

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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THE COMMITTAL OF THE LORD JESUS

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BWL What is in mind is the committal of the Lord Jesus. Hebrews gives us “the roll of the book” which relates to the counsels of God. The Lord Jesus is the One who has taken everything up. He has committed Himself to carry everything through; He has done it and He has done it gloriously. In Hebrews 2 there seems to be a danger of slipping away (v 1); the epistle is really written to bring Christ before us. The glory of Christ is immediately brought on to view in chapter 1. Every chapter in some way speaks of the glory of the Lord Jesus. Where we have read relates to His committal in carrying everything through. As coming into manhood He said, “I come to do thy will”. What has been accomplished is to God's complete satisfaction, “For blood of bulls and goats is incapable of taking away sins”. There is that which has gone before which has been set on by God. We have here that it did not achieve anything really as far as the eternal satisfaction was concerned. It involved that a divine Person would come into manhood and as in manhood was fully committed to the carrying through of God's will.

In Genesis we have the “ram caught in the thicket by its horns” which speaks, in type, of the devotion of the Lord Jesus. It is a committal of love.

In Luke we have what other gospels refer to as Gethsemane. When the Lord had moved out from the waters of baptism, He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. It says, “And the devil having completed every temptation, departed from him for a time”, Luke 4: 13. In the passage in Luke which we read, Satan is back with all the power and awfulness of death that he sought to bring to bear on the Lord Jesus to divert Him from this pathway of committal. What we find at the end of the Lord's life is that there has been no change. He is committed and He is ready to take the cup from the Father's hand; “not my will, but thine be done”. I wondered if we could get some help together in the contemplation and enquiry into the committal of the Lord Jesus.

RJF It is always good to be occupied with the Person of the Lord Himself. We see what it was for Him to lay aside what belonged to Him. It speaks about Him in Philipians as “subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but

emptied himself”, chap 2: 6. Do you think we see that committal stretching right to the very beginning?

BWL Yes, I wondered about Philippians 2 and the connection with Hebrews 10. He “emptied himself” and then He took a “bondman’s form”, v 7. It was all His own action; what the Lord Jesus did Himself. The Lord was not sent from heaven; He came of His own volition. But as here in dependant manhood He speaks of Himself as being “sent into the world”, John 10: 36. The deity of Christ is beautifully brought onto our view in John’s gospel, the gospel where that is stressed the most. It is the gospel where He speaks of Himself as the sent One, perhaps more than all the other references in the other gospels put together.

RJF We could think that the scripture “Lo, I come ... to do, O God, thy will” bears on the beginning of His public service but it seems to me that it goes back much further than that. It characterised His entire life as a dependant Man, Child, Boy and Man amongst men.

BWL Yes, it does go back. The “Lo, I come” involves the incarnation; the Lord was here as a babe, as a child and as a youth. The incarnation really involves the maturity seen in the Person that was here and His committal. The Lord knew; He had part in these divine counsels from before time. The Lord knew what was involved in them.

DCW This was something that was clearly pre-determined. There could be no question of sin, or inability or unwillingness of the Lord to do the Father’s will.

BWL Yes; only One who in Himself is a divine Person could take up such a work and carry it through in perfection in all its detail. The Lord knew the scope of what God’s will was; He knew all that was involved in it. The whole of His life, every detail involved the carrying out of God’s will, and only One who is a divine Person could take that on and carry it through.

DCW It is interesting that it is reiterated in the chapter: “Lo, I come to do thy will”.

BWL Yes; the quotation is from Psalm 40: 6-8. Hebrews 10: 7 relates to the quotation from the psalm, but then in verse 9 He says, “Lo, I come”. That is what the Lord said and did Himself in taking up this body that was prepared for Him.

PJW You spoke about the committal of love. We had a touch last Lord’s day as to the Hebrew bondman who said, “I love my master, my

wife, and my children, I will not go free”, Exod 21: 5. He said it “distinctly”, and then it says, “his master shall bring him before the judges, and shall bring him to the door, or to the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl”, v 6. Do you think that typifies what you are speaking of: committal of love and the absolute form of it with the ear bored through with the awl?

BWL Yes, that is good. What is for God Himself is a primary matter, “I love my master”; that is what comes first. The governing matter in the Lord's life was the will of God: “who, in view of the joy lying before him, endured the cross, having despised the shame”, Heb 12: 2. The assembly may be included in the joy lying before Him, but the governing factor was His committal to the will of His God and Father and the carrying of it through.

DAB Are you thinking we might get some impression of just how much for God hangs on this committal? It really set the whole divine plan in motion. Things have come in morally and in God's ways as we read of figuratively at the beginning of this chapter, but He had this committal first.

BWL Yes, that is helpful. In divine purpose God has men in mind. As I understand, counsel relates to the working out of how the purpose will be brought through and accomplished. That involves that one divine Person was to become man. Earlier on in Hebrews we have “bringing many sons to glory”, chap 2: 10. That is really what was in mind. Sin has come in but what we are speaking of goes beyond time. God had in mind that He would have men before Him like Christ. The counsel involved that one divine Person came into manhood that that would be so.

DAB We are reminded of it at the Supper. The emblems are of a life laid down and they challenge our committal week by week, but the whole divine scheme of things securely rests on this committal.

BWL Yes, it does. What we were speaking of in Hebrews 10 is for God. When we come to the Supper we partake of the loaf. The Lord said when He introduced the Supper, “This is my body which is given for you”, Luke 22: 19. We partake of that and it is for us, but we are feeding on that committal.

PM We have to - and every other man has had to - learn what the will of God is, but this blessed Person knew what it was from the beginning and committed Himself to it; whatever the cost.

BWL Yes, that is good. In Romans we are to “prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God”, chap 12: 2. The Lord did not have to prove that: He knew it. For us it no doubt involves discipline and the Lord learned obedience through the things that He suffered. He did not learn to be obedient, but He learned what obedience was. Obedience did not apply to Him as a divine Person.

PM I just wondered if it underlay the strength of that committal that He knew exactly what He was committing Himself to, and despite the cost to Himself He never thought for Himself at all.

BWL That is good; “for your sakes he, being rich, became poor”, 2 Cor 8: 9. That involves the incarnation. The One who is rich in Godhead glory emptied Himself taking a bondman's form.

RJF We have been occupied locally with the fact that one of the names of the Lord Jesus is “Counsellor”, Isa 9: 6. I wonder if that bears on this enquiry. He was One who took part in those counsels of God and knew what it would mean. He came in, in a bondman's form, knowing the full cost and pressure that was to come in upon Him, which amplifies the committal because He was committed despite that foreknowledge.

BWL Counsellor is what He is to us. When you think of the depth and riches of what you have spoken about in relation to having part in the counsels of God; that is a very rich and fruitful field. We need to appreciate something as to these counsels because we are the objects of them.

AM He found His sustenance in committing to the will of God: “My food is that I should do the will of him that has sent me”, John 4: 34. Does that really teach us that the will of God to Him was not a matter simply by obedience; it was His resource?

BWL Speaking carefully, He lived on that. The Lord enjoyed carrying out the will of God: His food was to do the will of God.

RJF Even at the temptations He says, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which goes out through God's mouth”, Matt 4: 4.

BWL That is all involved in the preparation of the body. There is a note in Psalm 40: 6 to the expression “ears hast thou prepared me”, which says it is literally 'digged'. It involves that the Lord was here with the intelligence and understanding of what God's will was. We hear through the ear. That is what God found delight in; He had a Man here

that was intelligent in relation to all that His mind was. The body was necessary for the carrying out of the will of God.

JRW This section bears very much on the thought of offering; the contrast of the one offering with all that had gone before. There was a certain perfection and delight in that offering. I wondered if it was based on what we are saying in relation to His committal. Can you say a little more as to the thought of offering?

BWL I think what you say is helpful. Hebrews is a book of contrasts; we get things from the law introduced. It is a book of what is better, better things; so that what we have come to in Christ is far better. It is speaking of the great day of atonement; once a year there was the offering for the sins of the people. I think it was the sins in relation to the year that had gone before; so in that sense it was retrospective. It had to be carried out. It has been said an Israelite would be concerned he might die before the year was up and the day of atonement had not come round; he would be concerned about things. The offering of Christ is in complete contrast to that: it never needs to be carried out again. The bulls and goats had no understanding or intelligence or appreciation of anything. I think God took account in some way of the understanding of the offerers.

JRW It says earlier, "who by the eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God", Heb 9: 14. It just struck me that the committal that we are speaking of really underpins that and what lies behind it. That offering was spotless; it secured everything that was in the divine mind.

RMB As to the offering given it says they were incapable of taking away sins. Can you say something as to why God required them, and what value there was for Him in them?

BWL It all looked on to Christ. The Old Testament is written for us; we look back. We were helped in that recently in relation to Matthew's gospel. The householder "brings out of His treasure things new and old", Matt 13: 52. What is new really sheds its light on the Old Testament. As we look at these things as having received the gift of the Spirit the Old Testament is opened up to us.

RMB I wonder whether there were two main things that gave them value. They looked on to the sacrifice of Christ; and they spoke to God in that way of the one sacrifice that has been referred to. I wondered too whether there was value in the sight of God in whatever it was in a godly Israelite that prompted him to bring that offering, what it was in

him that made him feel the need of it, and whatever outgoing of heart there may have been in that.

BWL I think that is right. God took account of those who took it up, those who were exercised in taking up what was ordained for them, and even the woman that cast in the “two mites” (Mark 12: 42) in the temple. The Lord takes account of that. The whole Jewish system was passing off but God had not exactly left it at that point, and He took account of what that woman offered. She offered more really than everyone else. God took account of what was in her heart and I think is what the blood of bulls and goats would speak of; it is what is in the heart of the offerer.

CHS Do you think when David speaks in the psalms about difficult times much was being worked out in his own heart? It says,

For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise, Ps 51: 16, 17.

BWL Yes; David felt things. He was able to write these psalms that relate to his experience. His appreciation was of God, and David had some understanding that there was something greater and Someone greater who was going to come on to view and establish everything for God's eternal satisfaction.

CHS What was said earlier about what we have to come to has been worked out in his own heart. Evidently he saw something very early on that is in line with what you are speaking of.

DAB I wonder if there might be another thing to put with what has been suggested, not only that God can look forward to the actuality of His offering, but He can look back as it were to the committal that had already been made. The fact that the offerings were lesser was not a problem for God because He had the fulness and the greatness already before Him.

BWL Yes, that is good and helpful. Galatians tells us, “when the fulness of time was come”, chap 4: 4. God was looking forward to that moment.

DAB I was just reflecting on what this passage says; it was what God had prepared that Christ offered; “the offering of the body”. Is it right to think that in the preparation of that body, the form it was given was a bondman? Is that a right line of thought?

BWL Yes; a bondman was one that was completely committed; he was owned by another. The Lord took that place.

DAB It is wonderful to me that, however many forms society exhibits, when God prepared the body for Christ it was in the form of a bondman. It acknowledged that the One for whom the body was prepared had committed Himself to the will of another.

BWL Yes, entirely.

PM Mr Darby said that in taking a bondman's form He had no will of His own, Collected Writings vol 17 p390

BWL The Lord had His own will, but He never exhibited His own will. It was always the will of another.

AM He was at the point of extremity; this is “not my will, but thine be done”.

BWL Yes.

QAP What is the present bearing of the Lord's committal - earlier in Hebrews, for example, He is spoken of as “a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God”, Heb 2: 17.

BWL The Lord was not a priest officially when He was here on earth; although He certainly acted in a priestly way. The Lord is on high and glorified and has taken up that service. He has committed to it. However, what we are occupied with is not so much what the Lord is now, although we cannot exactly take that away because all that we are speaking about involved the place that He now has, but He established everything as Man here, everything was carried through as Man here.

AJET The thought of what is established brings us on to the last verse that you read in Hebrews: “by which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”. We have spoken about how the matter of sins has not been met by the blood of bulls and goats, which is incapable of taking away sins, but not only has that been effected, but we come on to sanctification - could you say something about that?

BWL This all relates to the will. “Lo, I come to do thy will. He takes away the first that he may establish the second; by which will”. That is the will that the Lord was here for; so we find that the work is so full. Sanctification sets us apart for holy purposes so that we are like Christ; “he that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren”, Heb 2: 11. The work of Christ

has accomplished all that.

RMB What do the first and the second refer to in verse 9?

BWL Would the first include the whole side of the law?

DAB Is it not a reference to the covenant? What is said in this book about what is first relates to the covenant of the law. Then something else is established. It is very interesting to be called the second but in God's view it was first.

BWL Yes, I always wondered that. In time perhaps we think of it as the first and the second, but if we think of purpose it is what was there from before time. I think Mr Taylor works that verse out in the book of Job - The Second Established, vol 51 p236. We have got the whole thing at the beginning. That is what is being worked out in us now. There was that which was far greater at the end of the book of Job than what there was at the beginning.

TJH Is this committal that we are speaking of here looking on to what He may establish? It speaks of Him having "sat down in perpetuity", v 12. I wonder if you would say this committal is really looking on to that; His committal is looking on to those conditions.

BWL Yes, that is right; it is what He has done Himself. He sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God. He had the title to do that; He had the right to do that; it is what He has done Himself, so that He came in Himself and took the body.

PHM It speaks in Hebrews as to Him being, "Jesus the leader and completer of faith: who, in view of the joy lying before him, endured the cross", chap 12: 2. He had that view in mind. When we consider His committal; what was behind His committal was that we should be brought into blessing. Does that verse help us to see that He considered His committal as having that joy before Him?

BWL Yes; I think the satisfaction of the Father's heart would be part of this joy too as having accomplished everything for the Father, having secured sons for the Father. That would all be included in the joy that lay before Him and His glorification; "raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father", Rom 6: 4. That shows the Father's love in appreciation of the One who has done everything for Him. The Lord would have a sense of the joy which was before Him. The governing matter was carrying out the will of His God and Father and all that He had committed to carrying it through.

PAG This committal, not only dealt with sins, “who himself bore our sins in his body on the tree” (1 Pet 2: 24), it dealt with sin: “Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us”, 2 Cor 5: 21. The committal is not only complete, but it is also sufficient.

BWL God has been glorified in respect of sin, by the work that the Lord Jesus has accomplished. We are very thankful for what the Lord has done for us. Think of God being glorified in the work that the Lord Jesus has carried out for Him.

RJF Why is it here “the offering of the **body** of Jesus Christ once for all”? In verse 4 it speaks about the “blood of bulls and goats”, and we know how effective the blood of the Lord Jesus was and is, which it speaks about elsewhere. Here the emphasis is on the “body of Jesus Christ”.

BWL It involves the One that sacrificed; it involves the Person. It involves a life laid down, a life that was committed to the will of His God and Father. A perfect life could not accomplish this; a perfect life was necessary, but that perfect life had to be laid down in death.

RJF It brings out the Offerer as well as the offering.

BWL Hebrews does not follow the types exactly, but we do get all the types. We get the Offerer, we get the offering, and we get the altar.

DCW The footnote says the Hebrew bondman came in 'with his body', Exod 21: 3.

BWL Yes; He came in alone. In His committal He has secured the purposes of God; He has secured His bride; He has secured everything.

PJW I express my will in my body, but the Lord expressed nothing in His body but the will of God.

BWL It is good to bring that out, and it helps us in our contemplation of the Lord Jesus

GCB This verse we are speaking of is the evidence of a life laid down. What do you say about Hebrews 10: 20, “boldness for entering into the holy of holies by the blood of Jesus, the new and living way which he has dedicated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh”? They seem to both refer to His manhood condition.

BWL The veil previously had been a barrier, but I think the veil relates to His manhood. That is what it says, “that is, his flesh”. The Lord as

having gone in the whole way is opened up to us that we may approach God. We are there because He is there.

GCB I wondered if it indicates His present condition in manhood.

BWL Yes, I think that is what “his flesh” means, not flesh and blood; it relates to His manhood. He is a glorious Man.

GCB I think it is quite a touch for us all that it is a life laid down in devotion, which should touch all our hearts. There is what is ongoing now, a risen life.

BWL Yes; so Romans tells us “we shall be saved in the power of his life”, Rom 5: 10. That is His present life where He is.

We should move on to Genesis. This is a chapter of love; the father's love for the son. We cannot really say that Isaac was intelligent as to what was happening. When we come to the “ram caught in the thicket by its horns” it really speaks to us of the Lord Jesus, He being rich in glory coming into conditions that relate to restriction. I suppose the thicket might speak of restriction, but He is held there in complete devotion. The ram would speak to us of that and would speak of the Lord's intelligence. The horns are part of the animal. The horns of the altar were one with the altar, the complete committal and devotion of the Lord Jesus to the will of His God and Father.

JRW This section seems to present it from the side of God's provision. The first section you read in Hebrews is, “Lo, I come to do thy will”. It seems there that the spring of it is from the Lord Jesus Himself. Here it is presented from the side of God's provision. “God will provide himself with the sheep”, and then, “On the mount of Jehovah will be provided”. Can you say something as to that side of it?

BWL It has been said that the Lord in Gethsemane really represents the burnt offering that God found His full delight in, that which was for His own heart and pleasure in that blessed One. As finding His delight in Christ as a burnt offering He took the opportunity to make Him the sin offering. In that sense it was all God's provision, but Christ has given God that opportunity.

JRW It is almost as though the two thoughts coalesce there at Gethsemane. There is God's provision, but it was infinitely filled out in the committal that the Lord Jesus made and carried through.

QAP At the cross, they said to Him, “let him descend now from the cross, and we will believe on him”, Matt 27: 42. As the ram was caught

in the thicket by its horns, He remained all the way through.

BWL Yes, the devotion involved the whole life of the Lord Jesus.

DAB I have sometimes wondered if there is a connection with the end of John 14. There were two horns: “that the world may know that I love the Father”, that is one, and “as the Father has commanded me, thus I do” (v31), that was the other. Those two things together comprise the glory of the pathway of Jesus and are now something that the whole world can take account of.

BWL I like that suggestion of the two horns. You might say the thicket corresponds to the outward confusion, the Romans and the Jews all in outward confusion; but the horns relating to that devotion and committal.

DAB Both those things have God before Him. We are so thankful for what He did for us and it is so easy to become occupied with that. What He exhibited was what He was for God and for His will.

BWL I think that is the primary matter to have before us; that which is for His God and Father.

KJW I was interested in what you said about the Lord's whole life. Where He was in the temple in Luke it says, “did ye not know that I ought to be occupied in my Father's business?”, chap 2: 49. We can see there at an early age the complete devotion of the Lord to His Father's will and His business.

BWL The Lord had an understanding of what the Father's business was; “My Father worketh hitherto and I work”, John 5: 17. This shows the feelings of the Lord Jesus in relation to the Father's business, doing things the way the Father would have done them, as understanding fully His heart. Think of the delight that heaven found in that man.

KJW It is not always easy for others to understand; even His natural family did not understand the way that He moved. For the Lord that was His sustenance, to do God's will.

BWL Yes, and the Lord had recourse to the mount of Olives. It says, “everyone went to his home. But Jesus went to the mount of Olives”, John 7: 53; 8: 1. The Lord could in that sense repair there in that heavenly realm in His links with the Father: “morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed”, Isa 50: 4. Think of the delight that heaven found in that One, a Man here who was ready to hear what was for the day in full and complete dependence, here for the

will of His God and Father.

PM You get a reference to God's provision at the commencement of John's gospel; when John says, "Behold the Lamb of God", chap 1: 29. He was God's Lamb.

BWL It speaks of what is sacrificial.

PM He had waited four thousand years for this. He brings out His provision; God will provide Himself.

PAG The Father's appreciation of Christ is seen in that when the priest presents the burnt offering for any man the skin of the burnt offering is for the priest himself, Lev 7: 8. We are taught rightly that the burnt offering speaks of what is exclusively for God, but God would have us to be clothed in His appreciation of the worth of this One who was held in love.

BWL Yes I think so. As having the skin of the burnt offering do you think that would help us in relation to providing an oblation? That perhaps would bring us on to Luke 22.

The place is not called Gethsemane here in Luke; it is the mount of Olives, an elevated realm, a spiritual realm which the Lord was accustomed to repairing to. Matthew and Mark are spoken of as the pressure gospels. They give us Gethsemane which means 'wine-press', but here we can also see something as to the pressure that the Lord Jesus went through. The carrying out of the will of His Father involved that He was to be made sin. For us in relation to an appreciation of the burnt offering we have the skin of the burnt offering, and there is also the oblation that is baked in the oven. We really have the oven at Gethsemane. We are to have some appreciation of the Lord's humanity as going through this.

PAG Yes, and the intensity and compression of what was experienced here prefiguring what would be on the cross. I know the forsaking is not referred to in Luke, but here "his sweat became as great drops of blood, falling down upon the earth". The Lord also refers to His soul; He describes it as being troubled and this is some evidence of it, the intensity of what He faced here.

BWL Yes; we can barely comprehend what was involved for the Lord Jesus; One who knew not sin and in Him sin is not was made sin. I think death is spoken of in three ways: the wages of sin, which could never apply to the Lord Jesus; the judgment of God; and the power of Satan. This perfect life was going to be laid down but it involved that He was

made sin. It involved the wrath of God and Satan was trying to divert the Lord Jesus from this pathway that He was on, by bringing all that pressure to bear upon Him.

MIW As believers we may make committals and when the tests come we may fail. Do you think this brings out that there was One for whom, in the perfection of His manhood, when the greatest test was presented, there was never any question that that will should not be realised in every detail, even to the cross?

BWL Exactly, “not my will but thine be done”; in the reality of His manhood He would shrink from what lay before Him in relation to being made sin.

DCW Hebrews speaks of His “strong crying and tears” (chap 5: 7), emphasising the intensity of His feelings.

BWL I think that is all involved in “his sweat becoming as great drops of blood”. “Being in conflict he prayed more intently”; that was what was necessary. Perfection is always seen in the Lord Jesus. Luke as the gospel of grace would help us in relation to matters of pressure and exercise and conflict in these ways. There is support and help available, grace is available and that is to encourage us. The disciples were not able for it; they had not received the gift of the Spirit at this point. The Lord's counsel comes in here: “Pray that ye enter not into temptation”.

DAB It was entirely right that, as a holy Man, He shrank from what was in prospect, that His precious body prepared by God should be an offering for sin. It was only right to do it because it was the will of God.

BWL To not shrink from it would not have been the action of a real man.

JRW Was there any difference between “my will” and “thy will”?

BWL I would be glad of your impression.

JRW It strikes me as we are speaking that they are distinct, but in no way different.

BWL I think that is right. Speaking carefully, the Lord did not do anything unless it was the Father's will. It is not that His will was any different from the Father's will. He never exhibited and did anything as of His own will, but always because it was the Father's will.

JRW I was just thinking in relation to the remark about the rightness of

shrinking from what was involved. That really was in relation to the Father's will, but there was no difference.

PJW The devil was defeated at this point. I think Mr Taylor speaks about victory arising in the Lord's heart in that He would exhibit to the whole universe the unswerving devotion of obedience to the will of God, vol 89 p450. Do you think that defeated the enemy?

BWL I am sure it did. We said earlier that the devil “departed from him for a time”. Satan had never failed before in relation to anyone else, but he was defeated then. In Luke 22, we find that he is back with what we might say was his greatest weapon, and again he is defeated; completely defeated by the Lord going into death. He was defeated at the cross; he is defeated here.

PAG We are speaking of the temptations after the Lord's baptism when He was in the desert; they were in relation to things that He could have, things that He could legitimately have had. He did not have them because it was not the Father's will. Here the temptation is in relation to something that He could avoid. He would not avoid it because it was not the Father's will for Him to avoid it. In every case His committal was seen to be perfect and that is really Satan's defeat. He can neither tempt Him into something He could have had nor tempt Him into avoiding something He could have avoided. It was entirely the Father's will.

BWL That is helpful. He accepts the cup from the Father's hand. I think that is important to distinguish as well.

PAG It would have been an affront to holiness for Him to take it as an act of His own will because of who He was. It must necessarily be the Father's will, and thus the Father's will became His. It would have been an affront for Him to desire to take this thing, which was so immeasurably awful.

BWL The Lord rises up; in that sense He has His answer: “rising up from his prayer, coming to the disciples”. He is moving on to the cross now. It has been said that 'He bore in His spirit what He took away in His power' (Collected Writings vol 7 p172);. In the actuality of the forsaking on the cross, God made Him to be sin for us in those three hours. He had gone through it in His spirit with the Father. This is when He does that.

RJF It says, “rising up from **his** prayer”. I wonder if it emphasises the matter that we are considering. He was wholly engaged in this; it was

not something that was abstract. I find it hard to put it into words. "Being in conflict he prayed more intently": there was that there which He took on and wholly owned and yet it was His Father's will.

BWL It would speak of His entire perfection of dependence that He was in prayer about this matter. It is a real matter that He felt. Prayer is the action of a dependant man.

QAP The Lord Jesus is distinctive in every sphere, but He is also an example and model to us.

BWL Luke's gospel certainly bears on what we can come into with the Lord as a model for us. All the support necessary is available as we are moving on these lines in dependence and looking to be engaged with the Father's will. It says, "an angel appeared to him from heaven strengthening him". We get help as we are on right lines. That is important, to see that we are to be maintained; we need to be maintained in dependence.

CHS Could you say something about the Father? We do not get much as to the Father's feelings here. We get a little perhaps in Genesis. The Lord said, "I do always the things that are pleasing to him", John 8: 29. That relationship has to be entered into by us for us to go that way.

BWL The Father's delight was in relation to the Lord Jesus; the Father never found greater delight in Him than at these moments. It is God's appreciation of the burnt offering. He took the opportunity to make that One a sin offering so that we come in on that basis; "bringing many sons to glory" (Heb 2: 10) involves the saints, the ones that have been secured by this work.

DAB We often say, rightly, that things the Lord addressed to the Father at the cross were not immediately answered, whether before the forsaking or later. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34), was not publicly answered; neither is this prayer we are speaking about. I wondered if on the one hand it brings out that the Father was pleased in some way to allow the distinctiveness of the committal of the Lord Jesus to stand in its own lustre. Then we have in Romans 6 the answer: He was "raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father", v 4. That is an answer to all this that went unanswered at the time.

BWL The Lord in dependant manhood committed everything to the Father; He left it there. I think what you say is good and helpful: He was

raised by the glory of the Father. The disciples went to the tomb; it was early in the morning; the Father had already been there. The Father did not wait a moment longer than was necessary to show that death had been a real matter. The Father was there before any of the disciples.

DAB-w Can we see a link with the delight the Father had in contrast in Isaiah 1? It says there, "I am sated with burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and in the blood of the bullocks, and of lambs, and of he-goats I take no pleasure", Isa 1: 11. He says, "Bring no more vain oblations!", v 13. That is really in contrast; here we have the perfect Offering. God looking upon the heart, this One He took full delight in. This oblation here is a full oblation.

BWL Exactly, there is no other offering needed; the work of Christ stands for time and eternity and God is eternally satisfied in all that this One has accomplished. God is satisfied in the work that Christ has done, which He has committed to carrying all through.

DAB-w This was not witnessed by man at all. This is between the Lord and His Father, but the Spirit has recorded it for us to consider. Considering this would not result in any vain oblation, would it?

BWL No; I think that is good. As far as the disciples were concerned they seemed to be sleeping. They were not able for this, but the gift of the Spirit helps us in our apprehension and appreciation of what the Lord Jesus was going through here.

JRW They had had a clue as to the answer in John's gospel. John does not give us Gethsemane as such, but the Lord says, "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But on account of this have I come to this hour. Father, glorify thy name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven, I both have glorified and will glorify it again", John 12: 27, 28. I wondered if that was something of the answer that the Father's name had been glorified and the Lord then goes on to say, "Not on my account has this voice come, but on yours", v 30. We can contemplate and take account of these things and they can affect our hearts.

BWL That is good, so that we can understand something of the Father's glory. It may not be directly referred to, but the Father is glorified in this; One here completely committed to the carrying out of His will; the greatness of it.

RMB In connection with what has been said as to the Father's answer to Christ it is important to underline what has been drawn attention to,

that the public answer was manifested in His being raised from the dead; but Jesus was victorious in going *into* death. His triumph was *manifested* in coming *out* of it.

BWL That is good. The Lord Jesus went into death as the invader and broke death's power by going in, not by coming out. The Lord came out Himself. In the epistles it is the Father's work in raising Him from among the dead, it brings out the Father's delight in that One, a selective resurrection.

PM He actually died in communion with the Father: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit", Luke 23: 46.

BWL The three hours of darkness related to the forsaking. The forsaking involved conscious suffering. In those three hours the wrath of God in relation to sin was exhausted. The Lord committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father. He could say to the thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise", Luke 23: 43.

PAG Peter records of the Lord that He committed all "into the hands of him who judges righteously", 1 Pet 2: 23. His committal was such that He committed it all into the hands of His Father. Whether there was an immediate answer or not His committal was not contingent on an answer. He knew that there would be one; there would be one in resurrection. It has been quoted in Romans 6, "even as Christ has been raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life", v 4. The committal had to be gone through completely in order that something new might be established and it was not until He had been through the article of death that there could righteously be an answer, "from the horns of the buffaloes hast thou answered me", Ps 22: 21. It is a matter of righteousness that the committal had to be complete before the answer was given.

BWL It is helpful to consider that, in the Lord's life here, He moved in faith. That committal is the action of a dependent Man.

GCB Would you say there was an answer in the thief to what the Lord had said: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", Luke 23: 34? The thief was as guilty as the rest of us.

BWL That is right. Satan's work continued after what we have read in the betrayal of Judas, the opposition of the Jews and the Romans, and what men did. Satan was involved in all that. None of these things diverted the Lord Jesus from the pathway that He was on. Think of the spirit of forgiveness with the Lord Jesus! The answer is seen when the

gospel goes out, proclaimed by Peter at the beginning of Acts.

DAB It is a very wonderful thing that the coming of the Spirit too was a divine answer to the controversy that there was with the Jews: Mr A J Gardiner used to speak of how God has really vindicated Christ by sending His Spirit to those who believe.

BWL The gift of the Spirit is a witness to Christ glorified. God's work involves that. John tells us that too: "the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified", chap 7: 39. The Lord's full committal involved Him going back into heaven as a Man and the Spirit coming. It is a wonderful thing.

RJF The last words of the Lord, "Father, into thy hands I commit my Spirit", were the final expression of the limitation of manhood, accepting that there was nothing more that was to be done. There was nothing else that He could do save commit His spirit into the hands of the Father.

BWL I think that is absolutely right. The body had been prepared and that body was now given up in death. The Lord when He came out of death took a new condition. The body in which He carried out the will of His God and Father was laid down in death. He was His own spirit, and yet really Man, JT vol 48 p183. He committed that spirit into the hands of His Father.

Sunbury

17th February 2018

List of initials:

DABarlow, Sunbury; R M Brown, Strood; DABurr, London;
G C Bywater, Buckhurst Hill; R J Flowerdew, Sunbury; P A Gray, Grangemouth; T J Harvey, East Finchley; B W Lovie, Aberdeen;
A Martin, Buckhurst Hill; P Martin, Colchester; P H Morris, Sunbury;
QA Poore, Swanage; C H Smith, Chelmsford; A J E Temple, Sunbury;
J R Walkinshaw, Maidstone; K J Walkinshaw, Sunbury;
P J Walkinshaw, Strood; M I Webster, Buckhurst Hill; D C White, Sidcup

THE DIVINE STANDARD

John Laurie

Exodus 25: 8-15, 40; 36: 1; 39: 32

I had the impression to say something, beloved brethren, about these words, “according to”. They occur numerous times throughout the whole of Scripture and in a very particular way they come into Paul's ministry, indicating that there is a certain standard of things. It is so attractively set before us even in regard of our calling and our place of blessing before God where we are reminded that God has called us “not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace”, 2 Tim 1: 9. What an encouragement that is. We have been helpfully reminded of the need of gaining encouragement and moving in the enjoyment of it. God would afford us thoughts about this even in the dignity and standard of His calling because it is not according to our works which would surely fail and accomplish nothing, but it is according to His own purpose and grace, and He has acted “according to the good pleasure of His will” (Eph 1: 5), so that He should be glorified in all that is accomplished among the saints. Paul clearly had a distinct impression about this and repeatedly brings in the thought of things being done at that level and according to that dignity in view of God securing His pleasure and an answer in glory from it. I thought that might in some way be illustrated in these three different settings in which the thought is presented in Exodus.

I might suggest that firstly in what was indicated to Moses in chapter 25 we would have the divine requirement that things should be according to the pattern and according to the word of God. It is presented there as a divine requirement. When we come to chapter 36, the ability to do the work according to the word of Jehovah is the particular point; God afforded needed wisdom to persons to carry it out. And then in the last section it was done and finalised according to the original requirements of God. These three things are important. I can hardly see how we are able to move according to the mind of God unless we have some understanding of what His mind is. It would be rather futile to exhort someone to move according to a plan if they had no knowledge of the plan! But I believe God has helped us through the way the truth has been opened up among us in such a wonderful way, no doubt by the help and power of the Holy Spirit and of the Scriptures, but also by the help of the apostle Paul and others whom God has distinctively raised up, and to whom the Lord has given gift. There has

been a long, long time of distinctive teaching for us in many ways so that we should learn the mind of God and it seems to me important that things must be according to that. There is a necessary requirement that things should be according to the divine mind and Moses was given the pattern of that on the mountain and was exhorted to act and move in accordance with it. There had to be no deviation from that, as is made abundantly clear in what we have read here. It had to be according to the word of God in every way, and so we read in chap 25: 40, "see that thou make them according to their pattern", as if God would emphasise it again to Moses in a summary at the end in order that he should attend to that carefully. It is clear that the ark, and I read about the ark specifically, had such a prominent and central place in everything. How important for us to understand that if there is anything presented to our minds in the way of a standard and a pattern its answer is distinctively set forth in Christ Himself. He is the very centre of the whole divine system. God's pleasure is focused and centred in a blessed Man. The good pleasure of God is connected with His will, and clearly God's will is "to head up all things in the Christ", Eph 1: 10. And so, understandably, God began by calling the attention of Moses to the ark and to the distinctive features of it and to the distinctive place it had in God's mind in the whole pattern of things that had to be so carefully constructed.

But then when we come to chapter 36 we find God gave wisdom to "Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every man that was wise hearted"; so that they should have an understanding how to do this. It is one thing to understand that there is a requirement to do it, but if I have not the means or the ability to carry it out then there is no progress, but God has not left us without that means. He has furnished the saints with wisdom; characteristically I would say that is seen in the gatherings of the saints in local companies. We have to credit the saints with having wisdom to work out things according to the divine mind in administration in local companies. Characteristically that is true and has to be respected by us so that we do not assume to be superior in our understanding of things to what God has set in wisdom in the assembly. And that is typified in what is said here about these persons to whom special skill was given so that they would know how to act. It says, "to know how to work all manner of work of the service of the sanctuary - according to all that Jehovah had commanded". I just leave that further thought with us that if through divine help we have come to understand some measure of the scope and importance of the truth, then it falls upon us to seek help in divine wisdom to work it out according to that. There is a

requirement then as well, not only to know about the truth, but to speak and think and act according to the pattern that has been given, and God would help us in that. The Lord is the source of wisdom for all that is needed so that things should be filled out in suited dignity in the assembly, and I think as Head of the assembly we have an infinite resource to draw upon. By the help of the Holy Spirit that is made livingly good amongst the saints so that there should be power to give effect to things.

In the last section read, it says there so beautifully, "And all the labour of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was ended; and the children of Israel had done it according to all that Jehovah had commanded Moses - so had they done it". How pleasing it must have been to God that the work had been carried out and completed according to His mind. But one of the things that interested me was that, through intelligence given of God, all was completed entirely in accordance with the divine plan, but firstly it seems from the record that the curtains were made, and the tent or covering formed, before the ark was made. Now we might say the ark was presented first, and that was right and proper that God should show where His prime thoughts lay, but through intelligence being given it was found suitable that there should be a covering made to protect the ark and that the ark and all that it represented should not be exposed to danger or harm. I think that helps us in understanding how things are worked out according to the principles of the truth if Christ is to have His true place among us. God's mind is that Christ should have the central place and the place of glory in the affections of the saints. But if that is to be fulfilled then there must be this maintenance of the principles of the truth that the curtains and the coverings would represent and so, apparently, they were made first to provide that needed shelter and suited place for the ark to be set in so that all that was in God's mind should be brought to completion. Thus it was carried out that the whole labour of the tabernacle of the tent was ended, and God was honoured in that.

I feel we are coming near the end of the dispensation and we have been reminded that there are many tests and tribulations coming in, and we should not lose heart; we should seek grace that we might be vessels available in view of the divine work in this dispensation being brought to completion because when it is brought to completion the whole church will be raptured! I feel we are coming very near that point! In some way, it might be suggested in the ark and the work of the

tabernacle being brought to completion and God's pleasure secured in it. We want to be vessels available to the Lord that are usable in relation to the completion of His interests here, intelligently serving and moving in view of His own glory.

Well, I leave these three thoughts concerning "according to" before our minds so that we may be moving pleasing to the Lord and in view of a full answer for God in glory.

May it be so for His glory.

Word in Meeting for Ministry in Brechin

6th November 2017

GIVEN OUT OF HEAVEN

Andrew E Mutton

John 3: 27

We have been occupied already, brethren, with what is in heaven and Who is in heaven - a great and glorious matter. Everything that belongs to the heavenly realm (the extent of it as we have referred to) thrills your heart - to think that the knowledge of it is available to the Christian.

I would like to speak, with the Spirit's help, about what comes out of heaven. This scripture is very clear: "A man can receive nothing unless it be given him out of heaven". I think we can take the liberty of speaking of the fact that this refers to spiritual things. It also refers to temporal things, in a way, but I would like to apply it as referring to spiritual things, "A man can receive nothing unless it be given him out of heaven".

By way of contrast, I think we are all very familiar with what is earthly. Things that we have, possessions, houses, cars, jobs, family, all of these things, they are earthly. I distinguish that from what is worldly; I am not talking about what is worldly; I am talking about what is earthly, things that belong to this earth. What is earthly will never enter into heaven. If what you have is only earthly, it cannot enter into heaven. I trust everyone here has the knowledge of Christ as their Saviour. That is a heavenly blessing, it is an essential heavenly blessing, and if you have that you will enter into heaven. But all of those earthly things that you or I fill our lives with, they cannot enter there. If you remember the parable of the rich man (Matt 19: 21), he could not set everything aside. Could you? If you had to speak of it in a percentage, and you could divide the things that you have between those that are earthly and those that are heavenly, which would be the greater? That is a test. You have to do things on this earth, you have to go to school, to college, to work, look after the home, to bring up the family, and all these kind of things, but they are earthly. What is heavenly, what comes out of heaven, is so much greater and you have nothing unless you have these things.

John the baptist knew this. He did not have very much that was earthly; he lived in the desert, he ate locusts and wild honey, quite frankly that is not something I would enjoy! He had set aside all those things, all the earthly things that could have been for his benefit and

temporal blessing, because he had found Christ. He was here - the Lord Jesus says of him "there is not arisen among the born of women a greater than John the baptist", Matt 11: 11. Yet John the baptist was found in the desert, with a garment of camel's hair, having a very limited diet, and walking there apart from men. He did not value what was earthly; he valued what was heavenly; he valued what came from heaven.

We read here that he speaks of the Lord Jesus, and that is the first thing I would like to speak about, the One who came from heaven. He says, "He who comes out of heaven is above all", v 31. We have spoken of the place that He has now in heaven, but this was before the Lord ascended, and John the baptist knew in his affections that the One who came after him, the One whose paths he had come to make straight, came out of heaven and He was above all. There is a slight repetition of what we spoke of earlier, but dear brother, dear sister, can you really, truly say, that the One who comes from above, is in your heart, in your affections, and dare I raise the challenge, in the whole of your life, that *this* One is above all? Not above just in priority, but He is of a different order. He comes from a place that is superior altogether. He now resides there, but He came out and was found here, as we said this morning, "in figure as a man" (Phil 2: 8); He was found here but He had come from heaven, and "He who comes from above is above all". This is the One that John had learnt to love. He says, "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1: 29) - I love those words in scripture, "Behold", and elsewhere it says, "Lo". Dear brother, dear sister, have a fresh look at Jesus, have a fresh look at the Man who is above all, the One whom God has exalted and the One who in this time in which we are now, brings out of that great divine treasury, things that are for your blessing and encouragement. John the baptist knew what it was. They ask about the Lord Jesus baptising, and that people are going to Him, and he speaks of his own joy in the fact that the Lord Jesus had come out of heaven, "the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices in heart because of the voice of the bridegroom: this my joy then is fulfilled", v 29.

How many of these earthly things are your props? How many are there? If these things were stripped away one by one - and some have had these things taken away one by one - be it health, family, employment, whatever it might be, one by one these earthly things may be stripped away - but could you still say, that in your heart, "He who comes from above is above all"? Does it shake your faith as the

exigencies of the testimony and the difficulties of life bear in? Does it make a difference to your appreciation of Jesus? Does it make a difference to your joy in the fact that you have a Saviour and a Lord, or a difference in the certainty of what He has done, and what He will yet do? Does it make a difference? These are testing things, and I share in them, but they are testing things that should not impinge on the place that Jesus has in your heart, because He sympathises, and He knows them. He is the One that is from above.

In Acts 9 we find two other things that are from above; Saul was travelling on the road to Damascus, and as he travelled along that road two things came out of heaven and he fell to the ground. Firstly, “and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven”, Acts 9: 3. I wonder whether you have had that experience of a light out of heaven shining round about you. If you know Christ as Saviour you will have known that light, but was that the last time you knew the light out of heaven? The “light out of heaven” fills the heart, the mind, the soul; it causes the Christian to rejoice and it causes other things to fade and disappear. I like to think of this man as he lay on the ground, everything that was earthly disappeared. He lay there and the light shone round about him - did he see the road? No. Did he see in the distance the city where he was going? No. Did he see the people round about him? No. The light came and, simply, it put everything else in the shade. Everything else disappeared. Everything else that had been so important to him, his urgent journey, the place to which he was going, the letters he was carrying, all of those became irrelevant: “there shone round about him a light out of heaven”.

We can know that same light, because that light comes from the exalted Man. That light comes from Jesus Himself. Have you known what it is to have that light? You may say, 'I do not really as I do not understand; I do not understand a lot of what is said; I do not understand much that it is in the scripture. I do know that I am saved, and thank God for that, but where can I get this light?'. This light comes from one Man alone; it comes from the Lord Jesus. This light shines towards the Christian. It shines towards a believer who is set for Christ in a world that wants to have nothing to do with Him. The light fills the heart, soul and mind of a believer so that he sees that things are of no value here on this earth. He sees and understands things now. You will know what I mean when I say that you have sometimes been sitting in a meeting and you heard something said, and suddenly you saw it. You see something of Jesus or of His glory; you see something of what God

has in His heart for you that you never saw before; even when you heard the same scripture read. How many times have you sung the precious hymns that we have in the hymnbook, and maybe sung a particular hymn for the fiftieth, sixtieth, seventieth time; and one line jumps out? Then a brother gets up and refers to it in thanksgiving, and something in your heart responds to the light that is coming from heaven. You see something new, you see a different facet of what God has in His heart, and you see something that is shining towards men that could not be bought with any price from here in this world, because it comes from another world where Christ is exalted. This light is very precious.

We sometimes refer to our responsibility, and we use the expression when we talk about it that we have been 'given a lot of light' and - I speak for myself - I can perhaps appear to be a little disparaging, often saying as to other believers, 'according to the light that they have'. I have stopped myself saying that now as I think it is a little patronising - that light is light from heaven. However little or however much you have got, it is a little of the real thing. It is light that shines from God Himself, the great source of everything in the universe and it shines towards you in Christ. If you understand today something that you did not understand before, that is because light has shone into your heart, into your mind, from heaven. Wonderful thing! That is not my doing, no one else's doing in the room; it is a transaction between heaven, a divine Person, and you. It is very precious to have that light.

One other thing came from heaven as Saul lay there; there came a voice: I wonder if you have ever heard the voice of Jesus? We sometimes sing the hymn at the start of the gospel:

Come! - 'tis Jesus gently calling

(Hymn 154).

When you came to know Jesus as your Saviour, how did you hear His voice? Do you remember how you heard His voice? I was interested in this because, as probably most here know, a couple of weeks ago Billy Graham, the famous preacher, died. He had been asked in an interview not long before he died whether he had ever heard the voice of Jesus, and he said, 'Not as you mean it'; he said, 'I have not heard an audible voice, but I have known His presence'. How has Jesus spoken to you? If you have answered to the call in the gospel, if you have opened up your heart to His ministry and to the great knowledge that comes as we enter in, as having the Spirit, to what God has for us, how have you heard His voice? He says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I

know them, and they follow me”, John 10: 27. I should know His voice, I should recognise His voice; so should we all recognise the voice of Jesus:

Come! - 'tis Jesus gently calling.

Does that stop when we have received Him as a Saviour? I do not think so. Jesus still speaks. He speaks to you, He speaks to me, He speaks to His people, nourishing and cherishing them, supporting, adorning the assembly, giving us everything that we need so that that vessel is built up now for that time when He will present her to Himself. Jesus speaks now. This voice came, and it came along with the light, “Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?”, Acts 9: 4. Just in those few words, the voice of Jesus communicates so much. I wonder whether you have proved that in your testimonial life that the voice of Jesus communicates a lot. I have found it, not as much as I should, but you find it sometimes, and you say, 'Perhaps it is coincidence'. I do not think that that is what happens in the things of God; I do not think that coincidence happens in divine things. Sometimes you find that things work out in a way that you never thought possible. Things come into the meeting when you are sat down, maybe on a weekday evening, having the reading, and you say, 'That answers my question that I had two days ago'. Sometimes you just read the Day Dawn calendar, and think, I was just reading that in the Bible; and yet it has been there on the Day Dawn calendar since the day they printed it probably six or seven months ago. It is no coincidence! The voice of Jesus is present. You have the meeting for prophetic ministry and you find that the voice of Jesus comes just for the present moment, you find that a word comes just for you where you are - never mind the person next to you, who may receive something different from it, but it comes to *you*. You find that you are in a difficult place, perhaps at college, university, in school, or at home, you find that you are in a difficult fix; the voice of Jesus will come. Will He give you the answer you hope for? Maybe not always. But will He help you through it? He certainly will.

I remember a brother speaking to me when there was a particular test in my life; and I said I just want the confirmation of what to do and I am not getting it. Eighteen months later in the exercise I am still not getting it! The brother said, 'He may not give you the direction before, but He will certainly give confirmation after'. Jesus speaks in His own time in the best way to bring about your development in the truth and in the testimony. If every time you had a need, if every time

you had something that you wanted to know, and you turned straight away to Jesus and He gave you an answer five seconds later, how much would you really learn? How much would I be dependent? That is not how it works. Jesus may do that; the divine answer may come, and it may come very quickly. For Saul, the answer did not come straight away. After they had spoken the Lord says, "rise up and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do", v 6. No doubt Saul wanted to know right there and then, but that was not how it was to be, and so it is for us. All of those earthly things that he had relied on before were of no use. The voice and the light of a risen glorified Lord, the same voice and light which would bear upon you and me today in the testimony, were now directing this man who had been so opposed. We have been opposed to Jesus; we have been opposed in our lives; it may have been many years ago, but sometimes even now our wills are opposed. This man thought he should do much harm against the Christians who were here in Damascus, and they were afraid of him, but this light and this voice, again I say, the same light and voice that is still available from heaven, struck him down on that road and made him a Christian - one who is like Christ. He set him on his pathway to becoming one who Jesus could refer to as "an elect vessel to me", v 15. This was the start of it; that the light and the voice of Jesus came directly upon him.

In Acts, one other thing helps us, and we have only referred to it in passing today, but I refer to it now - we find something else that comes out of heaven, a sound. It says, "And when the day of Pentecost was now accomplishing, they were all together in one place. And there came suddenly a sound out of heaven", Acts 2: 1, 2. This was the great coming of the Holy Spirit, coming here to indwell believers and to adorn and to beautify the assembly for Christ, to gain and to make ready His bride, to bring about something that would answer to the heart of that blessed Man. Here was the great moment when that happened. This was a moment of power. The number of Christians who were there was quite small and they were to be persecuted and opposed by the authorities, by the religious powers and so on, but there came, "a sound out of heaven as of a violent impetuous blowing, and filled all the house where they were sitting". It says in the note, 'not 'wind', but they heard blowing, as of hard breathing ... 'Blast' is too sudden and passing' (note g). These things are important to get right because this was the great movement of a divine Person into this scene. It was the coming of the Holy Spirit, another Comforter, One who would help and guide us in to

all the truth, One who would lend His power, His strength, to our weakness, One who would guide us, who is able to look after the interests of Christ while He is absent. He has done so for these two thousand years of which we have spoken since the Lord Jesus ascended. He sat there “on the right hand of the greatness on high” (Heb 1: 3), and the Holy Spirit is here working in the hearts of men, women and children, to bring about this great answer for the heart of Christ. This great movement also came out of heaven; the sound was heard.

Here we have the three things: the light, the voice and the sound, the power coming out of heaven towards the believer. What resource you have to be here for Christ! What resource is available, direct from heaven itself for the Christian! Do you avail yourself of these things day by day? I know probably almost everyone in the room knows them to be truths, but what it is actually to grasp them for yourself, to know daily the voice of Jesus, to know light entering into your soul when you are surrounded by the darkness of everything that is around us here! It seems on every hand to get worse and worse, and I know - and I repeat again - those of you who are in schools and colleges and universities bear the brunt of what the enemy is doing at the present time. The enemy is making a real bid for those who are in these institutions, who are going through studying, because that is when your mind is at its keenest and your thoughts are being formed, but do not worry: you have the greatest resource that there can be in the whole of the world; you have the resource of a glorified Man and of the Holy Spirit here below. All this is bringing, not just encouragement, but bringing something that is substantial out of heaven to fill the heart of a believer with things that are eternal and will last, and last and last. All of those things that disappear when we are taken to be with the Lord, all the things that we shore ourselves up with will be as nothing, but these things that come directly out of heaven, these are the things that will last and are for your blessing.

All of these things bring about something which James refers to in his epistle: “Who is wise and understanding among you; let him shew out of a good conversation his works in meekness of wisdom; but if ye have bitter emulation and strife in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This is not the wisdom which comes down from above, but earthly, natural, devilish. For where emulation and strife are, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above first is pure, then peaceful, gentle, yielding, full of mercy and good fruits,

unquestioning, unfeigned”, James 3: 13-17. “Wisdom which comes down from above”, I can say quite clearly that this is not how wisdom is perceived where I work, and I dare say where you work or where you study, that is not the case either. But in divine things this wisdom is available from heaven. “Wisdom from above first is pure”; that is important; it is not tainted with what I think, not tainted with my own thoughts, or the received wisdom of other men around me; it is from above, and it is pure. Then it is “peaceful, gentle, yielding, full of mercy and good fruits” - would you not like this kind of wisdom? Would you not like the light that comes from heaven, and the work and the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about this kind of wisdom in your heart, this kind of understanding? This yields fruits as well; it brings about activity and actions from the Christian that are in keeping with what proceeds in heaven. We are very concerned a lot of the time to be in keeping with what proceeds on the earth. I know that sometimes you are asked about what you think about something, and you say, 'What does so and so think?'. “The wisdom from above first is pure ... gentle, yielding”, it brings about a conviction in the heart that no persuasion or pushing from man's wisdom can ever achieve. It brings about something that is solid, something that brings a peace. The Lord Jesus said when He came in amongst His own, “I leave peace with you”, John 14: 27. This wisdom brings about that character of peace. “Full of mercy and good fruits, unquestioning, unfeigned”; it is a wisdom that means you have God's thoughts, God's view of things, God's understanding; all of these things. How wonderful that that is our portion here, even before we get to that eternal day, this is our portion. May we grasp it.

There are two other things, two other great events that are written of in the scripture, that are spoken of as coming out of heaven. One of them is a Man who will come again; He has come once from heaven, and He will come again. 1 Thessalonians 4 tells us about “the Lord himself, with an assembling shout” (v 16); He will come. Are you looking for that? Is that the culmination of all the things you are gathering up in your life here? Is that the focus, the anticipation that you have in your heart? It is going to happen. It is a future thing, but it could be so close, and He will come out of heaven. My whole exercise as to these occasions is that our eyes and our focus are turned upward to look on the Man in the glory. That is where the next movement from God's side is going to come. Yes, there is work going on now and we are being built up and encouraged, the assembly is being adorned now, but the next great movement from God's side is going to come from

heaven. The Lord Jesus sits there at the right hand of God and He is waiting for the Father's word. He does not know the time or the hour; it is in the Father's hand, and the Father will give that word, and then the Lord Himself will come. How real is that to you? It should be as real every day, every day waiting for the Lord to come. I trust it is. As a Christian, I cannot wait to be in the presence of my Lord, to see Him and to meet Him in the clouds and to be like Him and to be with Him. I may have to learn patience to be here, but it is so close, we are on the cusp of it, on the cusp of being ushered into the realm where He is. He is seated there now and it is the Father's desire and His desire that we should be there too.

One other thing that happened when He went there is that He prepared us a place. He told His own that, "I go to prepare you a place", John 14: 2. There is a place waiting there for you and for me now in heaven. You might say it is empty at the moment, but it is waiting for you and it is waiting for me. I cannot wait to find my part in that place.

Then, the last thing I refer to is the fact that there will come, after that, a vessel out of heaven. At the end of Revelation, it speaks of that, "the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God", chap 21: 10. What I would like to leave with the brethren as to this is that that will include you, and it will include me. We will come down as part of that great vessel, "coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God". It is a wonderful thing. We have spent our whole lives here in what is insubstantial and what is passing, but there will come a moment when we will come out of heaven, with Him, for that great day of display. We will come out of heaven. It is something that we do not speak of too much, but I think God would have it to fill our hearts because it is a great part of what gives Him pleasure and it is a great part of our blessing and our inheritance.

May it fill our hearts! May we be encouraged by these things. For His Name's sake.

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