EJM It is just after it says, "The time of singing is come" that it says, "And the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land". It may be some allusion to the Holy Spirit, because it is really in His power that we are united to Christ. "No-one can say, Lord Jesus, unless in the power of the Holy Spirit", 1 Cor 12: 3. We should enlarge in our thanksgivings to the Spirit when we are thinking of this.

AM I find it a test as to what I can say to divine Persons about themselves. What can I say to the Lord about Himself? I can speak of His work. What can I say to the Holy Spirit about Himself? Again, I am well aware of His grace and His care. What can I say to the Father

about Himself?

EJM In chapter 5 the spouse has something to say about Him, beginning with His being,

The chiefest among ten thousand.
His head is as the finest gold;
His locks are flowing, black as the raven ... v 10, 11.

AM Yes, that is right. And she ends with, “His mouth is most sweet”, v 16. That is the final touch. She hears that voice. It is the voice of the Beloved. She speaks about it here,

The voice of my beloved!
Behold, he cometh, chap 2: 8.

That is a touch from Him, that quickening touch.

TM Would you say something as to the new song in Revelation 5?

AM I was wondering about that. That is an interesting scene. We have the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. At the end of chapter 4 they are saying, “Thou art worthy, O our Lord and our God ... for *thou* hast created all things, and for thy will they were, and they have been created”, v 11. That is the greatness of the Creator. But in chapter 5 “they sing a new song”. In chapter 4 it is not a song: they say these words; but in chapter 5 “they sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open its seals; because thou hast been slain, and hast redeemed to God, by thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation”, v 9. It is redemption. I think it is right to say that singing begins with redemption, and here are these four living creatures and twenty-four elders representing all of God's ways in time and all that has been secured through His ways, and they are saying, “Thou art worthy”. We sang this morning:

Worthy by all to be adored, (Hymn 195)

and here it is, “because thou ... hast redeemed to God, by thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation”. They are taking account of the Lamb here in a sacrificial way, are they not? “Thou hast been slain”. It is a sacrificial view of the Lamb here, and the result of that is what is for God.

TM It was the wonderful result of redemption that it is “out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation”, the great response there will

be as a result of that.

AM It is a heavenly celebration of what, in type, took place on the banks of the Red Sea, the work of redemption; but there is one thing we need to lay hold of about redemption and that is that we have been "redeemed to God". The work of redemption is for God. You might say, 'Well, I thought it was to relieve me of my sins'. It does that, but it is for God, in order that I should be for God. If I am conscious of the fact that I have been redeemed at all, then it is that I should be for God.

RWMcC You referenced the heading of a lot of the psalms speaking of song. A good number are from the sons of Korah. Do you think that brings in the thought of redemption, but then what is secured through that for the service of God?

AM 1 Chronicles 6: 31 says, "And these are they whom David set over the service of song in the house of Jehovah after that the ark was in rest". Then it goes on, "Of the sons of the Kohathites" (v 33), and as you run through the list of names, you find "the son of Korah", v 38. There they are. You think of those psalms: "Of the sons of Korah". You read those psalms - many were obviously written in David's time or later - and there were those who could trace their genealogy back, and they could say, 'I am an object of mercy', and the service of God is enriched through such. Can you say some more?

RWMcC In Psalm 48 it says,

We have thought, O God, of thy loving-kindness, in the midst of thy temple

- it does not say it is a 'song' there, but -

According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth, v 9, 10.

AM What a fine psalm that is. That comes into the service of God frequently:

As is thy Name so is Thy praise; (Hymn 237).

What a sense that wonderful psalm gives of the assembly, a place where God has set His Name. "Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King", v 2. Think of the greatness of the sphere in which God is being served!

DCB You mentioned the time, “the winter is past”. Is it necessary to have an increasing appreciation of the sufferings of Christ as giving us the background for the service of song?

AM I think so. It recurs through the Song of Songs. The loved One is constantly being brought back to the fact that He has been through the winter. In chapter 5 it is the night:

Open to me ...

For my head is filled with dew,
My locks with the drops of the night, v 2.

He has been through the night. He appeals to our affections on that basis and do you not think that the emblems before us when we come together appeal to our affections? It is good just to sit and contemplate the emblems before the Supper, as they speak to us of the way in which He has been. He would say, 'I went that way for you'. “This is my body ... This cup is the new covenant in my blood”, Luke 22: 19. 20. Think of how it has all been secured by that One, so that our affections are softened, are they not, and quickened as He comes in so that there is a response to Him?

RT “The winter is past”; would that be not only for Christ but for us?

AM Go on. Say some more about that.

RT We have some sense that the winter is past for us. We do not bring the memory of it exactly but we bring the formation, as being formed in the winter, to be pleasing to Him.

AM That is right, and so the saints are lifted up in their spirits. They are lifted up in relation to another world where there is no winter. Say some more.

RT So we should be ready to go!

AM Yes, indeed. I think it is good if there is a quick response to the Lord. When we get a sense of the presence of the Lord, we would respond immediately and be with Him in His movements.

RB Would the scripture you read in Hebrews 2 be a greater thought than what we have before us here in the Song of Songs?

AM I think in Hebrews we get the Lord's own feelings. Divine

Persons are totally unselfish. The Lord has the assembly for Himself, but this morning something was said that just left that touch in my mind, that He would take account of the assembly and say, 'I can use this vessel for the service of the Father. This is suitable for the praises of the Father'. So we ascend. It is an ascending line, is it not? We are moving on and we are moving upwards to what the Lord really has in His mind, that there should be something for the Father, do you think?

RB I was thinking this was from Psalm 22. We can say that, when the Lord came out of death, He would have been thinking about His assembly, but He was thinking about what was for the Father's heart, what had been secured through His death for the Father's heart.

AM That is right and so that word as He comes out of death is "Woman", v 15. There is really that which would express the assembly. And then He says, "my Father and your Father ... my God and your God", v 17. His priority is not to claim what is for Himself. He receives that anyway, but He holds it in relation to the Father.

RB So this singing in the midst of the assembly would really be the enjoyment of the divine rest. That is where our hearts are set at liberty, in the divine rest, and nothing to intrude, nothing to disturb, love in its own resting place, and hearts can sing.

AM Think of the voice of the Lord Jesus being raised! He has an environment in which He can do this. His voice was raised alone when He was here as Man. He said, "I praise thee, Father", Matt 11: 25. That was a response to God from one Man upon the earth, but now He has the assembly, and there is this collective response, this unified response, and He leads in it. It is a very precious thing.

DTP There is something choice about, "Let me see thy countenance". There is what the assembly is peculiarly for Himself, and it is choice and it proceeds from that. There is the countenance, and He wants to hear our voice too, the fulness of response.

AM So the countenance would be uplifted for Him. There is nothing hidden. It is total, confiding affection in the One who is worthy of it.

DTP There is a sweetness related to that. It is really where love is proved both from the Lord Himself, and also the fulness of it coming into expression in this one, the one He loves.

AM How much do we think of His own heart, the satisfaction of His

own heart? That is really what is expressed here: “Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice”. He is expressing His joy in the assembly, but it is for the satisfaction of His heart.

RG Would you connect the last chapter of Hebrews with what we started with in the Song of Songs?

AM You had better enlarge on that.

RG “Therefore let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach” (v 13) is like the north wind, the winter. But even at that point He says, “for we have not here an abiding city, but we seek the coming one. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually to God” - that comes in immediately. It is like the answer in the Song of Songs 2

AM That is good. We are going forth “to him” in Hebrews 13; we are with Him in the Song of Songs 2.

RG The winter is like going forth to Him, “bearing his reproach”. “Let us”, we are going out there, but then the other side is, “let us approach” (chap 10: 22), and we get the approach now in chapter 2 of the Song of Songs.

AM That is helpful. Thank you.

AGM The title He uses is “My dove, in the clefts of the rock”. Do you think the assembly is sensitive and suitable for Christ? I was thinking of “the clefts of the rock” as really a reference to the effects of His death. “The rocks were rent” in Matthew (chap 27: 51), but I think the idea of “dove” is very important in that way.

AM It is as if there is a sensitivity wrought by the Holy Spirit that He finds in His assembly, “My dove, in the clefts of the rock”.

I think it would be good to move on to Hebrews. There are those who are His brethren, those who are of His own order, but He quickly moves on to the assembly; it is the same personnel, but it is important to get a view of the assembly as one vessel, as a united vessel. We may think of the assembly as lots of believers, but the assembly is one vessel, one vessel that is capable of being taken by Christ in response to the Father.

BL Is that why the word is changed from the psalm? It is “congregation” in Psalm 22: 22, but it is “assembly” here?

AM That is right. There is dignity in the word “assembly”, what is dignified, what is exclusive to Him. Say some more.

BL “Congregation” is a collection of individuals.

AM And I think we need to be maintained in the sense that the assembly *is* a vessel, a holy and dignified vessel, that is suited to Christ Himself.

JS Do you think as we experience in the service what it is to be for the satisfaction of the heart of Christ and the enjoyment of His love, and union with Him, that would produce very sensitive feelings to know His promptings as He would lead us onwards?

AM I think so. That is good. So He has in mind movement to the Father. We can understand that somebody might want to prolong in unduly, but in fact His desires are to move on so that there should be a full answer to the Father. Is that what you think?

JS Quite so. I thought the assembly having the experience of union would make her very sensitive as to His feelings and promptings immediately, do you think?

AM Yes, indeed. In a sense He does not have to say anything. As you say, it is His own feelings, His own promptings in relation to it, and the assembly would be conscious of that as united with Him.

RB In the reading of it you get the impression that the assembly has gathered round Him. He is “in the midst”.

AM Well, that is His place. Think of His voice being raised “in the midst”. I remember a brother who was addressing the Father - I am told his face was shining - and he spoke about the Lord praising the Father “in the midst of the assembly”, and he said, 'We hear His voice. What must it be to Thee?'. Think of the Lord's voice being raised to the Father “in the midst of the assembly”! He has the myriads who are with Him, who are one with Him in response to the Father. What must it be to the Father?

RT Is it augmented by the assembly being with Him? He has already been in the presence of the Father. He went in there

Received in glory bright up there, (Hymn 350).

But the assembly being with Him adds something else to the song and the sweetness and the blessedness of the presence.

AM Yes, it adds to it, and yet it does not introduce anything different, but it is adding to the richness and, you might say, greatness of what is for the Father's pleasure.

RT So we are there in sonship.

AM Yes, that is right. The Lord's brethren are the Father's sons, and we are there in sonship, and all that that involves dignity, liberty, joy, intelligence: all these features that mark sons.

RB The psalmist speaks about "an instrument of ten strings". Ps 92: 3. Each of these strings would be tightened to perfection to give a perfect note.

AM That is right. There is a skill in playing a ten-stringed instrument. Think of the skill that is required, but the Lord strikes the chord, and He finds what is suited to the heart of God. Everything was suited to the heart of God in Him, but He finds it in His assembly. He can strike that chord and find that the response is perfect.

PAG Is one feature of the response that the assembly appreciates the economy into which God has come? We have spoken about the place that the Lord has, and the place that the Spirit has, and now the place that the Father has. That economy of love is uniquely appreciated by the assembly.

AM The assembly is really in the full intelligence of the arrangements of divine Persons and can respond in that way. It is good that in the response to God it is not just that there is a response from the hearts in affection, but that it is suited to God. It is an intelligent response.

DCB The psalm refers to God dwelling "amid the praises of Israel", Ps 22: 3. I wondered if you see that, that God finds in this something that is His own resting place.

AM That is right. It is as if God would say, 'This is what I have been working towards from the outset', and He rests in it. It says in Zephaniah, "he will rest in his love; he will exult over thee with singing". The assembly in the presence of God forms a resting-place for God. He can actually find His rest there. You may think that is an extraordinary thing to say, but it is true. There is an eternal rest for God secured through the saints.

RT The type is often quoted, Jacob saying, "Bring them ... to me"

(Gen 48: 9); they “shall be mine”, v 5.

AM Yes, that is right. They were those he could take account of and he could see their origin was in Joseph; they were Joseph's seed, and he says, they “shall be mine”.

RT There would be elevation in a sense at that time, but that would be true as well. There is some sense of a further movement: they “shall be mine”. We come into the fulness of the divine purpose.

AM That is right. What blessing to know that we are His and to have some understanding of divine purpose!

RT “Let my name be named upon them”, v 16.

RB The Spirit of God gives us a beautiful touch in that section that Mr Taylor is referring to. It says, “he brought them nearer”, v 10.

AM Our portion is that there is no distance, no distance at all. “Bring them ... to me, that I may bless them”. There is to be no distance at all, and we have our place in the Father's presence.

RT I remember Mr A B Parker speaking on that verse. He said, 'It says, “Bring them ... to me, that I may bless them”, but the first thing he does is he kisses them before he blesses them'.

AM That is good, just to get a sense of the Father's own affections. That is a fine touch. So as we come into the Father's presence, it is without fear. There is reverence, but it is without fear, and there is a sense of welcome, the Father's joy in having His sons in His own presence.

GAB “For both he that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one”. It brings out wonderful harmony between the Lord's own word and singing and those of His own. There is a unity and harmony, do you not think?

AM That is right: “all of one”, all of one nature. It is a new order, another order of man altogether, “all of one”. Say some more.

GAB The Lord says in His prayer in John 17, “that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them and I them”, v 26. We have the sense of the Father's favour just as it is in Christ. Now, as united with Him, we can respond in that wonderful harmony.

AM Yes, and He also says in that prayer, “thou hast loved them as

thou hast loved me”, v 23. I remember a brother, when I was young, raised a question in the meeting, which is the greater, the Father's love for Christ or the Father's love for you? Which is greater? Of course, I, as a lad, thought that it has to be the Father's love for Christ. But it is the same love. We can understand the Father's love for Christ, can we not? “Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me” is the same love, one love, and we are brought into that scene of affection where the love that rests upon Christ rests upon His own, the same love. What a wonderful thing that is!

GBG “Taken us into favour in the Beloved” (Eph 1: 6): that is like “the winter is past”.

AM That is good. Say some more.

GBG In that setting the sufferings and the sorrow of Christ are all over, “taken us into favour in the Beloved”, in Christ, in the Father's presence, delighting in Him.

AM Yes, that is right. What He means to the Father, and the Father looks upon the saints and He says, 'I am accepting you in all the worth of that One'. All He sees is Christ, is it not? He sees Christ in the saints.

JW Shines on us now without recall,
And lasts while Jesus lives. (Hymn 26)

AM That is good. In those hymns of Mr Darby's you see his joy in the knowledge of the Father's love.

RG That all links with what Mr Taylor was referring to in relation to Jacob. Joseph says to them, “And behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth which speaks to you. And tell my father of all my glory”, Gen 45: 12, 13. It is a wonderful thing to have some sense that the voice of the Lord can be heard by us in this regard. “It is my mouth which speaks to you”. These are those that had opposed him; they had rejected him; they had sold him; but here they are in the complacency of love, secured through love, to be taken in to the Father, to understand before the Father, that the Father's love was upon them as Joseph's love was upon them.

AM That is very good. Well, you can understand Paul saying, “who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ” (Eph 1: 3), the greatest blessings in the most exalted place secured in the most precious and the most blessed Man, all secured in Him; and

you see it in type in Joseph, his brethren secured. It is Himself. Well, God has His delight in this: “he will rest in his love; he will exult over thee with singing”. Think of the heart of God exulting over His own, the joy of God over His own!

PAG Would we have some impression in this of what God has expended in order to secure what His heart was set on? I know it is a reference directly to the Father. We know that “God is a spirit; and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth”, John 4: 24. That is due to God. But “the Father seeks such as his worshippers”, v 23. God did not just purpose this in a past eternity and then wait for it all to come to fruition through some act of power. He has sought, He has been active, in order to secure what is dear to Him.

AM God has a response that did come about through an act of power in angels. But think of the expenditure that there has been in order to secure a response in men, so that He should gain their affections and that His love should be known and that He Himself should be known. He will have in man what He will never have in angels, an expression of Himself, in man, in liberty and in joy in His own presence, responsive to Himself, and the glory is all His. What a wonderful thing, to think of the way in which God has worked, and that has taken the ages of time.

RB And He will display it throughout the countless ages of eternity for His own pleasure.

AM He will display “the riches of his grace” (Eph 1: 7) in the coming ages. That is, what grace has secured, what could be secured in no other way, but that He has secured for His own joy and pleasure and He takes delight in displaying it. He will take delight in displaying what has been secured through grace and He will rest in it eternally.

RB Canst all in love survey, Hymn 258.

JW I was thinking of that poor woman in John 4 who had not found satisfaction, but she found it in Christ, and He was immediately thinking of what was due to the Father. She was just converted, and He was thinking of what was there for the Father's pleasure.

AM And is that not what we have been taken up for? We have been taken up for the Father's pleasure.

DCB So there has been a great expenditure and energy of love to

bring us in, but now He is resting. We sang this morning:

Love in its own dwelling (Hymn 100).

AM Yes, that is good, so the striving, the cost, *that* was limited; the rest is eternal.

DCB There is a new voice here in this reference in Zephaniah, God Himself. Could you say something about that?

AM I do not know that I could. I feel very limited about what I could say, but it just seems to me it is the expression of His own joy. What do you think?

DCB I do not know if I could say more. It affects our hearts that God Himself should look upon what is entirely according to His purpose and His pleasure and should sing because of it; it is for each one of us to be affected that God is singing because of us.

AM It is an extraordinary thing to think of, but it must be so that He must secure what is completely in accord with His own mind and His own heart. He *must* secure it.

JD We use our bodies and our voices to sing, which is physical, but this is really spiritual response. I am looking for help, but we do not hear the Lord's voice physically, but we know His headship, and we know Him singing through the saints and now the point we have reached here in relation to God is a spiritual matter.

AM The whole realm of the Father is a spiritual realm, is it not? Yet we are caught up in it even though we are in these conditions and the saints' voices are raised. I think we had a sense of that this morning. The saints were moved in response to divine Persons. There was a certain richness and liberty that was found as one after another gave expression in response to God.

RT Does what our brother says not bring out a further deep expression of the Spirit's service to us in this very thing we are speaking about?

AM Yes, help us.

RT At the end of Ephesians 3 where it is speaking about the eternal day, it says, "according to the power which works in us", v 20. There is a power there all the time. It is not our physical bodies that are sustaining it, but the Spirit is there sustaining the whole thing for the Father's

pleasure.

AM That is good. That helps. And He has His part in that service. “For through him we have both access by one Spirit to the Father”, Eph 2: 18. He has His part in maintaining that service and sustaining the saints. As Christ leads in it, He sustains it.

Buckie

5th May 2013

Key to initials:-

R Bain, Buckie; D C Brown, Edinburgh; G A Brown, Grangemouth;
R Gardiner, Kirkcaldy; G B Grant, Dundee; R W McClean, Grimsby;
A Martin, Buckhurst Hill; A G Mair, Cullen; B W Lovie, Aberdeen;
E J Mair, Buckie; T Mair, Cullen; D T Pye, Kirkcaldy;
J Strachan, Dundee; R Taylor, Kirkcaldy; J Webster, Fraserburgh

FULL SALVATION

John Speirs

Hebrews 4: 13

Romans 3: 23

1 Timothy 2: 3 (from “our Saviour God”) - 6

1 John 1: 7

John 16: 13

Each of these scriptures that I have read contains the word “all”. I suppose the children would know what that means. If I said, 'All of the people in this room', you would know that would include everyone; no-one would be excluded. It is a complete thought, a full thought, and in the glad tidings we have to do with what is full, what is complete. In this world in which we live, man tries his best to do certain things, but he always falls short. He is not able to do things completely. He runs out of time, runs out of money, runs out of the will to do it, runs out of resources. He is not able to do things completely, but it is a wonderful comfort to know that in the glad tidings we have to do with what is full, what is complete. But it is also a solemn thing to see first of all the complete failure of man, the complete inability to do anything for himself in the way of salvation, the complete failure to meet God's standard.

Where we read in Hebrews it speaks about all things being seen by God. What impressed me was that not one thing is “unapparent before him; but all things are naked and laid bare to his eyes”. Do you know that, dear friend? That is an absolute statement, “all things are naked and laid bare to his eyes”. That is God. He is the One with whom we have to do, and we **have** to do with Him. It is not optional. You might not want to do with God. You might think you can avoid Him. God sees everything that you do without exception. He saw what you did last night. He saw the things you were occupied with. He saw where you went yesterday. He saw who you spoke to. He saw the company you were keeping, and not only that, He saw what you were thinking. If I was there I could see where you go, and what you do, but I could not see what you were thinking. I cannot see what is in your heart. God can. How does that make you feel? How do you feel? You might think, 'I am quite good at covering things up so that my parents do not even know it, my friends do not know it, my wife or my husband does not know it'. God knows it. You cannot hide it from Him. “And there is not a creature unapparent before him; but all things are naked and laid bare to his eyes” - complete, full knowledge of everything: that is God, that is

the One with whom we have to do.

The wonderful thing is that although God knows you, knows what is in our heart and sees that it is disobedience to Him, wanting to satisfy the flesh, He has also provided the answer so that there can be a change with you; so that you do not have to try and cover things up. You can just be open and honest with God. The gospel is a time to be honest with ourselves before God. A lot of what goes on in the world, in systems of men, or in the media, may look good and have an appearance of what is right, but it is only a very thin veneer, and below it is corruption driven by “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”, 1 John 2: 16. That is what is in the world and God sees all these things.

In Romans where we read, it is very clear that there is no difference between persons. It is speaking about different persons, such as Jews and Gentiles, and there is no difference, no difference depending on your nationality, background, or the company that you keep, or the upbringing that you have had, or the life that you live. There is no difference, “for all have sinned”. That is a complete statement: “all have sinned” - that includes you, and it includes me - “and come short of the glory of God”. It is interesting that “all have sinned” is in the past and “come short” is present. That is - we do “come short of the glory of God”. You might say, 'I have tried hard to be good. I have tried to do what would please God. I have tried to be obedient to Him. Is that not enough?'. Have you found that you have succeeded? God gave man a full opportunity to prove that he was able to obey God, to be subject to Him. He gave him the law; He gave him a set of commandments. How far did man get? How far would you have got? How far would I have got? No further than those that failed so quickly. Come to it that there is nothing you can do for yourself, and that you are a sinner. What are you going to do? What a hopeless situation you find yourself in. I realise that I am a sinner, and I come short of the glory of God. God is not going to lower His standards. God is not going to overlook anything, or pretend that your sins do not exist. A price has to be paid on your account. Are you going to be able to pay it yourself? Oh, dear friend, it is not possible, and the best that you could do is not enough. It says in Luke's gospel, “as they had nothing to pay ...”, chap 7: 42. Come to it that you have nothing to offer God in relation to your sins or your sinful state. You are just another sinner from Adam's race, descended from the disobedient one and, not only that, practising disobedience, proving that you are from that race, disobeying God. Think of how simple God's requirements for men were, simple

obedience, subjection to Him, “Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole of man”, Eccl 12: 13. How far have I got in doing that? I fail hopelessly but we can thank God that He has provided One who did satisfy Him, who obeyed Him perfectly, and His name is Jesus. Do you know Him? I am sure you have heard His name before, the name of Jesus. What does that Name mean to you? He wants to have to do with you. He is speaking to you. He wants to speak to you about your soul, that soul that everyone here has, a soul that is never-dying.

I read in Timothy because it speaks there about God's attitude. You might think that, God having seen that all were sinners, He might have given up on man. We might think He might have said, 'Man has proved himself to be a failure, I will give up on him'. Thanks be to God that He has not done that! God has a perfect standard of righteousness and holiness but He is also a God of love:

The heart of God is love;
That love extends to thee

(Hymn 59).

Think of that dear friend: God's heart of love is towards you as an individual. We have spoken of all men, we have spoken of God knowing all things, He knows everything about you, and He knows that you are a sinner but, dear friend, what does it say? “Our Saviour God, who desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth”. That is wonderful, is it not? God has not excluded anyone. It might be thought that it would be reasonable for God to preach forgiveness to those who would be considered to have had quite good lives, preach the gospel to them, but those that would be considered really wicked, He cannot possibly preach to them. No matter who you are or what you have done, no matter how good or vile you are in your own estimation or anyone else's, you are a sinner in God's estimation; but He commends His love to you. Even what you might think the smallest sin is abhorrent to God. You have personally offended God. I have personally offended God. Do not make light of sin. We might think a sin is of little account - just telling a little lie, just doing my own will instead of His; but these things are offensive to God. But He is One “who desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth”. That is God's desire, that you should not remain in your sins, because God will ultimately have to judge persons, and He will judge perfectly and righteously, and there will be no appeal court. In this country and in these times it seems there are more and more avenues for appeal. You can keep appealing to a higher and higher

court. When the day of God's judgment comes there will be no appeal. God will be righteous in doing that. Do not trifle with what God has to offer in the glad tidings. He "desires that all men should be saved", and how is He going to do it? Further down it says, "the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all". There it is again. A ransom only for the good? No! A ransom only for those in the Western world? No! A ransom only for those from a middle class upbringing? No: "a ransom for all". What a Saviour! What a work! How has He done it? How has this price been paid? Do you know what a ransom is? It is a price that has to be paid to set someone free, and, you know, sin holds us captive; but the price has already been paid; but you need to accept in faith that it was paid for you; to believe is that Jesus paid that price Himself. How did He do it? Did He do it by some vast sum of money? Did He do it by some political arrangement? Did He do it by some words of power? No, dear friend, He "gave himself a ransom for all". He gave up that life that was precious to God, that life that was perfect. There was no-one else ever like that on the earth, perfect. Think of God's delight in Him in His life here. It was that life that had to be given up for you and for me who were without any hope at all; but He did it, He finished it, that work that God gave Him to do. What a Saviour! Do you know Him? Have you accepted Jesus for yourself? If you do not, you have no hope. I appeal to you, that you have to do with Jesus now, "the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all". That is a wonderful thing!

The children know that He came to Bethlehem's manger, a Babe "wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger", Luke 2: 12. It was not a grand entrance in the world's view. But He was God, God Himself come down to draw near to persons; not to frighten them, but to draw near to them. He came into manhood's form, not an angel, not some other being, but into manhood's form, so that He could draw near to men like you and me, so that we could draw near to Him, so that we could believe on Him. But that perfect life in which He did nothing but the Father's will ended in death, ended in a cruel and wicked death which exposed the heart of man for what it was, because they crucified Him, they crucified the Lord of glory, they crucified the Originator of life. Think of that, One who was God Himself, but here in manhood allowing Himself to be taken by men, a perfect Man crucified on the cross. Why? For anything that He had done? Far be the thought! He was perfect. The wages of sin did not apply to Him, the penalty of death did not apply to Him. He was sinless, He was the sinless One, but He went to the cross for you, if you believe. Do you believe it? Do you have faith? God would give you faith to believe it: He gave Himself "a ransom for

all". Can you say, 'He gave Himself a ransom for me'? He paid that price in dying and shedding His precious blood so that I could go free before God. What a wonderful Saviour He is! Think of Him there on the cross. Think of man in his hatred putting Him there, and think of Him bearing in those three hours of darkness what no man could bear apart from that sinless One. Think of Him being abandoned of God. Think of the pouring out of God's wrath on the head of Jesus in condemnation of sin, on that sinless One, who was "made sin for us", 2 Cor 5: 21. What a Saviour, dear friend! He went that way for me. Can you say He went that way for you? I trust you can because, if you can your sins are forgiven you can have peace towards God, and know that your eternal salvation is secure and that nothing can change it. What a wonderful free and full message there is in the glad tidings.

I read in John's epistle because it says there "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin". You might accept He gave Himself a ransom for all men, but you may ask is it for all their sins, is it for all my sins? "The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanses us from all sin". Would you like to have a sense of being completely clean before God? God looks at you as a sinner and He looks at me, and if we do not have our sins forgiven, have them covered by the blood of Jesus, He sees them there, outstanding in their scarlet and crimson dye, clearly apparent to Him and offensive. But if they are covered by the blood of Jesus they are gone and they are gone forever. How would you like to be able to stand before God, and not be afraid of Him looking at your heart, because He sees Jesus has been received there? Would you let Jesus into your heart? He wants a place there and He deserves a place there. Let Him in! You will never regret it. Think of Him cleansing us from all sin. You might say, 'what if I sin again?'. Well, "the blood of Jesus Christ ... cleanses us from all sin". All our sins are covered and we can go on, in the assurance that our sins are covered.

Have you repented to God? Have you accepted that you are a sinner? Have you confessed your sins to Him? Confession, it has been said, is the fruit of repentance (FER vol 20, p42). You do not have to tell anyone else about those sins. You must own them to God, tell them to the Lord Jesus. You can confide in Him. You do not have to be afraid. He knows them all anyway, but He loves persons to come to Him and tell Him that they need Him as their Saviour. Have you done it? I urge you to do it, dear friend.

I read in John's gospel where it speaks about "the Spirit of truth". This is the Lord Jesus speaking. He is speaking to those that loved Him

while He was here on earth, and He is comforting them because He is going away. The Lord Jesus is not here any more; that is apparent. He died, He shed His blood, He went into the grave, but He did not remain there. He was raised by the glory of the Father. He laid down His life Himself and He took it again. He had authority to do so. Not only that, not only was He seen by many after He had risen from the dead, but He went into heaven, and that is where He is tonight, and it is from heaven that He is speaking to you. What He says here is that Someone else is coming, "the Spirit of truth". What will He do? "He shall guide you into all the truth". God has nothing but full and complete blessing in mind for you. You might think, 'I have been such a bad sinner, perhaps God will only just forgive me my sins but keep me in a place where I am made to feel guilty'. No, dear friend, that will not do! That will not do for God. He wants you to be in full liberty in His presence. If you are a believer He has justified you. That means that you are no longer held as guilty before God, because God has cleansed you and has done so on a righteous basis. You might think that, if someone offends me and I forgive them, other people can still look at that person and say that he is guilty, but in the presence of God sinners justified cannot be accused. Satan would try to do that. He would try to make you feel bad about your sins, try to bring up the guilt of them again, but God will not do that. Their guilt is gone, gone forever. What a wonderful comfort! But there is more, "he shall guide you into all the truth". You know what a guide is. It is someone that knows a place better than you do. You might go to a foreign city. What is the best way to find your way around? Find someone who knows it well. The Holy Spirit knows the truth, perfectly, and He would guide you into all the truth. You have to be willing to be led by Him. How much are you willing to have Him guide you into the truth? Are you willing to give up some of the things that you do for your own will? You might think, 'I am saved. I can go and do my own thing again. My eternal salvation is secure'. What about God? How does He feel if I just do my own will again? He has so much in store for you, and the Holy Spirit is the power He would give, a blessed divine Person, "he shall guide you into all the truth". There is no limit to what He is able to show you because He is a divine Person, "he shall guide you into all the truth". Well, I just leave it as an appeal. Let Him guide you a little further than you have been already. Give Him a bit more time in your life. Let Him show you something more about your Saviour. Let Him make you realise that Jesus is not only your Saviour but He is your Lord, that is you are to be subject to Him, that you take direction from Him, and that you also see that He is the glorious Son of God. You see that Christ desires to bring you before His Father in liberty and joy. He has

in mind that you should have a place there as a worshipper.

And He has in mind too that you should be faithful to Him in the testimony down here. Have you done that? Have you publicly associated yourself with Jesus? Perhaps you would like to do that. Perhaps because you know how much He has done for you, you would like to do something for Him. He says, "This do in remembrance of me", Luke 22: 19. Have you remembered Him in the breaking of bread? Would you like to do so? The Lord Jesus would love you to. He has done everything for you, would you not do this for Him? I leave this word with you: the Spirit would "guide you into all the truth". That is what is available. God has no half measures, I would say carefully, in mind for the believer. He has full blessing in mind, and then eternally you shall be with Him. Dear friend, if you continue to refuse God's glad tidings, a time will come when you will be banished from God's presence for ever and endure eternal suffering. That is a solemn fact, but that need not be your portion because Jesus is available tonight. Simply come to Him in repentance, believe that He died for you, believe that He shed His precious blood for you, and your sins will be forgiven. Come to Him! Ask for the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to guide you into the truth and you will not be disappointed. As you do so God will get something too. If you go in for the truth, you see what God has prepared for those that love Him, and the result would be worship. That is what God is looking for, "the Father seeks such as his worshippers", John 4: 23. Are you a worshipper? You worship in the power of the Spirit; He would help you to do that.

Well, I would just leave the impression of the fulness of the glad tidings that we have, that we know that God sees *all* things laid bare before Him, and that *all* men are sinners, but He desires that *all* men should be saved, and Jesus Christ gave Himself a ransom for *all*, His blood cleanses us from *all* sin, and the Spirit would guide you into *all* the truth. May you come into it by faith yourself, personally, you have to accept it for yourself. Come to Jesus tonight. Accept Him as your Saviour.

May it be so for His Name's sake!

Bo'ness

24th February 2013

BURDENS

David J Hutson

Galatians 6: 2, 5

1 Corinthians 12: 12-13 to “one body”, 26-27

Matthew 11: 28-30

I have been interested, beloved, in these references in Galatians to burdens. The note tells us that they are different words, and therefore I have referred to the other scriptures which may amplify that a little for our encouragement. There are many burdens being carried at the present time, burdens of sickness, family burdens and bereavement, matters of employment. How many burdens there are, but what a comfort it is that we have one another. It says, “Bear one another's burdens”, and then it speaks of fulfilling “the law of the Christ”. That was why I turned to Corinthians, because there we have the reference to the body, and this working out of bearing one another's burdens would be a working out of the practical effect of the fact that we are members of the body of Christ. There is that peculiar reference to the body that we often refer to where it says, “so also is the Christ”. That is the same expression as in Galatians. Mr Darby says in the footnote that “the” might be omitted, but he prefers to put it in and I think that would show that he would prefer this reference, “the law of the Christ”. It is not the law as it was at the time of the ten commandments, but it would be a regulating principle; so that what regulates us in these matters, beloved, that we “bear one another's burdens”, is the truth of the fact that we are all members of the body of Christ, “the law of the Christ”. We feel these things, “if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it”. There is much among us in the way of suffering at the present time, but it elevates these matters as we take account of them as relating to the body of Christ, and what it must be for Him to see the workings of the body here on earth at the present time. It will not be so in glory when we have bodies of glory, each one of us, transformed “into conformity to his body of glory”, Phil 3: 21. There will be no burdens then; so that it is something distinct to the present time of testimony for the heart of Christ, to see the working of the body in this way.

Then it says later, “For each shall bear his own burden”. Mr Darby's note connects that with this reference in Matthew 11, “for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light”. Jesus says at the beginning, “Come to me, all ye who labour and are burdened”. That also fits with

the second of the two references in Galatians, it would seem to be more of the side of the heavy burdens - "labour" and "burdened". So there is what we bear together, as bearing one another's burdens in the working out of the truth of the body of Christ, but then there is also that which we have each one of us to bear. Though we bear one another's burdens, each one in particular is affected by his own particular burden, and in that regard the Lord Jesus says, "come to me, all ye who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest". Then He goes on to say that, "my yoke is easy, and my burden is light"; that is also the same word as where it says, "For each shall bear his own burden". So that whilst we bear one another's burdens and find comfort in that, and whilst there is that for the comfort of the heart of Christ as He takes account of the workings of the body here, there is also this personal matter; there is that which affects us personally, which we can take to the Lord Jesus and find that He would say, "my yoke is easy, and my burden is light". How wonderful that He would speak of a yoke; how wonderful it is that He would, as it were, be joined with us in relation to the burdens that we carry in order that we might prove them to be light as carried with Him. Paul speaks in one place of a "true yoke-fellow", Phil 4: 3. We would not apply that to Christ, of course, but it gives the idea of how these things work out personally, and then he speaks also of the Holy Spirit who "joins also its help to our weakness", Rom 8: 26. How wonderful these things are! Then it speaks, too, of the Father and the chastening. At no time is it pleasant for us, "but afterwards yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness", Heb 12:11.

So I bring these references forward, beloved, because there is much pressure among us, but all this is with a positive end in view, with the working out of the truth of the body here for the pleasure of Christ at the present time. Not that we can speak of it in its full extent; we can only speak of walking together as in the light of it: nevertheless, as we do, and as this is worked out through the pressures that are among us, there is what is here which is peculiarly for the pleasure of the heart of Christ. Then as we carry these things before the Lord, as we come to Him as He says, "Come to me, all ye who labour and are burdened", each one of us finds that He would be with us, the Spirit would join His help to our weakness, and we would prove that Christ's yoke is easy and His burden is light. We would have the blessed support of the Lord Jesus as we are with Him with the burden, and the experience too of the Holy Spirit Himself joining Himself to our weakness, making intercessions for us "with groanings which cannot be uttered". What

does it say there in Romans 8, well known to us? “But we *do* know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to purpose”, v 28. So how wonderful that in all these things there is this wonderful end in view, that we *do* know that all things are working together for good to those who love God, to those that are called according to His purpose.

Well, may the Lord help us, beloved, as we work these things out together, and as each one of us takes his burden to the Lord and finds that He would be with him in it; and the Spirit would join Himself to our weakness, so that we might prove the blessedness of what it is for these things to work together for good for those that love God in view of a response to His own heart. May the Lord help us and encourage us!

Edinburgh

20th August 2013

PENTECOST AND THE PRESENCE HERE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

John N Darby

Leviticus 23: 15-22

After the general thought of the Sabbath and the Passover, we find in verses 9-14 of this chapter a figure of the resurrection of Christ in the wave sheaf on “the next day after the sabbath”.

The Christian dispensation is based on two great facts: the resurrection of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit which verses 15-22, that we have just read.

At the time of the wave sheaf, there is the burnt offering but no sin offering at all. Seven weeks later, at Pentecost (v 15), the two loaves offered are baked with leaven. The resurrection removes sin but the gift of the Holy Spirit does not remove it. That is why, at Pentecost, a goat is offered as a sin offering. The life which we have received from Jesus raised is essentially without sin; sin cannot enter there, any more than it ever entered in Christ. He came into contact with sin constantly without ever being touched or defiled by it. The Spirit of holiness which was with Him during His life was the same Spirit by which He has been declared Son of God in power by resurrection of the dead (Rom 1: 4). The resurrection leaves the fallen human nature entirely aside. That of Christ forms the basis of the presentation of the church before God, in communicating a new life to it. This resurrection life is hid with Christ in God, but the presence of the Holy Spirit manifests in a very particular way the Christian's character down here.

Christ glorified, who represents us *before God*, sends the Holy Spirit *down here* and manifests His presence by certain results. If the Holy Spirit is grieved, the witness is lost in proportion; if He acts with power, the testimony is bright. This “Comforter” has been given to us to abide with us for ever, and the judgment of God on His church simply consists of pronouncing how far it has responded to the presence of the Holy Spirit in its midst. This power of the Holy Spirit manifests itself in believers in the midst of the evil which surrounds them, but for all that, without the world being changed in any way.

One cannot separate the Spirit acting in grace from the Spirit acting in power, for there is only one Spirit. They had more power than grace in Corinth, and the Holy Spirit reproves the Corinthians in this respect; but both one and the other manifest the presence of the Holy

Spirit. The miracles are called “works of power of the age to come” (Heb 6: 5); they were samples of the power of Christ which will drive evil out of the world. By the Spirit, Christ came in power and grace in the midst of evil. The grace is eternal, but the power which drives out evil will no longer need to be manifested when it has finished its work.

If the church does not act in the power of the Spirit against the world, the world will act against the church with the power of Satan, its prince, who is always ready to lead it. Christ reassures us in showing us that the Spirit who is in us is stronger than he that is in the world (1 John 4: 4); but if the church does not manifest itself in power, it is invaded by error and conquered by the world. This is also what has happened to it.

The gift of tongues such as was manifested first of all at Pentecost was the smallest of the gifts, but it was a great manifestation of grace towards the Gentiles. At Babel, God had smitten the pride of man and separated the peoples by the confusion of tongues. From the moment the Holy Spirit is given, He crosses the Jewish barrier and speaks the great things of God to every nation in its own tongue. This fact signalled the power of Christianity; it was the sign that the glad tidings are addressed to all those who have need of it.

Pentecost was thus the blessed manifestation that God was in the world and deployed there in grace a power greater than that of Satan.

This leads me to another remark. These things took place on the earth; the Holy Spirit is sent down here from on high, and abides here as the Comforter. He manifests the Name of the Father and of the Son. He is God from all eternity, one with the Father and the Son. He is not an incarnation but He is a power in man down here on the earth.

The more I read the New Testament, the more I am struck to see how much the presence of the Holy Spirit is brought to light there. In Romans 7, there is no mention either of Christ or of the Holy Spirit where it is a question of the state of an awakened soul under the law; but in chapter 8, it is the presence of the Holy Spirit which marks that state of the liberated soul even to the resurrection of the body. “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us”, Rom 5: 5. God Himself is there by His Spirit. Salvation depends entirely upon His love for us, and the heart realises this practically in answering by love to the nature of Him who is love,

and who is in us. The affections cannot manifest themselves without the heart having an object, and for that we need besides the life of resurrection, the power of the Holy Spirit who takes the things of Christ and brings them to us, bringing into action in us the faculties of the new man.

By His presence, the Holy Spirit renders testimony that we are children of God. In Him we possess Someone who gives us more than a rule of life, who leads us in holiness. He gives us the understanding of the will and thought of God, for we have an unction from the Holy One, and we know all things, 1 John 2: 20. The Holy Spirit attaches us to heaven by our needs and intercedes “with groanings which cannot be uttered”, Rom 8: 26. He glorifies Christ in communicating to us the things which are of Him; He maintains the church in its relations with the glorified Man. He does not only testify of the love of God: He shows the glory given to the Son of man. He acts according to this glory, and the church is the vessel called to contain it in the midst of this world; for the church is the tabernacle of God in Spirit, Eph 2: 22.

As a fact, outwardly, such a thing hardly exists any more and it is impossible that the church can be satisfied with the way in which it manifests this glory before possessing it in reality. In as much as He is love, the Holy Spirit longs after the time when, all corruption having come to an end, the glory will be fully manifested. The more the church understands that, the more she longs, even for the world, after the moment when she will be manifested. It is this which makes her say, “Come!”, She desires to see the day of the Son of man shine everywhere, and in waiting for it, she says by the Spirit, 'I already have the river of living water', and addressing the world, she offers it [God's] salvation: “Let him that is athirst come; he that will, let him take of the water of life freely”, Rev 22: 7.

When we have truly grasped the truth of the presence of the Holy Spirit down here, we have the deep feeling of our own poverty, and we are amazed in seeing the state into which the church is fallen, having regard to the way in which the Spirit was manifested in her at the beginning.

The Holy Spirit has come to manifest the glory of Christ down here before manifesting it above.

Apart from the oblation, there was a sin offering at Pentecost. We need this as long as there is leaven in the offering.

With Pentecost, the harvest is not yet complete, v 22. This dispensation will not be the means of gathering *all* that there will be of souls that are saved. There will be good grain left in the field of the world for the poor (the Jew) and the stranger (the Gentile), beyond the great harvest of the church. The “corners of the fields” will not be harvested; there will still be ears to glean.

The seventh month is the memorial of the jubilee, the gathering of Israel (v 23-25), then the day of atonement will take place, the affliction and repentance of the people (v 26-32); and finally the feast of tabernacles, joy with the presence of Christ in the midst of Israel.