

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 363

June 2003

CONTENTS

THE POVERTY OF CHRIST

THE WALL AND GATES OF THE CITY

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

(i) WHO IS THE LORD'S?

(ii) HIMSELF

Edited and Published by:

E.C.Burr

50 Red Post Hill London SE24 9JQ

THE POVERTY OF CHRIST

**2 Corinthians 8: 9; Philippians 2: 5-11; Psalm 105: 37, 38;
Exodus 36: 2-7**

J.A.G. Looking on the emblems at the Supper this morning, the scripture in Corinthians came before me, “ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sakes he, being rich, became poor”.

I thought about the poverty of Christ. As Messiah He was cut off and had nothing (see Dan 9: 26). Then He says in another place, the birds of the heavens have roosting-places, and He speaks of the beasts of the field having their own places, “but the Son of man has no where he may lay his head”, Matt 8: 20. Through His poverty He had in mind that we should be enriched. I thought the scripture in Philippians 2 would help us to see the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the wealth that was His, and how He came into a position where He knew poverty in order that we might be enriched. I thought of the verse in the Psalm, “he brought them forth with silver and gold; and there was not one feeble among their tribes”. How wealthy we are as we come out of Egypt! God had said to Abraham many, many years before that they would be brought forth with great property (see Gen 15: 14). In the book of Exodus the scripture we read shows that they had more than enough to put together the dwelling of God. There is a footnote in Hebrews which says the tabernacle in type was the expression of God’s universe of glory, (note ‘d’, ch 9: 1).

I just wonder if we can feel our way into these great matters, and be affected in our spirits as we think of the condition that the Lord Jesus took up in order that we might be delivered, and delivered wealthily and be contributors to the great divine system. I think quickening has that in mind; we are not just living, we are living wealthily. In this scripture in Exodus it was the time when Israel was holiness to Jehovah. We need to think of these things. And they had to be restrained; there was more than enough. Perhaps the brethren can help in this. It is quite a consideration, how He became poor and how He knew poverty.

In the section we read it is His obedience that is in mind, but you can see the line of poverty that runs through it. Certainly not moral poverty, it is moral greatness. But He is not related to the earth or earthliness or material things. Not that there is anything wrong with material things because we can have them from God and regulate them under God's hand. They are needed – we learned that today because of the way the brethren have contributed to clear the expenses of the meetings. But think of how Jesus felt when He was here.

N.J.H. Do you link “became poor” with His humiliation?

J.A.G. Yes, I thought so. Being rich He thought it not “an object of rapine to be on an equality with God”. What a wealth that was!

What grace was coming out in Christ here, “ye know the grace”, he says, “of our Lord Jesus Christ”! He brings in that verse in relation to the collection I think, in Corinthians, “for your sakes he ... became poor”. He came into these circumstances which were very straitened. He could not have been in more straitened circumstances than He was on the cross.

N.J.H. We have been enriched with “every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies” (Eph 1: 3), and been glorified as having the Spirit. We have every enrichment, but with Christ it was humiliation.

J.A.G. Yes, that is exactly the scripture that I was thinking about.

The wealth that belongs to us as having been blessed “with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ”, “taken ... into favour in the Beloved” (Eph 1: 6), holy and blameless before God in love (see v.4).

R.N.H. Does the full name involve the enrichment, do you think?

J.A.G. You mean the ‘Lord Jesus Christ’. That is very beautiful, very affecting.

J.A.P. Even as to money it does not appear the Lord ever had any with Him, so when they had to pay the small tax it came up in the mouth of the fish.

J.A.G. Yes, and He says to the Pharisees, "Show me a denarius. Whose image and superscription has it?", Luke 20: 24. I suppose that is all part of the dependent way that the Lord went.

R.G. Is it like the merchant, he sold all whatever he had to secure the pearl?

J.A.G. Yes, that was in mind, the treasure, and then the pearl, I thought that. The Messiah was cut off and had nothing, and everything belonged to Him. You marvel at the wonder of it, the grace of Christ that He is prepared to move in this way. I think the footnote says it is in contrast to the first Adam (note 'n', Phil 2: 7).

G.D.R. Would both the stoop into manhood and the stoop into death be included in that?

J.A.G. I think so.

G.D.R. Mr. Darby seems to speak of His coming into manhood. We need to contemplate these things more, do you think? The emptying.

J.A.G. Yes. You think of His coming into manhood, you cast your mind back to the manger, no room in the inn. He was accustomed to these conditions from the very start.

W.M.G. It should cause us to be worshipful in spirit when we think about what the Lord has done for us, "that for your sakes he, being rich, became poor, in order the ye by *his* poverty might be enriched".

J.A.G. I thought that as I looked at the loaf and the cup. Think of the poverty of Christ!

R.B.H. The hymn says,

E'en the tomb's

Reproach sustained. (Hymn 13)

J.A.G. Every single thing that was necessary in order that we might be enriched. The stoop, or the reference to it in 2 Corinthians 8, had in mind the believer, the Christian. He did this, He went this way in order that we might be enriched. Not only that we might be saved but that we may be wealthy persons, and the whole of heaven is at

our disposal. Our brother referred to that scripture in Ephesians, “who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies”.

He has “raised us up together, and made us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus”, Eph 2: 6. We go through the tabernacle system, we go through the court and the holy place and the holy of holies, and you get some idea of what the heavenlies are.

J.A.P. The Lord Jesus came into relationships as man that we might come into them. Mr Darby says as to sonship (Vol. 7 of his Notes and Comments), if the Lord had not been Son here we would not be sons. It is the Spirit of His Son in our hearts whereby we cry, Abba, Father, (see Rom 8: 15).

J.A.G. He has given a lead in everything and consequently He is pre-eminent in everything. He is the only One who has been born Son.

J.N.M. Could you say something, please, about the italics, “that ye by *his* poverty”. There is a note as to it, ‘This “his” is emphatic: ‘the poverty of such a one as he’. That is affecting I thought.

J.A.G. I think it is, and it is to endear Him to our hearts and strengthen us in our links with Himself, appreciatively.

R.G. Is there something to learn from the fact that it says, “became poor”? He was not made poor, it was not any outside power that did this to impoverish Him, but it was His own volition – “became poor”.

J.A.G. Yes, His own deliberation, this is the way that He went. A bondman’s form, He took upon Himself “a bondman’s form”. It has often been said that there was nothing about Jesus here that would have made Him outstanding to look at. You would never have said, Oh, that is Jesus, He is distinctive. You would say, Well, that is king David, and that is somebody else, but the fine flour of the oblation made Him even and – I do not know how to put it – but there was nothing outstanding naturally about Jesus. How blessed that is!

That is all part of this wonderful stoop into bondman’s form. Am I giving expression to the thing properly?

N.J.P. The “became poor” is even more tremendous when you consider that He could have been rich at any point. Not only did He become impoverished but He continued in it, did He not?

J.A.G. Yes. Completely in contrast to Adam or to anything that we have naturally:

Nor yet in triumph passing,
But human infancy. (Hymn 188)

H.J.G. Never a bondman like Him. He took the bondman’s form to serve men, to serve us.

J.A.G. And His language was the language of love. “I love”, He says. That is the Hebrew bondman, and the whole of the truth hangs upon the Hebrew bondman, hangs upon Exodus 21, the whole unfolding of the law and of the system. “I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go free”. It is a deliberate action.

How much help we need, beloved – well I can say it for myself anyway – to be more conscious of the warmth and vitality of the love of Christ.

W.M.G. Would it help us in our spirits to be affected by the greatness of the stoop that the Lord has taken? What I am thinking is that we should have a good spirit as we think about these things.

J.A.G. Well, this is to help us in our thinking – “let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus”. We are to think the same way as He thought. There is a lot in Philippians about how you think, “thinking one thing” (Phil 2: 2), thinking the same thing, “joined in soul” (2: 2). All that precedes this appeal to, “let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus”. How much help we need to imbibe this humble spirit.

H.J.G. I know this is a bit negative, but I think we have to face, each of us, that we are affected by an independent thinking and it makes a lot of trouble among the brethren, and this is the only way out of it, is it not?

J.A.G. This is the only way out of it. The two sisters, let them be of the same mind in the Lord (see Phil 4: 2). If we move on this line we

will be thinking the same thing, thinking one thing, joined in soul. What a wonderful situation there is in a local meeting when it is so! How much liberty the Holy Spirit has to glorify Christ. We need to be regulated by the truth of God as it has been revealed.

G.D.R. We have been considering this blessed Person for nearly three days, but I think this is the top-stone, that Man and the way that He came, would you say?

J.A.G. I think so. I think it is wonderful to be able to sit here and drink into this spirit, “emptied himself, taking a bondman’s form, taking his place”, *his place*, “in the likeness of men; and having been found in figure as man, humbled himself”. See how totally different that is to Adam or to any of Adam’s race, “humbled himself”.

G.D.R. The spiritual result in the soul is not only, as we have been referring, our being enriched, but then we become resourceful, because if there is a need at the present time it is being resourceful, would you say?

J.A.G. Yes, exactly, and that is part of the wealth. You have plenty of resource, be enriched, “brought them forth with silver and gold”.

G.D.R. Paul could say, “put this to my account”, Phil 1: 18. He has, you might say, a chequebook and there is money in the account.

J.A.G. Exactly, and there is no lack of grace. “Of his fulness”, John says, “we all have received, and grace upon grace”, John 1: 16. But what a blessed contemplation this is! What can we say about the bondman’s form and then taking His place in the likeness of men?

This is a divine Person come into manhood, and He is going to become obedient *even* to the death of the cross.

W.M.G. Maybe you can help us in regard to the stoop down, the way the Lord has gone, “did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God ... taking a bondman’s form”.

J.A.G. Well, a bondman, as you would know and all the brethren would know, is wholly and solely at the disposal of his master. He exercises no will of his own, he is completely at his master’s disposal any hour of the day or night. Then it says, “taking his place in the

likeness of men". Then "found in figure as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death". This is Paul's impression of the incarnation. That is not my thought, that is Mr Darby's thought out of the Synopsis.

R.G. That is part of the becoming, is it not? I think we need for a minute or two, if you would, just to contemplate the becoming, because it was not something that happened once. It was a process, but that is not a good word. It was a series of descending steps in love. That was the becoming poor, was it not? Starting from glory's heights.

J.A.G. And He learned obedience, He learned obedience through the things which He suffered. He had not known obedience, His position was to call for obedience. But here He has come into a place where He has to obey. And so at the end when He says, "not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22: 42), how fully and perfectly that obedience shone out.

N.J.H. Two forms are referred to, "the form of God" and "a bondman's form". Help us on that.

J.A.G. Well, look at the difference. What can we say about the form of God? God is a Spirit. But a bondman's form, I suppose a bondman's form is the most abject form you could get. Would you say?

N.J.H. There is nothing in between the two. As we have been taught, it is in taking a bondman's form that He emptied Himself, there is nothing between the two.

J.A.G. No, exactly. That is the form that He took.

J.A.P. Could you say a word about heaven overruling men that the Lord, "was with the rich in His death", Isa 53: 9. What was your thought about that?

J.A.G. That is God, God's regard for Him, you know. They wanted to put Him in a grave with the wicked, but He was with the rich in His death because He had done no wrong. This, beloved, is holy ground and I think we need to have our shoes from off our feet in principle

as we go over this chapter. You marvel at the poverty, “that ye by *his* poverty might be enriched”. He was not considering for Himself; from that point of view He was thinking of us, He was thinking of the assembly as our brother says. The pearl of great price, the pearl does not need any working on, any alterations. The treasure might need to be cleaned up a bit, but the pearl is an entity in its own completeness. The death of the cross, the worst death I suppose that you could get.

N.J.H. The place He lived in, Capernaum, was probably the worst place to live.

J.A.G. Yes. All related to His becoming poor.

R.G. What our brother refers to is interesting because He went from Nazareth to Capernaum. That is an indication of the becoming poor process, if you like. Nazareth was an elevated town, Capernaum was right down at the seashore. He went down to Capernaum.

J.A.G. “Can anything good come out of Nazareth”, Nathanael said, John 1: 46.

J.R.B. The apostle says “*let* this mind be in you”, *let*. He then proceeds to open this up to us. Is it that this becomes so attractive to us that it has that effect on the way we move here?

J.A.G. Yes, I think so. Look at Paul, and you can see how he exemplifies his appeal here in the way that he moves, “become as the offscouring of the world, the refuse of all”, 1 Cor 4: 13. That was because of his fidelity to Christ, his love for Christ, his devotion to Christ. How did he come to be able to write this? He is writing this from the prison, is he not? He is thinking about the incoming of Christ and this is his impression of it. And he said, You have always obeyed in my presence but now I am not here with you, obey in my absence. Look at the example, look at the model; “so that, my beloved, even as ye had always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”, Phil 2: 12.

C.F.D. Do you think obedience is something that needs to be developed and built up in us? With the Lord it was there all the time. But what you find in your own heart is that it is not native to you at all, and maybe as we look around we find the same thing. This is not native to us and it really needs to be developed, which would make way for the Spirit of God, I suppose.

J.A.G. I am sure that is the case, because there are some things we might like to do so we would be obedient, but when it comes across our will we are disobedient and then we need discipline. Persons here have been in the army and they spend a few weeks getting knocked into shape for a start, and then you have to do what you are told or else you are in trouble. The Lord knows how to bring that about. He has had hundreds of years of experience on this area of discipline. Mr Stoney has a book, *Discipline in the School of God*.

So what you say is very important, that we learn it. The Lord said to Peter, when you were young you went wherever you wanted to go, but when you are old you are going to stretch out your hands and somebody else is going to gird you, (see John 21: 18). That sort of thing becomes very testing to us.

C.F.D. So it is something to be worked out. It does not seem as if it just falls into our hands, but in that verse it says, "but now much rather in my *absence*, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling", Phil 2: 12. These features are to mark us because they become constitutionally part of us, do you think?

J.A.G. That is right. This here, as you know, is heavenly men on earth, the Philippians, normal Christian experience as Mr. Darby says, although we would have to humbly say it is not always the normal experience of a Christian. But the Lord *learned* obedience, He learned obedience through the things that He suffered. He was never disobedient.

R.N.H. Would wealth come in as we make room for the Spirit? This word "let", as our brother mentioned it, seems to indicate yieldingness, yield your members instruments of righteousness, for example (see Rom 6: 13).

J.A.G. Yes, I think so. The glad tidings brings that about, it brings about a situation where you are moved by the compassions of God, and you present your body, all your members are under control. You present your body "a living sacrifice ... acceptable to God" and then you prove, "what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God", Rom 12: 1,2. The gospel affects us through the whole being, you might say, your whole being, all your members are under control.

H.J.G. The blind man in John 9 obeyed, and he came to know the Son of God. What greater thing could he get?

J.A.G. And the Lord almost invites him to know the Son of God. "Thou, dost thou believe on the Son of God?", He says. "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe? ... He that speaks with thee is he", (vv 35-37).

G.D.R. In the complete sacrifice in Romans 12, there is not much left of the old man, is there? The new man is there in life.

J.A.G. Yes. It is certainly a worthy consideration how the glad tidings is worked out in us. It has often been said we are taken out of Egypt but then Egypt has to get out of us.

C.F.D. It took forty years, did it not? I think sometimes we maybe expect too much too quickly, but the point is that it is a process that in principle might take forty years but a necessity in order to arrive at the finality of God's thoughts.

J.A.G. Yes, it has to happen, because as you know you can do it in eleven days, never mind forty years; but how many have done that? But the Spirit would engage our hearts with Christ, engage our hearts with the Model. The older brethren used to say, Keep the Lord before you. It is nice to say, Keep the ministry before you, keep Mr Taylor before you. All true, you know, but the Lord is the Man that you keep before you. Everything else is augmentary.

A.L.F. Would you mind saying something as to that we "might be enriched"? What do you gather from that?

J.A.G. I think it has already been said. We have been enriched with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies and we have the Spirit of

God, the Holy Spirit, to help us and to guide us into all the truth and to promote the features of sonship in our hearts so that we cry Abba, Father. We are growing in intimacy with the Father, the knowledge of God, and we have this link with the brethren. The Spirit is the bond between the brethren, that is our links together in the Spirit. What do you think?

A.L.F. So that we would be very much being enriched in the knowledge of God, the way He has come out in this lowly Man.

J.A.G. Yes – look at the wealth that is coming out in this room this afternoon, what the brethren can say about Christ, what they can about this scripture.

J.R.B. The hymn to the Spirit says:

Dispenser Thou of heaven's store (Hymn 158)

How greater could we be enriched?

J.A.G. Exactly, and always in freshness and vitality. Is that right?

D.N.M. You mention freshness and vitality, I was thinking earlier with reference to the Hebrew bondman that it is 'distinctly'. These things are distinct, are they not? The poverty and the richness were distinct. They are clear, there is a fulness connected with both, an emptiness and a fulness.

J.A.G. Yes, and it is manifest publicly; he goes to the door-post. He has his ear bored through with an awl and he serves him as a bondman forever (see Exod 21: 6).

G.D.R. As to the side of response, what is your impression as to "heavenly and earthly and infernal beings"?

J.A.G. I think it is every creature has to acknowledge "that Jesus Christ is Lord to God the Father's glory". A believer gladly does it.

Think of the devil, Satan has to acknowledge this, and all these infernal beings, they have all to acknowledge that Jesus Christ, the Man who was here and set out the truth of God, who made God known, they have to acknowledge that He is Lord. They have tried to be lords and so forth, but this is the Man who is Lord. Peter

preaching to Cornelius says, “*he* is Lord of all things”, Acts 10: 36.
What a fine Lord to be under!

N.J.H. He is already exalted, highly exalted, but He awaits the time when every knee will bow and tongue confess. Is that right?

J.A.G. Yes, “granted him a name, that which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus”. That is very beautiful, the name of Jesus, “every knee should bow, of heavenly and earthly and infernal beings, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to God the Father’s glory”. He was known here as Jesus.

W.M.G. The subject of the three-day meetings is the title ‘Jesus’. I just wonder whether you could say something as to this in this connection.

J.A.G. I think it is all part of the blessedness of His becoming poor.

C.F.D. You say ‘part of the blessedness of His becoming poor’.
Take the brethren as we sit around here this afternoon, who amongst us is minded to become poor? This is something that is contrary to the flesh, is it not?

J.A.G. It is, and I suppose we can say, and it is right, and the Lord says it as He sets out the legislation of the kingdom, “Blessed are the poor in spirit”, Matt 5: 3.

C.F.D. “In spirit”, I was thinking of that, you have referred to it well, but it is what we become inwardly, is it not? It is like the texture of our spiritual being, becoming poor, and naturally speaking we do everything to resist that, do we not?

J.A.G. Yes, because naturally we all want to be somebody. But you cannot be better than what God has given you. Think of the blessedness of being in sonship, and all these blessings, the gift of the Spirit. What is greater?

A.R.H. We sang at the end of the meeting,

The concept and the consummation thine! (Hymn 370)

To think that God had all this in mind and the way that it was going to proceed, and at the end Christ would be exalted.

J.A.G. Yes. Is that not very wonderful? What grace began, grace shall crown. And every single thought of God has been accomplished by Jesus, and accomplished in the suffering way, the *death* of the cross. Who can enter into that, even in your spirit? You think of the awfulness, the wicked hands of men; He submits Himself to this because it is the will of God, and He has in view our enrichment. He must accomplish redemption, He must bear the judgment of God. Think of those three hours of darkness, what endurance, what happened in those three hours? Who can say? Who will ever be able to say? All of that would help us to eat the sin-offering in a holy place.

J.A.P. As for the matter that came into your mind before the meeting, would it be right to think, too, that the emblems themselves speak to us of lowliness? The Lord did not take something ornate such as you see in Rome, but it was a simple matter. The simplicity has stayed with us for two thousand years and it is as fresh today as when He instituted it.

J.A.G. Yes, you see the ecclesiastical systems have to dress up and have something or other to make up for their poverty, moral and spiritual poverty. They have nothing. There will be true believers there. But all the paraphernalia the churches have to have is just an expression of their poverty. Jesus was not like that, He did not need it, and the brethren do not need it. If we are going on with God we do not need these things.

J.A.P. That is part of what the Lord says about the public position in Revelation when He deals with it, “the might of her luxury” (ch 18: 3), it says, the *might* of it.

J.A.G. He has to say to Laodicea, that they say they are rich and they become rich and they have need of nothing (see Rev 3: 17), but He says, you are the poor. You have no wealth Godward. There is Jesus, and all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily, and “ye are complete in Him”. We do not need anything else, “who is the head of all principality and authority”, Col 2: 10. That is His exaltation.

H.J.G. It is still the day of grace, “I counsel thee to buy of me”, Rev. 3: 18.

J.A.V. Yes, very beautiful, “gold purified by fire”, it is the real thing.

R.N.H. “Granted him a name”, does that bring out the beauty of His qualification? He is qualified for that name.

J.A.G. Yes, that is very fine because the Man is greater than the position He fills. And that is not always the case. Think of the apostle, think of Paul, Paul was greater morally in himself than his gift, though the gift and the man are all the same thing, but you do not let the gift regulate you. Is that the case?

C.F.D. I think you should say something about that because the gift might have more influence on us than we think, or realise, or maybe even what we want. But you say, do not let the gift regulate you.

J.A.G. Well, maybe I have not put it the right way, but what I am concerned about is that the person, formatively – and God may have given him a gift, the Lord may have given him a gift – but the gift is the person and he is greater in himself than whatever gift or ability he may have. We have let gift regulate us and it has led us into no end of trouble. The family side amongst the brethren is the greatest side.

R.G. I was going to say the gift is for time, but what is secured through His becoming poor that we might be enriched, is for all eternity.

J.A.G. For eternity. It is for the dwelling of God.

G.D.R. The section begins with the mind, and I think you were going to say a bit more about the mind, because Paul rationalises it, does he not, and says with the mind we serve God’s law, but with the flesh sin’s law (see Rom 7: 25).

J.A.G. Yes, the mind is under control. I suppose we could refer to the sons of Aaron with their high caps bound on (see Exod. 29: 9), so that you gird up the loins of your mind and think clearly and rationally, because it is innate in us that we go up instead of going down. We love to justify ourselves.

T.v.d.H. Is that why then, with the mind under control, we can have intelligence – “Which is your intelligent service”, Rom 12: 1.

J.A.G. Exactly, you can fit in to the community in that chapter. Whatever your job might be you go and you can do it.

J.A.P. In the early days there were meetings in Lady Powerscourt’s mansion, and so forth, and I think Mr Darby and others felt the poor did not feel very free to go to such a place, and he said there ought to be another place in Dublin. So they took a small, lowly meeting room which is still there, in a district which was approachable. These men were lowly-minded men.

J.A.G. Exactly, and in divine wisdom they were able to accommodate all the brethren, to make people feel they were wanted, whether they are rich or poor. That is not the thing, it is the person, it is the person that has been saved, and whether you are rich or poor you pay the same ransom money, half a shekel. It cost the Lord the same for every single person, and we need to think of that. Here it says in the Psalm, “he brought them forth with silver and gold; and there was not one feeble among their tribes”. They had come out in haste, loins girded, staff in hand, sandals on their feet. Egypt was spoiled.

H.J.G. The people of Israel had to learn in the plagues, too, did they not? Do you fit that in with us learning the Man that went the way of lowliness and poverty?

J.A.G. Yes, I think so, and it fits in with the exposure of Egypt. Every day Egypt is being more exposed. Not one feeble one, not a single feeble one among the tribes, He brought forth wealthily, so they all become contributors to the refined dwelling in the wilderness, there is the abode of His holiness, and then there is “the Sanctuary ... that thy hands have prepared”, Exod 15: 21.

G.D.R. Would you say it is a very vital point – Egypt is ruined? That came from a most unlikely source (see Exod 10: 7). They went to Pharaoh and said, Do you not know that? Egypt is ruined. Well, it is a question if it has been ruined in all of us.

J.A.G. The hymn, Mr Darby writes:

Rise, my soul, thy God directs thee,
Stranger hands no more impede:
Pass thou on, His hand protects thee –
Strength that has the captive freed. (Hymn 76)

T.v.d.H. Would you say something as to the silver and gold?

J.A.G. They spoiled the Egyptians. They borrowed from their neighbours utensils and whatever, because God had said four hundred years before to Abraham, I am going to bring them forth with great property (see Gen 15: 14). That is the knowledge of God coming to us through the glad tidings. Romans 5 opens up the whole scope of things for us so that we reign in life by the one Man Jesus Christ (v.17).

H.J.G. “Let my son go, that he may serve me”, (Exod 4: 23), and they needed all that to serve Him.

J.A.G. Yes, and to serve him wealthily, and they do.

K.N.P. Would the fact that there was not a feeble one among them come from the eating of the Passover lamb?

J.A.G. Yes. The contemplation of the lamb in the house, the contemplation of Philippians 2, four days in the house, then it is slaughtered. It has to die. Think how attractive Jesus was, even naturally, but then He had to die. As our brother was saying, He was very acceptable to man, He grew up “in favour with God and men” (Luke 2: 52), but when He comes into public service He is clashing with religious people, and the opposition mostly came from the Pharisees because they were on the up line and He was on the down line. The state was such in Exodus, there were wise-hearted people, willing-hearted people, and the contribution is a heave-offering, which I suppose points to the strength of their affections. They are making the Sanctuary. Moses has the pattern, but they make it.

W.M.G. Willingness is very much brought out in that passage, is it not?

J.A.G. Yes, that is what it is, wise-hearted, willing-hearted, the heave-offering. You are willingly, gladly, presenting the substance to God, because you have in mind to accommodate Him according to the pattern.

W.M.G. I suppose it is from the heart really, the willingness. If you are willing you do it from the heart so the hearts are involved in it.

J.A.G. It is affection. So much that he says, No, you have given me far too much. He had to restrain the people.

N.J.H. It is after the breakdown that this is said.

J.A.G. Yes. In principle it is the result of the new covenant. He had other tables and they have to be put them in the ark where there never would be breakdown.

J.A.P. It says as to the Macedonians giving, that they first gave themselves (see 2 Cor 8: 5). That is what you are bringing before us, this giving in the tabernacle system, it is yourself, as saved and having the Spirit and glorifying God.

J.A.G. Yes, he says, "And not according as we had hoped, but they gave themselves first to the Lord, and to us by God's will". That is the proper situation I would say for Christianity.

T.v.d.H. So there is no minimum size that they brought then?

J.A.G. No, the substance is put into the hands of persons who can work it according to the pattern. It never needs renewing. What they do here goes right through into Solomon's house. It does not need repair, patching up or anything like that.

R.G. Why do you think the Sanctuary is emphasised so much. The work of the Sanctuary, the service of the Sanctuary, and the heave-offering of the Sanctuary. This is the material that came out of Egypt, but now it is to be usable in the Sanctuary. Maybe we need a bit of help about that.

J.A.G. It is where God lives, it is God's abode, "The Sanctuary, Lord, that thy hands have prepared".

R.G. He became poor that we by His poverty might be enriched. The enrichment of the soul by the Spirit of God is what is involved here, is it not?

J.A.G. Yes, and what is in mind is the service of God.

R.G. You cannot bring anything in here. Certain things would have to be kept out.

J.A.G. God says to Moses, "See that thou make them according to their pattern, which hath been shewn to thee in the mountain" (Exod 25: 40), that is Christ. That is the Man of Philippians 2. That is the Man that the Spirit of God came on as a dove and abode upon Him (see John 1: 32) , and God is finding His rest now amongst His people.

J.R.B. How do we become wise-hearted?

J.A.G. I think it may be some allusion to coming under the service of Christ in headship.

J.R.B. I was thinking of the wisdom that comes from above (see Jas 3: 15). That is what we have been thinking of this afternoon, is it not? It has been demonstrated in that blessed Man.

J.A.G. Yes, I think the wise-hearted would regulate our willing-heartedness. Would that be right to say?

R.G. Do you become wise without a process? There is a lot of information, you marvel at the amount of information that we have, but that is not from the Sanctuary. M. Taylor said information, then knowledge, which means that you require the understanding of the Spirit. But then there is also wisdom. "I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find the knowledge which cometh of reflection", Prov 8: 12. That is what is suitable to the Sanctuary, is it?

J.A.G. Yes, and I think that means that you are under the touch of the headship of Christ, because the wisdom is resident in Him. But what a fine situation here when you have to be restrained from bringing "for the work they had was sufficient for all the work to do it and it was too much".

N.J.H. Does regulation enter into the service of God?

J.A.G. That is wise-heartedness, it is headship, it is under the Lord's touch. He leads, He is the chief Musician; "In the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises", Heb 2: 12. It is an immediate answer to the declaration of the Father's Name. I think it is very wonderful the way the Lord has helped us in the service of God. So we have the Supper, we celebrate the Supper immediately, we do not wait until the end of the meeting or anything like that, because we are ready to go to heaven.

N.J.H. There is far more in the hearts of the saints than what is expressed. That is divinely formed.

J.A.G. And it is always being increased. You do not leave a meeting with nothing, you come in with something and the Lord gives you something.

R.G. Do you think that we have reached the point yet when He says it is enough?

J.A.G. I am not so spiritual as to be able to answer that. No, I think there will be increase right up to the rapture.

R.G. That is what I was trying to get at. If you take the history of the testimony, the Lord has blessed step by step what has been brought, the Spirit has been able to use it, to fit it into the service of the Sanctuary. Maybe, the Spirit is still waiting for something more to be brought, do you think, for the service of the Sanctuary before the rapture?

J.A.G. It could be, some further enlargement, because the tabernacle system is an entity in itself, but when you come to David there is a whole lot of other material brought in. And then Solomon incorporates it all; everything is incorporated in Solomon's house, which is like the city in Revelation 21, and then the tabernacle of God with men.

H.J.G. Moses comes into what has been done quite a lot. That is what you are saying about headship, he had the pattern. Is that what you are meaning?

J.A.G. Yes. I think the wise-hearted are persons who are under the touch of Christ. The willing-hearted are as well, but then willing-heartedness needs regulation. How willing-hearted Mary was in John 20, for instance, but she needed regulation, she needed wise-heartedness and the Lord was quickly giving her it.

J.A.P. John's gospel says that more could have been written, so the limitation is with us I take it, that we could not take it all in.

J.A.G. Exactly. As our brother said in the word last night, the little power is not the Spirit's fault. Of course there is what is governmental because of the breakdown, but the more room we make for the Spirit, the more power there would be.

C.F.D. You say the more we make way for the Spirit. Do you think we really need to examine that a little bit and find out how we can work something increasingly into the service of God as to the Spirit because – I do not know what you find, but in the main it would appear as if there is not very much in the way of responsive word for the Spirit in the service of God. We might touch it, might have a hymn, but it seems to me it is an area that needs to be expanded.

J.A.G. Yes, we can speak fairly extensively about what the Spirit has done in glorifying Christ and so forth, but how much do we really know the Spirit Himself? Is that what you are thinking?

C.F.D. Yes, because the knowledge of the Person would result in a greater answer in the service of God. That was really what I was trying to get at.

J.A.G. I think John probably helps us in that. On the Lord's Day John became in the Spirit and a door opened in heaven and immediately he became in the Spirit. His links with the Spirit were pure and full you might say. So he is ready to receive the revelation.

G.D.R. The Spirit in type says, Give me a sip. But then the answer to that is "drink". There is abundance in that. We have thought of this a little, too. I think it is a wholesome thing if we can have two hymns, and we have proved that at home but I do not know if that is what is in our brother's mind. Something of that order?

J.A.G. The service of God is under the headship of Christ. You cannot prescribe, say we must have two hymns, or it is twenty minutes to ten we must go to the Spirit, we are a bit late. The impulse of Christ's headship is something we perhaps do not know sufficiently about.

R.G. You referred to the door being opened in Revelation 4. That comes after what the Spirit says to the assemblies, and you come to twenty-four elders, do you not? It is not the twelve, but it is the Davidic side you might say, the extension of what is in the service of God as you come to completion as a result of the Spirit speaking, do you think?

J.A.G. I think so, because immediately the voice says, "Come up here", and that is the rapture and then we are looking into heaven.

As you say we have the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures, and then the great blessed truth about what is creatorial and God's creatorial claims, "and for thy will they were, and they have been created", Rev 4: 11. The whole scope of things under God's hand. In chapter 5 the great concern as he was going to open this book and nobody seems to be able to touch it, "The lion ... of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, has overcome" (v.5) to break the seals. That is the Man of Philipians 2, Jesus' throne, and who is standing in it, a Lamb standing the midst of the throne. He is speaking about the lion of the tribe of Juda but what he sees is a Lamb, and that is Jesus, "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow".

TORONTO

29 September 2002

Key to initials

J.R.Bellamy, Vancouver; C.F.Dadd, Plainfield; A.L.Fennell, Toronto; H.J.Glass, Toronto; J.A.Gardiner, Aberdeen; R.Gardiner, Kirkcaldy; W.M.Grosse, Edinburgh; A.R.Henry, Glasgow; N.J.Henry, Glasgow;

R.B.Hill, Toronto; R.N.Hesterman, Woodstock; T.van der Hoek, Denton; D.N.Morrow, Toronto; J.N.Mooney, Toronto; J.A.Petersen, Plainfield; K.N.Pye, New York N.J.Plant, Toronto; G.D.Rosenberry, San Francisco

THE WALL AND GATES OF THE CITY

James Alex Gardiner

Revelation 21: 11-14, 21, 22; 22: 14, 15; Proverbs 31: 23; 2 Samuel 19: 1-8

It is in mind to speak about the wall and the gates of the city and how this bears on the local assembly. The gates are universal and every local meeting is to administer according to the principles of the house of God. The great and high wall is in evidence in Peter as he says, “why has Satan filled thy heart that thou shouldest lie to the Holy Spirit ... Why is that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?”, Acts 5: 3, 9. Governmentally they die. I am not saying that that is going to happen today, but the great and high wall is to be in evidence amongst us. It is not a low dyke that you can jump over or sit upon; it represents the principles that belong to the house of God. You know they are there if they are there in function, and consequently you know that you are safe and comfortable, surrounded by this great and high wall. Of course if you did not have a wall you would not have gates, which they normally had upon the wall. What is in mind in the gates is access, access; into the greatest things. So it says, “having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels”. This is for the day to come, although angelic support, angelic help, is continually towards us at the present time.

The apostle says in the epistle to the Hebrews, “are they not all ministering spirits” – all of them – “sent out for service on account of those who shall inherit salvation?”, Heb 1: 14. We do not really realise and perhaps we may not believe the greatness of what God has surrounded us with in the protection and development of this family. We come, amongst other things, to the universal gathering; that is a very wonderful matter. Then on the gates are the names of the twelve sons of Israel. I am sure the apostle carried this in his affections when he was giving testimony as to his conversion, speaking as to the twelve tribes serving day and night. We need to carry these thoughts of God with us; they are proper to the family.

You see the great mediatorial system here in the assembly and the

closeness of our links with Jerusalem that is upon the earth and the mediatorial system where the diffusion of divine light and love is so very evidently manifest.

It goes on to tell us that on the east there are three gates, and on the north three gates, and on the south three gates and on the west three gates; all these gates would be the same. And in the next verse we read there are the names of the twelve tribes. I suppose in a way that is the nearest we come to Paul in the city as it is manifest here. But you think of the universality of the gates; the universality of the administration. One gate is not different from another gate. In the function of the gates there is a manifestation of the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace – how blessed that is. Your gate where you come from is not to be any different from the gate where I come from. The character of administration is to be the same in every gate because it is the working out of love, it is the working out of the divine nature. The devil is doing his very best to stop the functions of the gates; to introduce principles that I can only say are characteristic of Bethesda. There is the east gate, the north gate, the south gate and the west gate. You say, well in my gate this is what we do. Is it in accord with the principles of God's house? Is my gate in accord with the principles of God's house? You say, well, it is all right, that is what you do, and you go ahead and do it. That is open, you know, that is not the house of God. How much help we need in this, beloved.

See that great and high wall. We cannot be assembly persons if we are not kingdom persons; it will not work. So the gates, each gate is a pearl. There is the standard, the pearl. I do not have to refer to Matthew 13 for the brethren to know what the pearl is; the merchant came seeking beautiful pearls. Think of the beauty of the assembly administration as heaven looks on and sees love operating in its divine ways to enhance the glory of what has come out in the revelation of God. Beloved, is that the standard in my meeting, is my gate a pearl? This is important and sobering and we need to be before the Lord about it. We were in Toronto a few months ago and a brother said to me, it seems to me that there is a different standard

for some places than others. I tell you there is no different standard. The standard remains. The truth of the assembly, the light of the assembly remains and the function of it is to be in the gate. This is not only the care meeting; we may think it is, but it is not. We come to the opening up of the truth in the readings, for instance, today, the gate was in function, the brethren were trading, that is the gate, and if anything comes up that is not in accord it is looked into. The evaluation of it is thought about. I remember Mr Lyon saying we take stock and we may have to write down some of the stock; that is true. It is important that the idea of the pearl marks the gate, the light and truth and glory of the assembly, because Christ has sold all that He had, the Merchant sold all that He had, He reserved nothing. And there is the pearl, it is complete, and beautiful. It is a wholly divine entity, the assembly from that point of view, it needs no adjustment, it needs no working on. The treasure does; take the treasure out of a field, the gospel, we need to get cleaned up and the gospel does that. But the pearl is a wholly divine entity and that is to characterise the administration in the assembly. Then somebody will say we are not the assembly. We have heard all this before and nobody claims to be the assembly, but as having been brought into the light of the truth in these days of recovery we operate and move in the light that is characterised by what is due to Christ and due to the assembly.

How important this is because the next section I read has to do with our robes. I link this with sonship in my own mind. "Blessed are they that wash their robes". I remember Mr. McCallum saying we say we need to lay hold of sonship; he said, why not let sonship lay hold of us and move in the light and glory of it. That is the robe, the best robe, it comes out in Luke 15; there is the Father's house, there is the family, there is the enjoyment, there is the merrymaking, the dancing and testimony to it. There is the unity of the Spirit in that place in the uniting bond of peace, and we need to maintain that.

You say the best robe does not need washing, does not need cleaning up. Of course it does not but we need cleaning up, we need to be maintained in freshness and vitality so that we prove our

right and enjoy all that the best robe sets out. We go happily into the city. Think of the street of gold:

Where the saints in glory thronging,
Where they feed on life's blest Tree (Hymn 206)

Christ is the centre of your heart, He is the centre of your thoughts, the centre of your affections. It says of the street and of the river – in the midst is the tree of life on this side and that side (see Rev 22: 2). It has been said, Christ is as great in the hearts of the saints, He is as great in the heart of the assembly, as He is in the heart and mind of the Spirit. That is in the setting of Revelation. You go into that street of gold and throng with the brethren in the holy liberty and blessedness of sonship. They are as free as a bird not with just certain persons but with all the brethren. And the tree of life is producing fruit, every month fruit and the leaves of it, for the healing of the nations. I have linked this in my own mind, and the brethren can help me, with “he also who eats me” (John 6: 57) – “As the living Father has sent me and I live on account of the Father, *he* also who eats me shall live also on account of me”. How blessed that is! Think of the fruit of the tree of life – Christ the centre. This is all symbolic. Somebody once tried to make out that it was material, but it is all symbolic right up until the section in chapter 22. But how great and how wonderful it is. Well, I have to ask myself, what do I know about Christ as the Tree of Life? I have certainly had experience of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and I do not think there is anybody in this room who has not. Eve got things out of centre. She said it was the tree that is in the midst of the garden they were not to eat of. See how important it is to see things rightly. The man in John 9 came seeing, he saw things for what they were.

And we need to do that if the gate is to be in function. Conditions have to be such that the Lord's Supper can be celebrated without any doubt in the minds of the saints and the service of God goes on in power and freshness and vitality. So we need help to judge ourselves, we need help to prove ourselves; he says, “and thus eat of the bread, and drink of the cup”. That is the way into the service of God. It is all available to us.

When that is the case I thought the scripture in Proverbs would be very applicable; “Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land”. We have no doubt that the Lord was in this or that. No, “her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land”. Administration is always very restful according to God. Absalom stood beside the way of the gate. What can we say? The Lord is in this in our place. Can I say He is in this; this is how He would have it done. Is this in accord with the pearl? He says, I sold everything to secure it. You would have to ask yourself, I would have to ask myself. I do not think that He is speaking in any condemnatory way, because there is an abundance of grace and help for every single person to make way for what is right and what is true and what is proper to the function and the maintenance of the blessedness of the house of God. These are great matters, and I would seek to encourage every heart in relation to it. So that “her husband is known in the gates”.

Yes, the Lord is in that, yes He was in that, and we grow in our knowledge of Christ. We know a good deal, in fact we are inclined to say we do not know too much, but we know plenty, but I am not sure as to how much I personally am acquainted with Christ. We know how to do things, we know now to conduct things, but as Mr. Darby says:

To walk with Thee below,
And learn Thy holy ways (Hymn 69)

How blessed that is! So that when the Lord comes in on Lord's Day we know Him, we are acquainted with Him, “her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land”.

I read this section in Samuel – poor David, his affections were misguided. When that is the case the gate is left empty. Why did Absalom have so much power? Why did he get so much influence? Where was the rule, where was the government? David takes him back without him being repentant. These are very solemn considerations. Two years in Jerusalem and he never saw the king's face. He steals the hearts of the men of Israel. Let us beware of the subtlety of the devil; Paul said we are not unaware of his devices

(see 2 Cor 2: 11), because he has in mind to divert our affections from what is real and true. At the moment, in the area of conflict I think what marks Bethesda is what he is seeking to introduce into the assembly – I tell you it is not order. The victory here is turned into mourning, how sad that is. How much sorrow, how much suffering, how much concern for the truth has gone before us in the recovery. We need to carry that in our spirits and see that the victory and the spirit of the victory is maintained with us, and the victory is maintained with us in a rule of grace in the application of the holy principles that govern God's house so that the rest of God is secured amongst us. That is, God can move in the Spirit free in holy complacency and the Spirit can be free to glorify Christ. Somebody once said there are persons who are happy with a Christ of their own imagination. That is a solemn thing to say. We are surrounded by them in Christendom, especially in this country; persons commercialising the glad tidings, how awful it is, and persons are being deceived by it. Let us beware that we are not diverted from a pure and strong link with the Lord Jesus. We are to call upon Him out of a pure heart; and a pure heart, beloved brethren, is the creation of God. You cannot create a pure heart because your heart, as mine, is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. But look at the situation here. He is going to lose the support of the brethren, there is going to be deception in the family. Even an unspiritual man like Joab knows this as he goes to the king and he is saying, "My son Absalom! Absalom, my son, my son!" I know how strong the ties of flesh and blood are and so do many of the beloved brethren who have lost families, some whole families, yet they have maintained steadfastness and faithfulness and fidelity to Christ and to the truth and God supports them and blesses them. This is practical and real.

So Joab goes to him and he says to him, it seems to me that if Absalom was alive it would not matter about the rest of us, the rest of your family; how awful that would be! Now he says, "arise, go forth, and speak consolingly to thy servants; for I swear by Jehovah, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night; and

that would be worse to thee than all the evil that has befallen thee from thy youth until now. Then the king arose, and sat in the gate”.

Things are coming back to normal. The responsible element now is taking up its responsibility and sitting in the gate where it should sit.

“And they told all the people, saying, Behold, the king is sitting in the gate. And all the people came before the king”. Every single person in every locality is a responsible person. There are those who are more responsible, they are the elder brethren, they have been in fellowship all their lives and they should know how to do things, how to rule. Mr. Taylor said a very wonderful thing when he said rule is by influence, and that is what it will be in the day to come. Rule is not by laying down the law, although that may be needed – you know in your own family there are times when you have to lay down the law – but the influence of grace and the power of grace, those are the principles of God’s house and of the truth and of the kingdom which are maintained amongst us and they need to be. We do not need to fear in the application of them because the Lord supports persons who are concerned about the maintenance of what is due to Him and due to God. The Spirit is in that. The local meeting is a habitation of God in the Spirit and the gate is to be held and maintained in such order that persons can go in by it into the city. How wonderful that is!

Let us be careful that we do not have misguided affections. Let us be careful that we are not in our localities pursuing something that is different from what is normal, and I say that to myself. This is not a time, standing up here, to get at people, it is a time for the opening up and the speaking of the truth so that what is conveyed has to be measured by Scripture. If you do not believe what I say go and look at the Scriptures. Be like the Bereans, search them, and find out if these things are so. And if they are not so then come and tell me, because I may need to be adjusted in relation to them; but go to God about it, pray about it, and find help about it. I have said this before, younger brethren need to be more assiduous in reading the ministry and in praying, and older brethren need to be better examples of expressing what they have read and what they purport to be. I am

not getting at anybody; somebody said the greatest room in the universe is the room for improvement, we can all manage that. May the Lord bless the word.

ORMOND BEACH

20 December 2002

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

(i) WHO IS THE LORD’S?

G.V. Wigram

This wonderfully explains as to Christians in the present day. I believe there is often a mistake in calling in question whether a person is the Lord’s or not, because they do not come up to the standard of our own minds. But God did not question whether Lot was a “righteous man”. We want first largeness of heart to judge as God judges, and then grace to see where the failure is. It is said, ‘Oh! They have not light’. No, that is not it. I believe that the present state of Christendom originates in this – people *have not learnt to walk with God*. Are you serving the living and true God in whom is your strength, and from whom your joy springs? If not, the truth will not, cannot, have its power.

Memorials of the Ministry

Vol. 1: pages 90-91

(ii) HIMSELF

J. G. Bellett

May He Himself be more personally with and before us; a *nearer* and *more real* object than ever!

Truth that gives *thoughts* is not fully the right things; but truth that gives *Himself* – that is the thing.

Jesus once here – now in the heavens – again to be here and with us for ever – the *same* Jesus throughout – known for eternity as He was known in His track through the cities and villages of Israel – this is the mystery that gives us *Himself*. And it is the business of *faith* to reach *Himself*. The centurion pierced the cloud, the *thick* cloud of His humiliation, and got at the *divine* glories, which lay the other side of it, or under it. The poor sinner of the city pierced the cloud, the *dark* cloud, or her own sin and misery, and got at the *divine love* that could heal it all. Faith may thus find various excellences in Him, but it is *Himself* it reaches.

Faith sits and sings –

All human beauties, all divine,
In my Beloved meet and shine.

Let not this evangelic age give you the *work* of Christ alone. It tends that way. Without His work, I know, all would be nothing. But let not doctrinal acquaintance with His work turn you from personal acquaintance with Himself.

Words of Grace and Comfort

1925 Vol. 1: page 332