

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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THE LORD'S SUPPER

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JL In pursuit of our enquiry into the things that belong to this particular dispensation in which we are privileged to have our part, it was in mind for this reading that we should consider the Lord's supper and what it leads into. There are many other scriptures that brethren might be free to refer to which may prove useful in the course of our enquiry, but I have read this particular unfolding by the apostle Paul of what he received directly from the Lord in glory. There is something particularly appealing about the presentation here, having come from Christ Himself; Paul says, "*I received from the Lord*". What feelings there must have been in the heart of the Lord Jesus on that night when He was delivered up, and Paul's reference to it here brings a great appeal to our hearts' affections, that we should thus remember Him as set out here. Paul adds his *own* words in verse 26 - these are not the words of the Lord Jesus but Paul's further words concerning it - "as often as ye shall eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye announce the death of the Lord, until he come". That shows its particular significance as belonging to this dispensation; not that I would limit the thought of the Lord coming to the immediacy of the rapture that is before us, but it is my understanding that from that point there will be no continuance of the celebration of the Lord's supper as we have it now. I trust that we will get help as we mutually and appreciatively enquire together of love's opportunity, granted to us by way of privilege.

TRV Would you associate the reference in Ephesians to "the eyes of your heart" (chap 1: 18) with this appeal that we have from the apostle? It is not just an appointment that we have, as we might have at school or work. It is something that would draw us along in our hearts' affections, as to that beloved One. So it is "the eyes of your heart"; there is intelligence in it, but we have to have our heart engaged to respond to this appeal.

JL Yes, I would be very happy to associate that thought with it. The context there in Ephesians where the eyes of our heart are presented has to do with another subject, but it is thoroughly appropriate to this one as well, because this is a matter that calls upon our affections. It is not set out here just as a formal matter of doctrine belonging to Christianity, but it is something presented as a special appeal to our

hearts, and on that account I like your connection there. And yet it involves taking it up intelligently with an understanding of the significance of these emblems that are before us as we celebrate the Lord's supper, the loaf and the cup, speaking to our hearts of His body and of His blood.

HWJ It distinguishes here particularly between taking the Lord's supper and eating in our homes, making this a very much higher level of things to engage our affections.

JL Yes, very much so; maybe you have more to say about that?

HWJ I think we need to think of the dignity and importance of it; the great dignity that is involved in gathering together to remember such a One who has given His body for us, and shed His precious blood for us. He not only *deserves* to be remembered, but He is entitled to the place that we give Him.

JL Yes, I am glad you bring those thoughts in. It had grieved the apostle that, in the minds of the Corinthians, the Supper had become degraded in its significance and was rather associated with common eating. Well, it is at a very much higher level. It involves responsibility undoubtedly, but it is a matter of the highest privilege that we should have this opportunity to answer to the affections of the Lord Jesus according to His own declared desire.

JHH He directs them to “keep the directions” (1 Cor 11: 2); he sets the matter out in an orderly way, does he not?

JL Yes, I think that; that is very good and bears on the way in which we come together, does it not? We are to assemble together in suited dignity, and free from other things that would detract from the opportunity for the responsive affections of the saints to rise in answer to the love of Christ.

JHH So we have, “hold fast the instructions” (2 Thess 2: 15); that principle is the means of direction leading to the Supper.

JL There is particular direction to guide us to that point.

AML Does the principle come out in Acts 20: “we being assembled” (v 7); would that be the exercise and dignity that are related to this occasion?

JL Yes; that is one of the other scriptures that was in my mind, and it brings in the dignity with which we gather, we assemble together; and

Luke the writer there reminds us that it was associated with the first day of the week; we gather on the first day of the week. Why do we not announce the Supper?

D-IJK Help us as to why it is the first day of the week, because it says here, “as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye announce the death of the Lord”? So why is it the first day of the week?

JL Well, the immediacy of the Lord's coming is before us; and we carry this out “until he come”. But, if He has not come, then we gather again - assemble again - not in a formal way following an announcement, but out of love's affection for the Lord Jesus. The first day of the week is the beginning of a fresh week; and this seems to be the starting point from which everything would work out during the week. It is a wonderful thing to begin with, the saints' affections stirred in relation to an absent Lord; because if He was here we would not be celebrating the Supper at all. We gather here because He is absent, and yet we have affection for Him, and the whole direction for the week really flows out from the opportunity for the Lord to come in among His lovers, and bring in His mind for us, would you say?

APD On Mr James Taylor's last visit to Vancouver, he asked the brethren who we come to meet. He emphasised on other occasions too that we come to meet the brethren, vol 72 p244.

JL Yes, that bears on the significance of assembling together, and love for one another. I have had the impression for a long time, and enjoyed it, that love is to be viewed in three ways in connection with the Supper: we love the Lord - that is why we have assembled together to remember Him. Secondly, the emblems are before us on the table and we are reminded of the Lord's love for us; there is the perfect witness to His love in the emblems before us. But then thirdly we share in the mutuality of affection for one another because we are all partaking of the one loaf in the celebration of the Supper. It is the expression in a public way of our fellowship, is it not?

RFW We are not particularly told, are we, that we should only break bread on the first day of the week, but it has emerged as what is right and proper, and fitting? What do you say?

JL Well, our brother referred to “the eyes of our heart”, involving a double thought. Affection is associated with the heart, but intelligence is associated in some way with the eyes. I suppose it has emerged among the saints during this dispensation that this seems to be the right

and appropriate way and time to do this in answering to the affections of the Lord Jesus. We have the suggestion, in the scripture quoted in Acts 20, that it was thought to be appropriate to the first day of the week. I think it has become a proper custom through intelligence, and the occasion when we celebrate it. Can you add to that?

RFW No, I am sure I go along with what you say. I think in the early days of the recovery, as we referred to it yesterday, the brethren broke bread every day (see JND Collected Writings vol 26 p259); but what has been adopted over time has met with the Lord's approval, do you think?

JL Yes, I understand that.

TRV Is there some association with John 20; the resurrection morn was the first day of the week; that connection lent itself to the pattern that came about through exercise?

JL Yes. I was reading over that passage before coming to the meeting as well; and, while the Supper was not being celebrated there, the circumstances and the particular day all bear on that word you have used, the pattern. A particular pattern has been set out for us, and has emerged through the Holy Spirit's guidance among the saints, which leads us to celebrate the Supper appropriately as the starting point at the beginning of the week, on the first day of the week.

APD Is it significant that there is no reference to her previous history when Mary of Magdala is referred to?

JL Yes; you are thinking that, where there has been self-judgment preceding the time, we come in full liberty and joy with one another, in providing those conditions that would make way for the true answer to the affections of the Lord Jesus?

APD It is linked with the *first* day, not the *eighth* day; so we can begin a week in the fresh light of the preciousness of God's work.

JL Yes, very good. I think in that respect that, while there is the suggestion of the blood connected with the cup and undoubtedly redemption has been accomplished, it is not redemption that is stressed, but rather the wider significance - the teaching - connected with the blood, opening up all the liberality and blessedness of the flow of divine grace in the expression of the covenant.

APD Christ's *personal* love is involved at the Supper. We come on to

answer to the love of God at a later time in the meeting; but we should dwell on the shedding of the Lord's blood as the witness to His *personal* love for us.

JL And the loaf which comes first before us is a witness to the personal body of the Lord Jesus, sacrificially given up in love in death. No doubt, in partaking of the loaf, and in us all partaking of the *one* loaf, we are thinking of the one body composed of all His own, but we are focussing our view primarily on the body of the Lord Jesus, which was sacrificially given up in death in love.

RFW I wondered if you could open up: "This is my body, which is **for** you"?

JL Well, would that not be a remarkable expression of the love of the Lord Jesus for us? He loved His Father, and we rightly think, as we are considering the loaf, of the devotedness and perfect obedience of the Lord to the will of His God and Father, that He was prepared to go entirely that way; but we should not forget that it involved the way He went in love. But then it carries this additional thought, with all its appeal to our hearts: "This is my body, which is for you". That is a touching expression of the Lord's love for us, that calls for an answer on our part. What were you thinking yourself?

RFW That is very good. It must involve His death, of course, but so much was secured in that blessed body which was given, and we can contemplate all that was seen in that wonderful life as towards us. It is food for our souls and for our affections.

JL Yes, the appeal of that should be taken to heart among us today, should it not? We might just simply ask the question, 'Are all breaking bread?'. The appeal of the Lord's love calls for such an answer. Someone might say, 'Well, I do love the Lord'. The Lord would in effect say, 'If you love me, here is love's opportunity: "this do in remembrance of me"'. It calls for an answer in response to the wonderful appeal of that love that gave its all for us.

D-gJK I am very interested in the use you make of these words - 'love's opportunity'. We may think of John on the island called Patmos (Rev 1: 9), where he was in conditions of limitation, but he did not forget love's opportunity, and look what was opened up to him! And do you think that really brings in the greatness of the dispensation, that there is such a scope to love's opportunity?

JL I am sure that the Lord has very graciously provided us with opportunity to celebrate the Supper as we do. I might just say, lest there should be any misunderstanding in relation to your remark, that I cannot celebrate the Supper on my own; and John to that extent would no doubt feel the loss in being isolated on the island called Patmos, because the very activity involves - as we have been saying - that we assemble together, and in the bonds of happy fellowship we partake of the emblems. It necessarily implies that there are others sharing in it with me. And that has to be borne in mind, does it?

D-gJK Yes, I am glad you clarify that. I was thinking of the whole thought expressed in what John says, "I John, your brother and fellow-partaker".

JL Very good, yes. He had the brethren in his affections. I like to use that expression, love's opportunity. I do not in using it seek to detract from the sense of committal, and responsibility too, that is involved as we lay our hands to the loaf, or the sobriety that should characterise our minds and hearts as taking up such a holy privilege, but it is love's opportunity to answer according to the Lord's own desire to remember Himself.

RG It may help us all to say something to distinguish the way the Lord inaugurated the Supper and separated it from the passover in the gospels. The occasion presented in the gospels was when the apostles only were gathered together, Matt 26: 20. Am I right that Corinthians is the assembly setting, and this involves the sisters, does it not?

JL Well, the passover as such, while it bears on ourselves to some extent, according to what Paul says about the passover in 1 Corinthians 5, was a Jewish celebration and belonged to a previous dispensation. Our enquiry is as to what belongs to this particular dispensation. And the Lord really introduced a *transfer* from the passover to the Supper as indicating what was in view. Some of us were speaking about that at home this morning, and now this is thoroughly confirmed by the Lord Himself, from the glory to Paul, indicating what is appropriate for us. This is the Supper according to its heavenly setting, bearing on this dispensation.

RG I am thinking that there were no sisters present at the inauguration in the gospels; but I understand from the teaching that Corinthians involves the assembly setting, and the assembly setting

would involve the sisters.

JL It clearly does; we should not be in any doubt about that.

BWL I wondered if love's opportunity is one reason why the Supper is not announced?

JL Yes; it is; it is one of the reasons. I think too that it preserves us from thinking of it merely as a formal occasion, but something that is particularly bearing on the affection of the Lord Jesus for ourselves, and our answer to it. I recall being at meetings a long time ago in Ireland, and your question was asked there; and a brother gave an immediate answer, 'Lovers do not normally need to announce their meetings!'. That might appear a little humorous, but it bears on the point that we have not organised it - if I can use that word with care. It is just a suited opportunity to express love that I may have in my heart for the Lord Jesus, who has so loved me. I feel drawn; saints are drawn to that point. The very reason that we gather for the Lord's supper is that He is absent. What can we do in expression of our love? We are not left in doubt; the Lord emphasises, "**this** do".

BWL I think that is helpful, and it is important that we are together, assembling. We often sing:

Oft has the Comforter spoken of Thee. (Hymn 4)

It is not that we are not thinking of the Lord in the course of the week that leads up to the Supper, but the Supper itself gives us an opportunity, as our brother has referred to: "that which I also delivered to you"; it is delivered to the assembly; it is an assembly occasion.

JL Yes, very much so. So we seize that opportunity, do we not? There should be no doubt in the minds of any, including our younger brethren, that we gather in the Lord's absence. Hence this enquiry has to do with what is appropriate to do in this dispensation. It will have no relevance when we are in the presence of the Lord Jesus; we will never celebrate the Supper again after Christ has come for us. We will have no need; it is because He is absent, and we seek to remember Him in this way in the scene of His absence - and in the *circumstances* of His absence. Part of my exercise in our enquiry today is that may go on to speak of what the Supper leads us in to. But at the point when we gather, we are made to feel that we are in wilderness circumstances and where our Lord is absent.

TRV Would you expand on that word "assembled"; and what occurs

as we respond as a result of the Lord's affections? As individuals, we gather, and then something occurs at that point. You have alluded to it, but would you expand on the transition there?

JL Well, we come from our homes, and in that respect we are coming as individuals who have affection for the Lord Jesus, but we gather together - and I might say carefully, not just as a congregation. We are not thereafter just a group of persons that have come to a common place; but we *assemble* together; there is a very dignified thought in that, and the sense is conveyed that we are merging together into one in our love for the Lord Jesus. There is no doubt about that; there is no suggestion at the Supper that there should be several little loaves or each with his own cup - the whole implication of partaking of "that one loaf" (1 Cor 10: 17), and the one cup, is to strengthen the fact that we are there *wholly* as one. So *there must be love among ourselves*, and a sense of unity involved in our assembling.

MJK You have brought up the matter of the dispensation, and now the Lord's supper; I wondered if you would explain to us why it is so important that the Supper comes in in this dispensation, and it is not part of any other dispensation?

JL Well, it would not have been appropriate previously, because the Lord had not until this night come to the point where He was about to lay down His life in death. And we learn that it has been for us - surely in the accomplishment of the will of God, but we learn that it was for us. And we learn from Ephesians 5: 25 that He delivered Himself up in order to secure the assembly for Himself. These things are altogether new; but when we are with the Lord there will be no further need for the Supper because it is on account of His absence that we celebrate it. In that respect, it is confined to this dispensation.

MJK We could not celebrate the Supper before the death of Christ, before the resurrection; but now it is because there is a Man who has ascended. That had not been before, and that opens up this dispensation. It is a Man in glory, and the apostle received it from the Lord in glory. That opens up to man, by the power of the Spirit, a whole new area of things, that we can be associated with a Man in glory; that had not been possible before.

JL And it did not even have its application after the Lord rose from the dead and moved in and out among His own; there was no point in celebrating the remembrance of the Lord when He was still there during

those days, moving in and out amongst His own. It belongs entirely to the period of the Lord's absence when He has ascended into glory. I am glad that you strengthen that point; and I think it is right that we should very much associate it with this dispensation that has been before us.

DAB It is my understanding that, in times past, the brethren celebrated the Lord's supper at the end of the occasion on Lord's day morning; why was that changed?

JL Because it is primarily in our affections that, in the absence of the Lord Jesus, we should come together to remember Him in response to His own particular desire. That opens up the doorway into a vast area of response. We are reminded in the gospel that they thereafter sang a hymn and went out to the mount of Olives (Matt 26: 30); it is as if the door was open into the heavenly realm. But that follows upon the celebration of the Lord's supper; we gather because He is absent and we answer to the appeal of His love, and it makes way for the Lord to come in amongst His own. We cannot govern the movements of the Lord Jesus but He loves to come where love is. John 12 is a scripture we might refer to to bear that out.

DAB The emblems are not removed from the table; they are the precious reminder, as you are saying, of the greatness of the love of the Lord Jesus for His own. At the Supper we are answering to the Lord's claims of love upon us, are we not? And as we answer to that, it brings us into a great and wider area. It is in the later scripture in 2 Corinthians that you perhaps had in mind to move us on to, being transformed "from glory to glory". It is a wonderful platform for moving into the service of God and the sphere of privilege.

JL Yes, that is interesting. You made a comment that I had perhaps not thought too much about, that the emblems are not removed from the table; but we do not go back to them. They are there and their witness stands; but when Christ comes in among His own, we do not go back. It must therefore lead to the transforming effect of His presence, known by the Spirit, just as is opened up in 2 Corinthians 3. We rise to answer in our affections in the consciousness of the joy of His presence.

APD Would we normally look for the Lord Jesus coming in at time of the breaking of the bread?

JL Yes, that would be normal to the occasion of the Supper, and

what we would look for; and that would be in the expectancy of our hearts as we assemble together.

APD Yes, I think it is a wonderful moment, and to be occupied with Him personally. It is a great privilege at that time; it is not a time to go over history, but it is the time to be occupied with the Person who has come in, do you think?

JL Yes, altogether so. And if He comes in, He must fill our hearts. I like the section we have just alluded to in John 12; again, it was not the celebration of the Lord's supper as we are speaking of it now, but it gives an indication of the wonderful joy that is brought about where the presence of the Lord Jesus is known and valued. The fragrance begins to flow out and fill the whole house.

JHH Does the service of a householder come in in the serving of the loaf and the cup? We do not need to go at great length; we can be simple about the matter.

JL Yes, I would agree with that.

JHH We are doing it for the Lord's sake; we are calling Him to mind. We do not call Him into presence; He moves as He feels suitable to love's call; we are calling Him to mind, are we not?

JL Yes, exactly; that is a very good way to put it. I think it is appropriate just to touch on that little point: we do not 'call Him into presence' because we cannot direct the Lord's movements; and yet the Lord delights to come where love is. To that extent, we would not pass by too quickly the importance of the emblems, but on the other hand we would not prolong our occupation with them because our hearts are just yearning to make way for Christ to come in, and to lead us into the joy of all that is opened up after His presence is known.

MTH I just wondered if you could say a word as to the new covenant connected with the greatness of this dispensation, as one of the features of this dispensation. The Lord inaugurated it in this way, "this is the cup of the new covenant". I wondered if you would say a word as to that.

JL Well, that is an interesting enquiry because, the terms of it as recalled in Hebrews 8: 8-13 belong directly to another dispensation; but the overflowing grace belongs to this dispensation. We come into all the blessedness and joy of what is involved in the new covenant. Its terms and directness will really be established with the Lord's earthly

saints but we are brought into the fulness of it. There is not a thing that the saints of the assembly are deprived of. I have been saying during this time that it is really the greatest dispensation of all, as connected with the ages of time, and someone might ask on what grounds do I say that. Well, we are told that He has “blessed us with **every** spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ” (Eph 1: 3); there is not another family that will enjoy anything that the assembly will be deprived of, and therefore all the grace and blessedness of the new covenant is ours as well, although its formal terms are not established with us.

RDW I wondered if you could say something to help us: the Lord's supper is held every Lord's day morning, but it is often said that we are either coming from the Supper or going to it. Would the Supper govern our lives?

JL Yes, I am sure that is a right thought, because of our affection for the One who has died for us, laid down His life. It is understandable that that should draw our affections as we are looking forward to the Supper, and hold our hearts as we have just celebrated it, in view of filling out the week. Would that be what was in your mind?

RDW Yes, it is *the Lord's* commandment to us, is it not, that we gather in this way to remember Him? It is love's commandment, and we do gather, but there are seven days between having the Supper: would our lives be governed by it?

JL Yes, we celebrate it and we have to fill out our responsibilities in the sphere here, but we are looking forward particularly to the coming of the Lord; not altogether in view of the celebration of the Lord's supper next week. If He does not come, then surely that would be before us, but we announce it “until he come”; it is the coming of the Lord that is in our hearts. We are just waiting on Him; do we really feel that? Do all our young brethren feel that, the importance of the opportunity of being able to remember the Lord Jesus? It might be that it will never occur again. It is a privilege, open to us now, to answer - not exactly to a legal commandment, but to an obligation of love in answer to his words, “**this** do, for a remembrance of me”. That should be taken up and fulfilled in answer to the precious appeal of the Lord' Himself.

KRO Can you help us as to the matter of announcing the death of the Lord? We have dwelt a lot on remembrance of Him, and where He has gone, and His work; but help us to this more testimonial side?

JL Well, it might be so at some times, and more so in some

localities where we might be few in number, that few observe what we do, and there is not any particular external evidence taken account of by others. But it is done in our hearts in recognition of the Lord whom we have come to remember, and the rights and title He has to have universal dominion in this scene. And we take it up in affection and “announce the death of the Lord until he come”. That is how heaven regards it, and there is the side of testimony in what we do, however many are aware of it or not; that is how there is a testimony rendered, that we are doing it in affection for our absent Lord while awaiting His coming. And heaven regards it so, and values those who do it.

CAMcK It has been said that the Lord will come to us, and will come for us, and will come with us; I was thinking that it is unique to this dispensation that the Lord comes *to* us. The dispensation will close when He comes *for* us. Then He will come with us, and that is when the new covenant will be seen?

JL That sets it out very concisely and well; I agree with all of that. That is exactly it and helps to highlight the importance of this dispensation and the privilege granted to us in the absence of the Lord.

APD You were helpfully saying you did not think it was a matter of legal commandment, but do you think the thought of commandment enters into it?

JL Yes, I do; not as I said in the sense of a legal commandment, but I think I used the term 'love's obligation'. In that respect, it assumes the force of a commandment from the Lord, with an obligation of love placed upon us to answer to it.

D-IJK I was just going to mention that we had before us yesterday the dispensation of faith; and I suppose you could say it is a dispensation of hope too; but it says, “And now abide faith, hope, love; these three things; and the greater of these is love”, 1 Cor 13: 13. This is the ground we are on now, the thought of love, because that is the only one of these three things that goes through into eternity, is it not? Faith gives place to sight, and hope gives place to reality; but loves goes through, does it not? And this is really what this brings us to, is it not?

JL And the Supper essentially is a love matter, is it not? That is very good. The Supper will cease; it will not have relevance as such because the Lord will then have come. But love will remain; that is a very precious thing.

JHH Can we go on to what follows? We provide something for Him, but then He leads us into His world and circumstances, does He? What are your thoughts as to what comes after the Supper that works out in the way of worship?

JL I am not going to set about to categorise all the various steps; that would make it too formal and take it away from the glory of the Lord's own thoughts in headship as He comes in amongst us; but I think your first reference to worship is very appropriate. It is very understandable that, as the Person of the Lord Jesus comes before our affections, it calls for an answer in worship from our hearts because of His own glory. It would be normal that that should immediately follow.

AML Would you say something about what they had in Acts 2: "they persevered in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, in breaking of bread and prayers", v 42. Would the Spirit help us to persevere, all in view of being able to follow the movements of the Lord in the Supper, leading to the worship of God?

JL Yes, in a particular way, perseverance is called for during the week; and once He comes in the heart is free, we rise in all the liberty of love, firstly in worship in our hearts to the Lord Jesus. We are not then in that sense persevering as we continue in the joy of His presence; we are in all the joy of the sphere of liberty. That is conveyed in 2 Corinthians 3; it brings about that transforming effect as we are occupied with Himself. The veil is removed, in the consciousness of His presence and joy, the power of the Spirit almost merging with the consciousness of the presence of the Lord known. It is quite difficult to distinguish some of these references here in the end of 2 Corinthians 3; and I did notice that one of the servants of the Lord said that there is 'a union in this wonderful ministry of the new covenant, of the Lord and the Spirit; so much so that the Lord ... is said *to be* the Spirit', JT vol 42 p133. The thoughts almost merge together in bringing about this transforming effect in our hearts.

D-gJK Can you say something about it being the whole thought - "we all"?

JL That would follow on from our earlier consideration; we come from our homes and our various settings, and we assemble together. We proceed then as one. I have no doubt that in some respect there is an individual aspect to "we all"; that is, it would be each one of us looking on the glory of the Lord, but there is a sense that our hearts are

united in the joy and privilege of all that is suggested here. We are together in it, we are not as isolated units, but we are all occupied with the glory of the Lord, and engaged with the blessedness of what is before us.

TRV I have a question in relation to seeing the glory of the Lord, and the praise and worship that goes forth from our hearts. The question is as to the emblems on the table, and why is the box on the table?

JL At one time the box used to be below the table; at one time it used to be at the back of the room, and the collection was taken in a way which closed the meeting. It has no *direct* connection to the emblems, but it seemed appropriate to saints over a period of time. The prompting of the Lord's own love has that practical answer in the affections of the saints, in bringing out our love. We might ask if it rises in dignity to the level of the emblems: well, not quite; but it is there in association with the dignity and blessedness of what is represented there in the love of the Lord Jesus. So the answering response comes out in the affections of the saints in giving.

TRV I had associated that verse towards the end of Hebrews 13, where it speaks of the praise given up to God continually, and then the "communicating of your substance", v 16. The praise and communication are linked together; so I was wondering if that was why, over a period of time, the exercise of the saints was to associate that practically together. It is associated at a very high level, because the praise and worship does come in.

JL I think the love of the saints would follow appropriately the contemplation of the Lord's own love in the emblems. We were looking at the scripture in 2 Chronicles 24 very recently, and we noticed that in the reign of Joash there was a deficiency in relation to the collecting, and the box was brought into proximity to God's house, and the consequence was that there was money gathered in abundance, v 11. It seemed to be that placing that box in proximity to the gate of the house of God had so stimulated the giving in view of the interests of God's house being maintained.

MTH Just to continue what we said at the beginning, is this in 2 Corinthians 3 really the occupation of the eyes of our heart, "looking on the glory of the Lord"?

JL That is a very good link, the eyes of our hearts. Yes, "we all, looking": I like that thought; it is because our hearts are focussed on the

Object of our love; firstly, calling forth worship to Him, but then in the joy of our relationship as His brethren, we rise in all the liberty that love would afford to encircle Him as His brethren, bringing out a response. And our hearts go forward to think of the way He has secured the bride; it seems to lead progressively into suited realms of praise and response, no doubt, in finality, under the headship of Christ, leading us to the worship of God Himself.

TC Are we required to repent before we go to the Supper each Lord's day?

JL If there is particular need for it, then yes, certainly. I think it should mark the spirit in which we go in any case, that we should go with the sense of the joy that we have been forgiven and blessed; and go forward in all liberty without something lying on our consciences that would hinder the enjoyment that we are speaking about now.

APD Does what we have had earlier in these meetings as to faith and the Spirit enter into the Lord's supper? The Lord Jesus says, "I am coming to you" (John 14: 18, 28), and in the faith of our hearts we gladly accept that; but the consciousness of His presence is surely by the Holy Spirit; would that be right?

JL Yes, I think so. It is by the Spirit that we are brought into the consciousness of that; and do you not think that the Spirit Himself, and the Lord who is the Spirit of the covenant, are almost merged in this section? It is by the Holy Spirit that we are brought into the consciousness of that liberty in the presence of Christ.

WSS The way in which 1 Corinthians 11: 25 speaks about the cup makes it a distinct part of the occasion: why does the footnote to 'in like manner ... after having supped', say 'after the supper'?

JL The cup is part of the Supper. We have the two emblems, and both are involved in what we would generally refer to under the heading of the Lord's supper. His body has been given, and His blood has been shed; and clearly the partaking of the loaf and drinking into the cup are what we would refer to as the Lord's supper. I suppose that when the word 'sup' is used here, it would rather be an expression that would convey rather more directly the partaking of the bread, but the Supper would clearly involve both the emblems and therefore the taking of both of them.

We come in the enjoyment and gain of redemption, and we

drink into all that blessedness; the cup for us is associated with blessing. Paul speaks of, “The cup of blessing which we bless” (1 Cor 10: 16); that is all the fulness and joy of new covenant blessing. There should be no thought in the mind of any that it is the same cup as the Lord speaks of partaking of in Gethsemane, which was a different cup altogether, one of bitterness, woe and sorrow for Him which no one else could drink or in any way partake of. But the cup that we drink into is what has resulted from that, bringing in all the fulness of blessing for us.

NJP It is an entirely new covenant.

JL Yes, indeed, and brings us into new joys. We should not be diverted from looking into these joys that follow in Corinthians, and then the suggestion in Hebrews, where the joy of the Lord is seen amidst His own: “he that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one”. He is not ashamed of His brethren, and in the midst of the assembly He is singing these praises, and we are drawn into them.

RFW Do you think in this connection that the reference, “with unveiled face” is from the Lord's side; that He would have us to see and understand His glory?

JL Yes, there is no veil or barrier; it bears on the desire of the Lord Jesus that we should enjoy His presence, and it is associated for us with the thought of entering into the joy of being with the Object of our love. The veil has gone, and it is a scene of holy liberty.

RFW I was thinking that Moses had to put a veil on his face; the Lord delights to have an unveiled face in the presence of His own, His lovers, that His glory might be appreciated in all its radiance.

JL Just so: His face unveiled. We are there to enjoy the blessedness of intimacy and nearness in the Lord's presence, and enjoy His love. There must be joy, then, in all that the Supper leads into. We cannot be in the presence of the Lord without enjoying the liberty, the sense of peace that He would leave with His own, and the joy that He would impart.

HWJ Would you say something about the matter of “being transformed according to the same image”? It is very important, is it, in relation to the Lord having liberty to come in and sing among us, in the assembly? The saints are transformed.

JL That is the transforming effect of the glory of His presence. There will be a transformation of our *bodies* into conformity to His body

of glory (Phil 3: 21) when He comes ultimately; but this would be the transforming effect because of the presence of the Lord being known. I would be glad if you would open it up for us.

HWJ I think that is very helpful. I was thinking of “the same image” - we are looking at the same Person, taking account of the glory that is there, the eyes of our heart all taking account of the *same* image, and transformed by that. It makes way for the Lord to come in and be Minister of the holy places, does it not?

JL What joy for the heart of the Lord Jesus, to take account of what is so suited to Himself. He is not ashamed of His brethren, to be surrounded by them. He is not ashamed of His bride, the one that has been secured. Adam looked for an answer at the beginning, but there was no suited companion to be found; but then when the woman was brought there was a perfect answer to the yearnings of his heart. And so with the Lord Jesus coming in among His own: what joy it must be for the Lord Jesus to see those transformed through the blessedness of the experience.

JHH In Psalm 68: 13, you have the wings of a dove, but she has “feathers with green gold”. Is that like the same image; there is a certain standard; it is not only the elevation but there is a standard in the elevation.

JL That is very good, and it makes way for the enjoyment of the liberty, does it not? If there was a disparity, there would be something felt in our spirits as if we were not quite up to this, or we were not in the right sphere; but the liberty flows out from the effect of it.

CC This whole meeting has been about the Lord's supper, and taking up the privilege of remembering the Lord and what follows; but before I was breaking bread, I did not feel up to or able for it. What is the requirement for committing yourself to the breaking of bread? Is there anything you need to know?

JL The basic requirement is affection for the Lord Jesus, and a desire to answer to the Lord in response to His own request. It would be necessary that persons should know that love through experience in their own souls as having been forgiven and secured; and there would be a necessity for some consciousness of the gift of the Holy Spirit, because otherwise we have no part in the assembly at all. But I think the essential thing is love for the Lord Jesus. If the assumption is that in some way persons have to go through an exam to prove their mental

understanding of the scope of the truth, or the fulness of the teaching, we would all fail the exam! I think it springs out of love for the Lord Jesus; indeed, I believe that Mr Raven once said that, if there is love for the Lord Jesus, intelligence will follow, FER vol 10 p 315-6.

MJK I think we need to be careful that we are not doing it for a show - I say that for the young. It must involve affection from the heart. Sometimes they might feel pressure to ask to be included in it, but that is not the point: the point is our relationship with Christ.

JL I think the younger people should not be in any way discouraged by thinking there is to be some grand display of capability: that is not looked for. The first thing needed is the simple desire to remember the Lord Jesus in answer to His love. There is a certain responsibility that we should walk suitably, as committing ourselves to that and to the fellowship. That follows, but the basic requirement is a willingness to answer in love for the Lord Jesus.

KDD Love for the Lord Jesus, and then love for His people. We gather as individuals but it becomes collective, does it not?

JL The two go together: if I love the Lord Jesus, then I must love those that are His. The Lord says that, if we love Him, we have to be seen to be loving one another. The two things go together, and that is essential, too, to the liberty in this heavenly realm that we have been speaking of. It is wonderful for our hearts to be free to be engaged in these praises that the Lord as Minister of the holy places would set on, and we are drawn into them!

At three-day meetings in Aberdeen, Idaho

2nd July 2016

Key to initials :-

DA Brown, Grangemouth; T Clark, Dorking; C Crozier, Warrenpoint;
AP Devenish, Edmonton; K D Drever, Calgary; J Laurie, Brechin;
R Gray, Calgary; J H Hibbert, Calgary; M T Holland, Calgary;
H W Jensen, Los Angeles; Daryl J Klassen, Aberdeen ID;
Doug J Klassen, Aberdeen ID; M J Klassen, Aberdeen ID; A M Lidbeck,
Aberdeen ID; B W Lovie, Aberdeen, Scotland; C A McKay, Brechin;
K R Oliver, Denton; N J Plant, Toronto; W S Selman, Denton;
T D VanderHoek, Denton; R D Wallace, Spaldwick;
R F White, Londonderry

GRACE AND DISCIPLINE

G Bruce Grant

John 1: 14, 16-17

Jeremiah 48: 11

I have read two scriptures: one refers to “grace upon grace”; the other refers to “from vessel to vessel”. It goes on to say in the second scripture that Moab had not been changed, but the divine intention is that there would be change: a spiritual, moral change that is always proceeding. This first scripture is speaking of the Lord Jesus, “And the Word became flesh”: the wonder of it! He was here amongst men. Some appreciated Him and that appreciation grew; John - and there were others - contemplated His glory. It says He is “full of grace and truth”; that is in the Lord Jesus, “full of grace and truth”. These features were both in Him; grace comes first, because in dealing with men grace needs to be first, but also truth.

I was specially thinking about verse 16, “for of his fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace”. There is what is in Christ; He is the source of grace, and John is speaking from experience. John says, “for of his fulness” - and he is including others - “we all have received, and grace upon grace”. There were those that were companying with the Lord. We think of John’s experience when he wrote this gospel, and what he is saying is, “for of his fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace”. That is the impression left upon John, that what he received from Christ was grace upon grace. I ask myself if I have ever been left with that impression. Do you have that substantial impression on your soul?

When we first believe the glad tidings, we are impressed with divine grace. That is the principle of the gospel; grace towards us in the way of blessing. It would not be gospel otherwise. It is an experience that meets our need, takes all our liabilities away, our debt away, our guilt, the penalty due to us; but it does more than that. The gospel brings in the full light of God's thoughts of blessing for us, and that is grace also; therefore it is “grace upon grace”. If all our guilt, our sins, are met, that is an amazing thing, but the gospel includes more than that. It is the height of blessing that God has devised in His heart of love for us, and that is all on the principle of grace.

Our eternal blessing is on the principle of grace. We are left

here in our pathways, going through different circumstances in our lives, and do we have the impression through these circumstances that it is “grace upon grace” that is supporting us in these circumstances? It is a wonderful thing if that is the case. It brings restfulness to your spirit, contentedness. You have a greater appreciation of Christ because He is the Fountain and Source of that grace. As we know, there are family sorrows, and the deepest of all are assembly exercises. Have we been left with the impression through these that there is fulness of grace in Christ, “grace upon grace”? What personal exercise John had; he saw the public breakdown. Paul saw the breakdown. They did not give up; they proved “grace upon grace”, and kept on going. It sustained them; it formed them. I think others have said that it is not only meeting need; it does that, but it forms us, forms us in our spirits and our souls, this fulness from Christ, grace upon grace. It is something we experience; we have to prove it individually; it never changes. It is a great thing to realise what is in Christ in all that we pass through to support us, to help us through, this fulness of grace. It is a great thing to be left with that impression upon your spirit, that it has been and is “grace upon grace”.

In Jeremiah it is “from vessel to vessel”. “Moab hath been at ease from his youth”; that is never a good thing: a lack of exercise does not do us any good. He “hath settled on his lees”: That suggests lack of exercise in spiritual things, not being emptied from vessel to vessel. It is speaking of wine being emptied from vessel to vessel to take it off the lees; it speaks to ourselves of discipline. That is necessary to bring about change with us, and it is absolutely essential to see that divine love is behind what the Father passes us through. It is negative here, but the point for us is not to be at ease, not to settle on our lees, and we are to be emptied from vessel to vessel. That will go on all the time we are here.

What discipline others have gone through! You think of Mary and Martha in John 11, what they went through in regard to their brother, but as coming through that with the Lord, the Lord meant more to them as they were emptied from vessel to vessel. They appreciated the Lord; obviously they appreciated the Lord more at the end of that exercise than at the beginning. So what exercises the saints pass through, deep exercises. They are emptied from vessel to vessel, going through discipline with the Lord, and with the Father, having to do with divine Persons through it. There is a slow but sure gradual change with us. “Therefore his taste hath remained in him”; taste is very much

from our side; it is what we do: we taste things. "Taste and see that the Lord is good": that is your own experience; you taste, you acquire a taste; so "his taste hath remained in him", just the same. But I think we acquire spiritual taste as we go through exercise; we acquire a spiritual capacity if we go through exercise, and that is a great thing. A change comes about as we go through exercises with the Lord. A parallel thought might be "the renewing of your mind", Rom 12: 2. As we pass through spiritual and moral exercises, our taste changes, and we appreciate divine things which we may not have appreciated fully or sufficiently before.

Then it says, "and his scent is not changed". If we think of John 11 and 12 again, what scent there was then: "and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment", John 12: 3. Others could appreciate that scent. So we pass through discipline, emptied from vessel to vessel, our tastes change, and then our scent is changed also. There is what is for the divine pleasure in it. None of what the Lord passed through was of the character of discipline. He was always perfect - perfect for the Father's heart - but in our case as we pass through discipline there should be this change of taste, and also a change of scent, and that is what others appreciate. What different kinds of discipline the saints are passing through, but there is fulness of grace in Christ and it is all with a divine end in view. Divine Persons do not work in a haphazard way. They have an end in view with each of us; once they have secured us through the gospel, divine Persons never give up. The Holy Spirit never leaves us, and the Lord and the Father are always interested in us for our good.

May we be encouraged, especially by this thought of the fulness of grace in Christ that is there for us.

Word in a ministry meeting, Dundee

19th January 2016

EXPERIENCE WITH GOD LEADING TO WORSHIP

Mike T Holland

Genesis 6: 8, 9; 12: 7, 8; 13: 1-4

Judges 6: 19-26

2 Samuel 22: 1-7, 29-34

Philippians 4: 19

I have read quite a few scriptures, and I hope my thought is clear. It is very confirming that the Spirit of God is truly active when you have an impression and someone brings forth something very similar. It may not be the same thought, but it confirms you in your thoughts. So I would like to speak of what we have in examples of persons, some of whom we have spoken about already in these meetings, in whom we see the intensification of their worship as a result of their personal experience with God. It is something that I think can impress each one of us from the youngest to the oldest, as we will see as we quickly touch on each one of these sample persons. I have noticed that each one of these persons and events could by themselves be the subject of a series of readings; so we do not want to go into the details of each one. What we will learn about as we go through each one of these cases, although I am not going to speak specifically about the altars which are presented in each instance, is the worship of God.

Mr James Taylor asked something that really struck me, and it has stuck with me for years: can each one of us say that our service to God is increasing in value and quality, vol. 72 p148? It is not *our* valuation and qualification, dear friends, but value and quality to divine Persons. I think we need to test ourselves against that question, as I myself have been really exercised recently, not only in preparation for this time. I will just repeat the question: can each one of us say that our service to God is increasing in value and quality? It is very simple, it is not something profound; I am not opening up some fresh thing that many here could not speak about; but the point is whether our worship is increasing; could that be true about each and every one of us?

I was interested when our brother read that scripture in 2 Timothy 2, to pursue these things, v 22. We have four things set out in these persons of whom I have read. We have Noah, whom we read about this afternoon, connected with faith and righteousness, Heb 11: 7. Righteousness is connected with him in Ezekiel 14 and I would like to speak about that connection. I was really confirmed in that thought in

reading of Noah. What is beautiful about this section, which covers his life and his experience with God, is that this is the first time that an altar is mentioned in the Scriptures. While I do not mean to speak about altars specifically, whenever something is mentioned for the first time in the Scriptures, it is clearly very important that we get the force of that scripture. The force of the scripture about Noah's life from Genesis 6 to 8 is that we see Noah has the instinct to worship God. That is where we begin. Nobody told Noah to worship God, nor was the precedent set before him to worship God; at least it is not recorded that way. Another thing is that it is not mentioned or recorded that God told him to worship Him or told him how to worship Him. You will notice if you read the detail that he clearly has the instinct to worship God. That comes out through his experience, his personal experience with God. I think everyone in this room from the youngest to the oldest has had some personal experience with God. We can draw on that personal experience with God to increase in the value and quality of our worship to divine Persons. So God literally shut Noah into the ark. I like to think about what it must have been to be so near to God; shut in, not only *by* Him, but *with* Him - you might say it was part of his personal experience with God. In verses 8 and 9 Noah found favour in the eyes of Jehovah, and again the history of Noah is mentioned. Noah was a just man; he was perfect among his generations; he walked with God. I read this section because Noah walked with God. We might just pass over that detail, but we know of others in scripture of whom it is said specifically that they walked with God; and we could speak for an hour about walking with God. That is where the personal experience of Noah came from: he walked with God. If you are not walking with God, that is where you need to begin. In order to answer the question that I set out at the beginning, set out by Mr Taylor those many years ago, we need to begin with this, to walk with God. Look into that, ask yourself if you are walking with God. We noticed at home recently how Paul wrote with method and one way that that comes out clearly is there is never any grey area with Paul. The apostle writes in such a way that how we walk with God is very clearly laid out. We were speaking this afternoon too about how the pursuit is really in essence walking with God. That pursuit of those four things in 2 Timothy 2: 19 is in walking with God, or that at least is part of it.

I moved nearer the end of Noah's recorded life, in chapter 8: 20-22; this is where we begin to see the worship that resulted from his personal experience with God. If you read all the details of his

experience with God, you see his worship coming out in these three verses; Noah built an altar to Jehovah. Who told him to do that? Again, it was his instinct to worship God, because of his experience of coming through that great event, of which we should all know something of the typical teaching. It is not a question of coming through on his own strength, but coming through in the strength of Another. Many times we have this scripture used in different ways - baptism and other things, but it is a clear answer in worship to what Noah had been through with God. I wanted to draw out in reading further, particularly in verse 20, how he “took of every clean animal, and of all clean fowl, and offered up burnt offerings on the altar”. As we go through these other examples, we have people building or making altars, and the prescription for building an altar is in Exodus 20; you can read it for yourself: Jehovah asked for an altar of earth and an altar of stone; and we will go a little more into that - it is important that we get a little bit of detail as to that. The wonderful thing here is the instinct and the discernment that is shown. What does Jehovah want from you, dear friends? Noah was not told what to offer, but it says he took of every clean animal. We have been speaking of pure things, and that is what Jehovah wants in our worship. It says, “of all clean fowl”. How did he know what was clean? We might just read these verses without thinking about that. No one told Noah what was clean, but he had within him the intelligence which our brother was speaking about earlier to know what was right in offering to Jehovah. That is the increase in value and quality of his worship; every clean thing. What else does that tell us? Noah did not hold anything back, to speak very simply. It says, “of all clean fowl, and of every ...”; notice those two little words 'all' and 'every': that is what Noah offered. Are you holding anything back in your worship to divine Persons?

In the next section, there is a wonderful history, full of worship and revelations from God; it comes out in Abram. Our brother read of his faith, his righteousness; he was called a friend of God because of his righteousness. “It was reckoned to him for righteousness, and he was called Friend of God.” James 2: 23. Clearly, what comes forth in these verses is that Abram had experience with God and the basis for this is that God appeared to him. It seems something simple, that God appeared to him, spoke to him, and told him to do something which was very specific; we have touches of what he did in Hebrews. What I wanted to bring forward in these sections in chapters 12 and 13 was the result of Abram's experience with God. The end of verse 7 says “And there he built an altar to Jehovah who had appeared to him”. The

foundation of all worship, dear friends, is that God has appeared to us. We have God's appearing in the Person of Jesus Christ, and we know that He manifested Himself in that way; He has manifested His character in that way. But He appeared to Abram, and so that is the foundation of his worship, and we will see as we go through the rest of these examples how it comes forward. At the end of verse 8 it says, "and there he built an altar to Jehovah, and called on the name of Jehovah". We have in that touch that he called on the name of Jehovah, a further instance of his experience with God seen in the appreciation of the name of Jehovah.

In the next chapter I wanted to bring out in Abram's history, that Abram returns to this place. (Mr Darby has a wonderful article on the history of Abram, Collected Writings vol. 19 p134.) Can you answer that question that we began with as to the intensification of our worship as a result of our experience with God? Is the value of our worship increasing? If it is not, what we have as an example here is that Abram goes back; it says, "he went on his journeys from the south as far as Bethel; as far as the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai; to the place of the altar that he had made there at the first", Gen 13: 3-4. That is a wonderful touch; he goes back to that original place where God appeared to him. If you cannot answer that question that I began with (there are at least ten or fifteen ways in which this matter was brought forward in the ministry), you may need to retrace your steps and go back to this place, "the place of the altar that he had made there at the first". It is the place where God appeared to him; it is the place where he had earlier experience with God. We may need to go back to that place, and we may need to go back to that place more than once, as Mr Darby brings out in that article. That is a test for each one of us. If I cannot say that the value of my worship is increasing, that the quality of my worship is increasing; if I cannot say that, dear friends, do I need to go back to the place where Jehovah appeared to me at the first?

In verse 18, we have the reason I read this scripture, which is that it gives us another altar, but what is wonderful about the life of Abram is that he does this before the prescription for the building of the altar comes out. That is in Exodus, some time after where we read. Again, we have somebody who is simply moving in faith as a result of his experience with God. What is wonderful too is that his tent, his dwelling place, his house, is moving with his altar; that is a beautiful

thing. One thing that could be said about his life was that the whole of it was encompassed and occupied with the worship of God.

I did not know whether to read of Gideon, and I was not going to read about him, until our brother touched on Hebrews 11. Every one of these Old Testament persons I have read of is in that chapter. I think the Spirit was very active in that. In Judges, we have the history of Gideon, and these verses from 19 to 26 speak of his worship to God as a result of his personal experience. Something that is to be noticed about Gideon is that at one point in his history it speaks of his being “faint, yet pursuing”, Judg 8: 4. That included others with him, but he was the leader. What is beautiful, however, is their “pursuing” in the face of much difficulty and much weakness: “faint, yet pursuing”. Are you faint, dear friends? The verses I have read from chapter 6: 19 bring forward not so much Gideon's experience but the result of that experience. It is experience with God, but it goes much further back, to a time when he was, in the face of difficulty, seeking to secure the food supply as it was being taken by the enemy. You can read back to that and I would very strongly advise that at a time like we are in. Someone has said to me that one of the enemy's chief objectives is to stop the food supply. Clearly that was going on at the time of Gideon, and yet we have this quiet, hidden service. He is not in a place where threshing would normally be done. He is seeking to secure the food supply in the wine press, although that would be the place where wine is to be made. Gideon is seeking the food supply and it shows that we can all be doing something in the way of service, even in a hidden way. So his experience with God can be read of, but the result of his experience is worship. Verses 20 and 21 speak of the depth of his appreciation. We have touched on it with Abram, but it comes forward in a different way with Gideon. It speaks to me of the depth of appreciation of the Person of Christ! Our brother gave out that beautiful hymn this morning -

The person of the Christ,
Enfolding every grace (Hymn 132).

That is what comes out in verses 20 and 21. The Angel tells Gideon to bring these things, but we can see that he has them available too. He has available his appreciation of what speaks to us of the Person of Christ, His manhood. We could say, as it were, that the essential manhood of Christ is truly appreciated by Gideon. What Gideon does is to follow the angelic instructions. He has some fear in the face of the Angel; he sees the face of an angel, and he recognises that he has

spoken with Jehovah; again we see that the foundation of our worship is God appearing to us. The Angel says, "Peace be unto thee: fear not; thou shalt not die. And Gideon built there an altar to Jehovah, and called it Jehovah-shalom. To this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites". So he builds another altar. I would encourage each one to look into what he had available, that is, the bullock, and these other things, and he takes them, following the instructions, which is beautiful. What is wonderful through Gideon's history is his increasing worship; it is not increasing exactly in quantity, but in quality and value to God. He "built there an altar to Jehovah, and called it Jehovah-shalom". I think sometimes we pass over these details of the names of places and persons, these names of the altars, for example. I read something wonderful recently, that 'the name of an altar indicates the state of soul of the one who builds it', JT vol 27 p127. The name of the altar speaks of the state of the soul of the one who built it. Gideon has been through experience with God, he comes to this place, and builds an altar; and he speaks as a result of the peace of Jehovah.

Our brother has been speaking about pursuing four things and we have another one of them connected here, peace. I wanted to bring out that we clearly have the increase of Gideon's worship as a result of his experience with God, and particularly what we might refer to as an increase of his appreciation of the Person of Christ in verses 20 and 21, the essential manhood of Christ. Do you appreciate that; does it colour your worship to God? Does it come out in the service of God? The service of God is a time when our worship comes out.

In 2 Samuel 22 (and we have it repeated in Psalm 18), we have the words of David, who is also mentioned in Hebrews 11. We are moving to a way of building an altar which is slightly different, and which the apostle Paul would bring out as well in that verse I read in Philippians. That is where I had this impression originally, in Philippians 4. But here David is over and over using that little word 'my': "my rock", "my' God"; it is 'my' over and over again. Dear friends, that is personal experience, resulting in worship. The end of this chapter is worship. We have a touch of that in the expression, "my feet like hind's feet"; that is beautiful. Robert Gray at home likes to say that that is 'alacrity' which comes out here in worship. Then David goes on in verses 47 and 50:

Jehovah liveth; and blessed be my rock;
And exalted be the God, the rock of my salvation.

Therefore will I give thanks ...
And will sing psalms.

This is one of so many of the psalms of David, one of numerous examples from David that we could have read of his worship to Jehovah. All I wanted to touch on here is this little word 'my'. I read a little part in the middle,

By my God have I leaped over a wall.

This is David overcoming difficulty, "a wall", he leapt over that wall! Now this is something poetic (which is the way he often writes), but he specifically says, "By my God". This is his appreciation of his experience with God. We were speaking about the operative extent of these things: "By my God", nothing of David is coming out. That is also what comes out in those verses in Exodus, the prescription for an altar, when we move on from the altar of earth. You will notice there is no choice in that matter, for Jehovah says, "An altar of earth shalt thou make unto me". It speaks of us recognising who we are before Jehovah, and even more what we are. Then it says "if" which suggests God asking: "if thou make me an altar of stone". Without going into all the details, an altar of stone is something that requires ability, something that requires experience with God. The altar of stone is our permanent, lasting impression of the Person of Christ. There are many more ways that it could be spoken of, but Christ where He is in that permanent position; do you have an impression of that? Can you say, "but my God?". We will get that coming out in Paul's experiences; we will even get those very same words used, "my God". Paul uses that same phrase and we have read it and quoted it many times, but the point is that it is his altar to Jehovah, his appreciation of the Person of Christ! This whole of this chapter in 2 Samuel is founded on the fact that David has been delivered from his enemies. That is personal experience with God,

By my God I have leaped over a wall.

Have you overcome difficulties with God?

That is what we read of then in Philippians. There is so much detail in these chapters about the greatness of these persons I have spoken of and what they did, but what we have here is the apostle. The way our brother opened his subject this morning was wonderful and confirmed this for me. Paul says, "but my God shall abundantly supply all your need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus". This is the

apostle's 'altar to Jehovah'. This is the apostle's appreciation of his personal experience, as a result of his personal experience with God, and shows the depth of his appreciation of Christ. He speaks of "his riches in glory in Christ Jesus"; do you have an impression of that today? That is such a great and wonderful thought to get a hold of. "But my God"; it is not 'our God'; it is not here a collective sense. There is a collective sense to this idea of worship and altars elsewhere. It says in Hebrews 13: 10, "We have an altar". Our brother was speaking in his opening remarks this morning of what we have. "We have an altar", and how great it is to enjoy that altar in a collective way. Mr Darby says something very important: 'experience is always individual, although our union with each other as members of Christ is part of this experience', JND Synopsis vol 4 p361. That is what we have here: "But my God shall abundantly supply". I wanted to bring out through all of this the simple thought that our worship is to increase, as a result of our personal experience with God, in value and quality. If it does not, maybe we need to go back to that place where God first appeared. If you do not know where that is, ask the Spirit to take you back to that place where God first appeared to you, to give you an impression of Himself, the greatness of "his riches in glory in Christ Jesus". Gideon clearly had an impression of that in what he brought, what he had available. He secured and kept things when clearly the enemy was trying to be take them away from him. The enemy would seek to take this away from you, but we need to secure it so that we can increase in our worship. I love this Philippian epistle because it is full of the apostle's personal experience. We do get doctrine, which is good, and the heights of doctrine in Ephesians, Colossians and other epistles. What we get here, however, is the apostle's personal experience with God. Here in this epistle it is concentrated; it is his appreciation of his personal experience.

The impression was simple, and was confirmed in many ways, not only in what our brother has brought forward but in the question I found in Mr Taylor's ministry. I do not want simply to quote it, but seek to apply it, and test myself against this. I would ask that each one here would do the same. The question is whether our service, which is really our worship to God, is increasing in value and quality. It is so simple that the youngest one of us here can answer to God in some way. If you have had an experience with God you can answer to God, but do not stop there. In every one of these examples, that is exactly what comes out and, though there are countless others, what comes out is that the

worship to God is increasing. “But my God”: can you say that for yourself? “My God shall abundantly supply”:

Jehovah is my rock ...;

By my God I have leaped over a wall.

Have you had that experience of overcoming something? There are many walls in our experience, but it is “By my God” that you can overcome them. The simple thought and question I would pose to each one of you, and myself first and foremost is: is your worship to God increasing in value and quality? Is this the result of your personal experience? If you have to go back, then go back, dear friend. Make sure you can say this, “My God” and have some impression of the greatness of the Person of Christ.

Make sure you have said that, and are able to say it; and I would pray that this is true of each one of us. And if it is, then it should come forward in the service of God. How great and wonderful these things are. I feel I have had to be very high level on these things. Our brother's exercise has really brought this forcefully before me even more. So I would just challenge each one with this thought. May it be so for His Name's sake.

Address at three-day meetings in Denton

25th March 2016

