

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 148

July 1985

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THE WILDERNESS ON THE WAY TO HEAVEN

Exodus 15: 22-27

The first great point is that Israel were out of Egypt. Judgment we had before us this morning - that we cannot be out of Egypt - the judgment, until we pass through the Red Sea, figuratively the death and resurrection of Christ. Many Christians are not out of Egypt.

Would you call them Christians if they are not out of Egypt?

They are converted.

Do you think every believer is out of Egypt? It all depends on what he believes. We were dwelling long on the resurrection this morning, because if you have not believed in Christ risen you are not out of Egypt, you are not in the wilderness.

You are, then, afraid of the power of the enemy?

The Egyptian power is not gone until Christ is known in resurrection. It is by Christ's death and resurrection that you have been set free, and you will find that the one under the shelter of the blood is only occupied with escape from the power of the enemy - Pharaoh and the Egyptians oppress him. When you have walked through the Red Sea (see Exod 15: 1) it is God you have to do with everything comes out in a different way; you are in a new position before God; you are out of judgment; you have not changed your house nor your business, and yet you are in a new position before God; and that is the wilderness, where there is nothing for you but God. The question now is, how did you get out of judgment? You got out of judgment through the death and resurrection of Christ. You are in a new position, and everything is different to you; the wilderness is only a passage, not a place; our place is not in the wilderness but we have to go through it to our place. I speak feelingly - there is no part of the truth (if I may speak for others) that we have so feebly accepted as wilderness experience. I often say to myself, I should

have been happier if I had accepted the wilderness. Read the 76th hymn -

Art thou weaned from Egypt's pleasures,
God in secret thee shall keep,
There unfold His hidden treasures –
There His love's exhaustless deep.

It is simple, that if you are saved out of judgment through the death and resurrection of Christ, you can expect nothing but death in order to be kept free from that from which you have been delivered, as in Romans 6, you are committed to death by Christ's death; you are severed from the man who exposed you to judgment, and you live the Man who delivered you. You may say it is Marah; it is a bitter path, and the only thing which can sweeten it is the tree thrown into the water, figuratively Christ's death, and this makes the water sweet. Israel would not accept the wilderness - we are like them.

How is it that the first thing that comes in is the circumstance of the bitter water? Is it because it is the water of the Red sea practically?

Yes, practically. You have got out of death and judgment by the death and resurrection of Christ. The support for the wilderness is all from God. Exodus 15, 16 and 17 describe the wilderness from God's side.

What do you understand the drinking of the bitter water to be?

Death; you are committed to it.

I thought it was more identified with the death of Christ?

So it is.

In Peter we get "Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind".

Peter is different from Romans 6, he refers to sins, transgression, and not only sin.

I thought that was the principle - "Arm yourselves with the same mind"?

Yes, exactly. What makes self-denial sweet to you is that Christ has suffered for your selfgratification; hence you shrink from that for

which Christ died.

I had the idea that the bitter water was more the thought that death was on all here?

Yes, there is nothing to minister to you spiritually. I believe you get it in a simple way, as an illustration, in Acts 28. It was cold, and Paul in order to warm himself gathered a bundle of sticks, and a viper fastened on his hand - he was in the wilderness. I am sure no man has ever tried to find comfort here but he finds a viper with it. God is his only help now, the true character of things comes out.

If that were accepted really at the start it would prevent disappointment?

There would be no disappointment if there were no expectation. It is most lamentable to see persons week after week outwardly remembering Christ's death and yet they are looking for something in this world.

I should like to hear a little as to the manna? I should be happy to listen to anybody who will explain manna to me.

I should like to know something about it. Would you give us a little help in that direction?

I will listen to you.

We would all like to hear what the manna is.

My good fellow, no one will ever touch manna until he is ready for it.

It is very clear none of us can touch it until we come to it. When we have consciously life in Him we are capable of being here as He was here.

Is the point that until we accept death we are not in a position to taste manna?

Yes. It is plain I am severed from Adam by the death of Christ and now I live in Him. I first touch life for my own relief, and then I have to learn how to live here, that is (as I understand) the life of Jesus referred to in 2 Corinthians 4: 10. Manna is God's resource for you in a sphere where there is nothing but death; but there, as in the

case of Israel, God is for you. We got out of Egypt by death and we must keep out of it by death. You do not feed on Christ except through His death.

What is the meaning of the three days' journey to Marah?

I suppose they, like ourselves, were looking for something agreeable, and did not find it. Marah was the waters of the Red sea. In the wilderness they could get no other.

Do you not make a distinction between eating His flesh and drinking His blood and feeding on Him as the manna?

Yes, I do. There is no other way of feeding on Him but through His death to enter into life; then I receive grace from Him to be here as He was here. I think we have very little idea what it is to come out here as a new kind of man.

"Man must not live by bread alone": would that be the manna?

Answering to that would be manna, but you must get it from Christ.

Some try to act up to the word of Scripture; that is often legal. If I live by the faith of the Son of God I am obtaining this grace of Christ. Anyone who answers to Romans 12 and 13 would present an entirely new style of man; he first presents his body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, is not conformed to this world but is transformed by the renewing of the mind. It is not that he has dropped a few bad habits, and, as it is sometimes said, "is greatly improved".

It is not the adaptation of the old thing to the new circumstances?

No. It is not merely improvement; it is far beyond that; he has put on the Lord Jesus Christ. His body is first presented as a living sacrifice to God, and next he is in true relation to the church; then he faithfully fulfils his responsibilities in the world, acknowledging the powers that be, submitting for the Lord's sake to every ordinance of man.

To carry out that we want manna?

Yes, exactly. Now I will listen to you if you will tell me what it is.

If we think of the will of God, we must see that it involves an entirely new set of interests; my thought as to the manna is, that it is daily grace for daily walk.

Yes, we would all go with that, but what is the character of the grace?

The only way I can explain it is, that as Christ walked here so does He enable me to walk here. He had everything and yet was as dependent on God as if He had nothing.

In our Lord's path here it is very striking that whilst He had everything yet He was always dependent. We find in Luke 4, after forty days' abstinence He hungered, then Satan said to Him, "If thou be the Son of God command this stone that it be made bread" - use your own means. His answer shews how perfect was His dependence on God. "It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God". He who had every resource at His command abides under the greatest human pressure, perfectly dependent on God.

It is certainly a wonderful thing to see the One who had all divine power at His disposal but would not use it in the most deeply trying circumstances. I must say the more I read Psalm 16 the more I marvel to see the path of obedience the Lord Jesus entered upon, and never left.

And yet it would be nothing but for the greatness of the Person. On the other hand it is only that Person who could undertake that path.

Quite so. You must feed on Him as your life, outside of yourself, in order that you may walk as He walked.

You do not confound the living bread with the manna?

No, certainly not.

You do not call eternal life and manna the same thing, do you?

Oh, no. The wonderful grace is that we are of Christ now, according to Hebrews 2, "all of one". The life of Jesus is now to be manifested in us, and this must precede the realisation of union with Christ. If

you are not truly in the wilderness you will not understand that "both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one".

Union is not such a wonderful thing as that which precedes union; union follows as a matter of course?

Quite so. No one can enter into the priesthood of Christ until he realises the fact that he is one of the brethren of Christ. The one earnestly seeking to live Christ here "bears about in his body the dying of Jesus", learns more and more of Christ. The great contrast between the blessed Lord and man is, that man ever has himself as his centre and source, whilst He had ever God as His centre and source.

What a wonderful thing it is that we should be of Him!

Wonderful, indeed. In John 17 He first sets us as Himself in the presence of the Father and then sets us as Himself in this world.

Are you connecting all that with the manna?

No. I say you have to know Christ here as the manna. The manna is presented in the conclusion of Galatians 2: 20. First, you are crucified with Christ, and a new Person - Christ, liveth in you. Then "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me". This is the manna.

Is that the force of that verse?

Yes, it is by Him I live here now, the One who gave Himself for me; it is by Him I live. I could not reach Christ on earth if I did not first reach Him where He is. I will give you a practical illustration. I remember a sister telling me she had been in a storm at sea. I asked, "What were you thinking of at the time? " She returned, "Of the Lord in the storm". "Well, then you were not like Him". You must be with Him where He is to be like Him where He was.

I think it is plain that the manna is the grace you get from Christ to enable you to be what He was here.

Yes, that is what I want; the question is, how to get it.

"My grace is sufficient for thee": would that be manna?

I should say it would. The question is, am I as dependent upon Him when I have everything as when I have nothing?

Must I feed upon Christ as the Bread of Life in order to learn what manna is?

I believe you must. There is nothing more wonderful than to be here simply for God.

The Lord Jesus one day rides into Jerusalem, and rightly receives the hosannas of the multitudes, as they own Him as the Son of David. The next day, as He returns to the city, He was hungry and seeing a fig tree afar off, having leaves, He came, if haply He might find anything thereon. He can be the servant in the lowest place as well as in the highest.

Is the manna connected with dependence?

Yes, of course, it is a life of dependence.

Is not the whole of John 6 more in contrast with the manna than the anti-type of it?

Yes. The prominent thing in John 6 is that we enter into Christ's grace through His death.

Is the "bread of God", in the thirty-third verse, the manna?

No. "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world". We live to God here as Christ did as a man. You are supported by manna in this scene of death.

Does manna make the believer superior to circumstances here?

Of course it does; you depend on God as Christ did, and not on circumstances. The wilderness is simply a scene of death, but there is a path of life for you there; the blessed Lord made that path, and there you can sing hymn 76.

I do not think I feel very clear about the manna.

Tell us what it is.

I cannot go beyond what I know.

Unless you are set to live here as Jesus lived you will not understand it. When you are bearing about the dying of Jesus you will know it, you cannot understand it until you want it.

That looks as if none of us wanted it?

You want it when you are bearing about the dying of Jesus.

That is a *sine qua non* to getting the manna? Yes.

Is the manna a humbled Christ? Yes.

That is your food in the desert?

If we understand your illustration of the sister in the storm, you told her that she was not like Christ, because thinking of Christ in those circumstances did not help her in them.

Yes, many think that they can imitate Christ, and they read the gospels for that purpose.

What would help a person in those circumstances?

Feeding on Christ.

Is manna the character of the grace that came out in a humbled Christ?

Yes. The One who had all power was down here completely dependent on God, so that the grace which would enable us to be like Him here was perfectly expressed by Him here.

I live by the faith of the Son of God?

Yes, but unless you know first - "I am crucified with Christ", you will never get to the end of the verse. It is not only you have eternal life, but Christ lives in you. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me". One person is gone; another Person is come in.

That is a precedent?

Quite so. I have asked myself - what is "the faith of the Son of God"?

The faith of which He is the object, where He is?

Yes, quite so.

In what way do you bring in there the truth of Christ once humbled? I want to walk here even as He walked?

Yes, but it is the grace of the humbled Christ which will enable me to behave suitably and support me in the circumstances here, to live by Him in this waste howling wilderness.

Could you supply the link between the Son of God - the object where He is, and the humbled Christ?

Is it not connected with forming Christ in me, as my life here?

You could not get the latter part of the verse without the first part. I see many happy in the gospel who have not Christ formed in them.

We must get grace from Him where He now is in order to express in any measure what He was here.

Would you put it in this way - the first thing is to accept the wilderness where I find nothing but death, and the second thing is to do the will of God as Christ did?

If I am here as He was, to do the will of God, nothing but His grace can support me.

Do we get Christ as the manna in Psalm 16? Yes.

The Son of God is the origin and fountain of faith, it is not merely as you get it in Hebrews - the beginner of faith.

"The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" is a remarkable expression, and I think what helps to explain it is the latter portion of the verse - "He loved me, and gave himself for me". It is a man walking down here governed by the love of Christ; it is not a legal thing in any way, but on the contrary comes in in contrast with law.

It is interesting to notice that there were three things in the tabernacle, two of which were not in the temple - the pot of manna and Aaron's rod. The pot of manna represented a life here entirely suited to God. I think we have confined ourselves too much to the

thought of Christ's having kept the law and magnified it. There was much more than that involved in His path and service here.

The standard of holiness with many does not go beyond not breaking the law. In the millennium the law will be written in their hearts. Christ not only magnified the law, but He was in every way suitable to God, and drew everything from God, and nothing from man.

According to Romans 8 He was the Man of God's pleasure; God was glorified in that Man, and in the future He will again be glorified in His body as the complement of Himself.

Do you make "bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus" preliminary to the manna?

Yes; manna is no use to a man who does not know what it is to be in a scene of death. Some are not ready for manna. I hear discussions as to what it is. You will understand it well enough when you are ready for it.

Do you get any idea of it in Hebrews 12? Oh, no.

He alone is the explanation of Himself?

Yes, and you will never understand it until you have it. Are you looking for it?

THE HABITATION OF GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT

ITS OBJECT AND USE

John 20: 19-23

This is a pattern, on the new ground where the habitation of God is.

It is a great thing to get a pattern, you get the chief characteristics in the pattern. The first is, "Christ is risen". You are not in the assembly if you are not with Christ risen; it is a new ground altogether, therefore as Peter writes, "To whom coming, a living stone, disallowed of men"; it is not merely coming to the meeting.

Here I see they were gathered together, waiting for the risen Christ, and the doors were shut for fear of the Jews, "then came Jesus and stood in the midst".

You have no idea of structure here?

No, but you get the great element, namely, that you have come to Himself, He is risen from the dead, and the more you contemplate the simple fact that you are in company with Him risen from the dead, the more you know of the ground you are on. I think you could not explain the wonderful sense of being in company with Him risen from the dead.

I thought that (so to speak) the day was spent in the disciples apprehending that He was risen and getting them together.

No doubt it has often been said, Mary Magdalene gathered them to a risen Christ.

I have often thought that the Lord went with the two going to Emmaus to bring them back to this point.

I have no doubt that the interview with Mary Magdalene and His walk with the two disciples occurred in one day; you find in Luke's account of it, that whilst the two were relating what had occurred Jesus stood in the midst of them. There is a preparation in souls. The two disciples did not believe in His resurrection. Their coming was the effect of beholding Him.

I think it would have a wonderful effect on every one entering the assembly if he were going into the presence of the Lord. If you ask a pious man in Christendom, "Why do you go to church?" he would say, "To worship God for my salvation". Surely you should go to God's house to know His pleasure.

Does the Lord breathing on them and saying, "Receive the Holy Ghost", shew the new state? "

Yes, you could not be with Him otherwise. That could not happen now, it is historical? No; the Holy Ghost did not come down until Acts 2. The scriptures which have helped me much are Matthew 14 and John 6; both occurred at the same time.

Do you refer to feeding the multitude?

Yes, I make Matthew 14 our side and John 6 the divine way to it. If you read John 6 with Matthew 14 you will see that both are at the one time. You could never enter upon the new ground but in the life of Christ; hence in Matthew 14 Peter leaves the ship to walk on the water, which no man of himself could do; and you get in John 6 that as you feed on the death of Christ you enter into His life.

I wonder why it begins at John 20?

Because it is the first day of the week, the beginning of new creation. In this pattern we get the characteristic of the assembly. It is very important that the disciples were sent out from the assembly; we do not sufficiently look for this. I do not mean that the assembly sends you. I should not put before a young believer the greatness of the step of joining Christ in the assembly, but I would count on the affection which would lead him to come.

I thought that was what the Lord was doing when the two disciples were going to Emmaus - He was attaching their hearts to His circle of things.

An illustration of "beholding the Lord's glory; you are transformed".

Into what?

Into Christ's present interest.

Do you think John 6 is the way you get disengaged from the condition which hinders us from joining the Lord?

Yes. Matthew 14 and 15 set forth the way we are prepared for the assembly; one is, you see Christ supreme above the power here and you join Him there; the other, His grace sets you free from the power of Satan. I think these chapters are highly instructive. The disciples had no bread in the ship; the Lord did not give them any, He was there Himself. He then says to them, "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter says, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God".

Yesterday morning we had the resurrection. If you do not get to it you can never join the Lord in the assembly.

Would you say that until a soul has really come to Christ risen, he is not in a fit state to take his place in the assembly?

Yes, decidedly. He is not at peace. The Lord said "Peace be unto you" . There is not a disturbing element between God and you.

Death and its shadow cleared away?

Yes, all has gone; the spiritual mind is life and peace.

You are in such an atmosphere that you have not really to recall disturbing elements?

Assuredly. Beholding the Lord's glory is the same as the holiest of all to the Jew. You could not come in if you were not completely free of all contrariety.

I wish you could impress that on every one. Well, each must begin with himself. You will never effectually impress a soul until you are impressed yourself. When I am deeply impressed I can deeply impress.

It is a very practical point; it might help some of us as to receiving in following at the Lord's table.

Yes, the first thing is to believe in Christ risen; next, your object is, like Peter's, to join Christ where he saw Him. If you join Him I know the step you will have to take.

Is it the path of Christian faith - all of faith? Yes, but there is no other way. There are plenty of human ways, but only one divine way. Do you connect John 6 with what you get in Peter, "To whom coming"?

Yes, but Peter refers to the structure. It is generally taken as the gospel. "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious", is the effect of the gospel, but coming to Him, "a living stone", is another step.

There are two things we should put before one desiring to take his place in the assembly - counting the cost, and counting the gain?

I should put counting the gain first; it is a question of affection. It is easy work when you know your Saviour risen from the dead; you cannot join a Saviour risen but in His life.

Would not there be a difference in a soul receiving the testimony of God as to the effect of Christ having risen, and so getting the knowledge of salvation, and the soul really coming to Christ as risen?

Yes; when you believe in Christ whom God has raised from the dead, then you receive the Spirit of God. Then you can come to Him in His life, as in John 20.

Is that what you mean by joining Christ?

Yes. He is rejected; in Matthew 14: 10, John Baptist is beheaded. If you come to Him according to Peter, it is as to One disallowed of men.

I question whether the lack is in not apprehending that Christ Himself is on new ground. I am afraid it is. You have to join your Lord and Saviour risen out from the dead, apart from all the ruin and misery in which you were.

In Matthew 14 was not the fact of the Lord being where He was on the water the very thing that made Peter leave the ship; it was not only Himself but His position as being superior to the winds and the waves?

Yes. In Matthew 8 He was in the ship.

In connection with the assembly what we are accustomed to look at is Christ as He was in our circumstances instead of as introducing a new order of things?

He was in the ship but He is not in it now.

"Henceforth know we no man after the flesh?"

Exactly; no place for man at all.

And it is a question of seeing Christ risen first; that is the key to everything.

I find that in religious publications the almost exclusive subject is Christ coming to our side. There is great difficulty in leading souls to Christ's side. Writings on His side and His order of things meet with little attention. You come to the assembly not merely for your own benefit but to know His mind, Psalm 22: 22, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren".

Are we to understand that the first step is to apprehend that Christ is risen?

Yes, after another order.

You cannot have an idea of what the assembly is unless you see the new order. The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

They saw Him with their natural eyes but it is a pattern for us to shew us what we should enjoy spiritually, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you", John 14: 18.

Is it not a fact that they did not realise Him by the natural eye?

Yes, but it is only a pattern. It is not what you get in John 14: "I will come to you"; that was to all of them.

Do you think that refers to the assembly?

It refers to the company, to the eleven there. He only alludes once to the individual in that chapter.

Would you say what the difference is between the Lord's presence being discerned and the presence of the Holy Ghost, because I

understand that the subject this morning is the habitation of the Spirit?

Well, take the eleven, they had the Spirit; "that day" refers to the Spirit's day, it was Christ who would come to them; the Spirit was given. "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you"; and "in that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you". If they had not the Spirit they could not know this; the Spirit in us takes a new action the moment we come into the assembly. You might be occupied with the Spirit as in Romans 8 until you had entered the assembly, and then the Spirit would take a new action in you as in the assembly.

Would you not bring Romans 8 into the assembly?

No.

But you have the Spirit that you had in Romans 8 in the assembly?

Yes, but the Spirit is differently occupied with you now.

Yes, I see.

So far as this particular passage is concerned (John 20) you do not get the exact force of the Holy Ghost filling the house, but you get the great elements in it; you are there and perfectly enjoying Him, and you are commissioned by it to take new ground.

You get spiritual material?

Yes, you are there, and there to learn; the great point is to be here for Him.

And it is an entirely new company?

Yes. The first thing the believer feels is the Lord is not here, where can I find Him? He is refused among men, where am I to find Him? People say, "where am I to go?" That is not it. Would you go to Him? You could not be near Him without knowing His interests and you will never know His interests until you are near Him. It is not only that I know His work but I know Himself; therefore - who shall separate me from the love of Christ?

If I am not of Him I cannot be suitable to Him. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground" etc.

Quite so.

If you join Him where there is no natural support, nothing but Himself could satisfy you?

Certainly. There was no consecration until all the sacrifices were offered up.

How do you apply that?

Because you must learn the perfection of Christ's work first.

Does it mean you must be entirely separated unto God?

Read Leviticus 8; all the offerings were first offered and then the consecration.

The consecrated company are in the full fragrance of all the offerings?

Exactly. I have often thought why is there nothing said about remembering the death of the Lord in Hebrews; I suppose it is because the Jew knew well that there could be no consecration until after all the sacrifices. The first twenty-one verses of Psalm 22 describe His death, the twenty-second verse His resurrection. You cannot remember His death if you do not know it.

It is generally spoken of as a means of grace? Yes. "Take and eat this bread in remembrance that Christ died for thee", which is not in the Bible from cover to cover. We suffer because of the failure in Christendom. I cannot escape the stigma on my family, but I can be practically free from it and thus an example to them.

Could it be said they were "all of one" before Christ rose?

Certainly not, but He called them His brethren before He saw them: they could not as yet enjoy the relationship.

Are you taking that twenty-second verse as two things or as only one, "He breathed on them and said"?

It is one and the same thing.

It was explanatory of His breathing?

Quite so, if you have not the Spirit of Christ you are none of His.

I do not quite understand "I will not leave you orphans".

If you felt like an orphan you would understand its meaning. I will not leave you orphans; they were like unfledged birds. I will come to you.

Do you connect that with the Lord in the midst of His gathered saints?

Yes. I will see you again and your hearts shall rejoice.

Is it not true that the Holy Ghost is always in the church, in the assembly; but the Lord is not always in the assembly?

It is true the Holy Ghost is always in the individuals who form the assembly.

Is that the only way in which He is in the assembly?

I used to think there were two ways; I was corrected by John 14: "He dwelleth with you and shall be in you"; it is to remain in you. That is the way I was corrected - I had read it as His being with us in two ways.

I thought you used to press it from Acts 2? Yes, I am like Peter, I was in error; I now desire to help others.

Is not the Holy Ghost in the house of God as well as in the individual?

Where?

The moment you come into the assembly the Holy Ghost takes a new action, you are connected with the building.

I thought 1 Corinthians 3 was corporate and 1 Corinthians 6 individual?

The Holy Ghost has come down to individuals. It is all individual in John 14.

Pardon me, the individual is only once referred to, "I will come to him, and we will make our abode with him". All the rest is plural.

It is a company of individuals?

Yes, I do not say there is any structure there. When you come to the passage in John 16, "When he is come, he will reprove the world", that is His testimony. The Holy Ghost comes to the disciples to testify of Christ.

It says, "Ye also shall bear witness"?

That is the apostles, that is the earthly side. Verse 26 (chap 15) is for us, 27 is for the apostles.

Which chapter are you talking about?

Chapter 15. On looking at the original to which my attention was called by one of J.N.D.'s letters, I saw John 14: 17 in a new way.

The Spirit never came on one individual. Quite so.

I am not speaking of the Lord Himself.

Never on one; it came on 120, sitting on each of them.

They all have their part in the one Spirit? The Spirit dwells in the believer.

Individuals do receive the Spirit?

No individual could say that the Holy Ghost dwelt in him only.

The Spirit of God dwells in you, God dwells in you.

One person could not represent Christ down here, "the body is not one member, but many". What you cannot do another can do. It is clear there were 120 persons at the beginning.

Where did the Holy Ghost dwell in the house when He formed it?

In the 120, they were a part of the house; no matter where you are you are a part of the house. There is a different action of the Spirit in you individually and when in the assembly.

What is "partakers of the Holy Ghost", Heb 6?

Companions of the Holy Ghost.

Do you mean that the Holy Ghost is only here subjectively, not as an object ?

Yes. I do not make Him an object.*

He makes Christ an object?

Yes. The Spirit is not objectively in the midst as the Lord is.

No, that idea has not helped us.

I quite admit there is a great difference between the Holy Ghost and the presence of the Lord.

Why does it say in Acts 2 He filled the house first before He sat upon them?

The effect of His presence filled the house. So I can say in effect the Lord fills Christendom.

The Spirit was there as a sort of president?

I could not agree to that. By way of illustration - The light which the Speaker in the House of Commons has, to see every one there, is the same light which every member has to see the Speaker. The Speaker represents Christ. The light is not in the room apart from the persons who have the light, the light is in the persons.

The Spirit of God came down and dwelt in the midst of the redeemed?

The Spirit of God dwells in the believer.

Does not the Spirit of God sometimes use an unconverted man; he may read the word?

That is another action. There might be conversion in China, but there is no house there. Does the Spirit direct the company as such, that is, He leads our hearts to Christ?

Quite so; that is the action of the Spirit when you are in the assembly, quite a different action to that He has in you individually.

If you speak or lead, you are leading the company, you are occupied with Christ for the company. The Spirit controls and directs the functions of the members as they are subject.

This is the construction of the house?

In 1 Peter 2 the moment you come into the assembly you come in as part of the building. Get the moral idea of the house, the intent of it, "To whom coming, a living stone, disallowed indeed of men".

What is the idea of the house of God? It is to learn God's mind.

I thought that was the idea of the temple, where the oracles are.

I think the house of God is a wonderful idea, it is where God puts Himself as it were in contact with men.

You mean to say there is a place on earth where man can find God?

Yes.

Speaking of the house, are we not always in the house?

Yes, but what do you get in the house? expect to get a knowledge of His mind.

Are we not always in the assembly? We are always belonging to it.

I think it would be a great thing if we could leave the "we" out.

The Spirit of God is always here?

The Spirit is always here in those who form the house.

A member of parliament is not always in his place.

Yes, but he does not lose his place. He has a new course and a new interest. Jacob's altar, El-elohe-Israel, indicates, not that God was his object but that he was God's object. God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel", that is God's house; though it was twenty years since Jacob was there, he said to his household, "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be ye clean, and change your garments". You could tell where every one is, if you knew his altar. You cannot know what suits God except you have been in His house.

The habitation of God is here, Jew and Gentile are builded together, the Spirit is here permanently, or rather God is here by

His Spirit, but then I make that fact wholly dependent on the body being here. When I think of the individual members and the Spirit of God acting in them I have a limited idea of God's presence, but when I think of the house of God, I think of what God is as dwelling here. The point is, that God is there, and it is not a question of activity. Leave out for a moment the question of activity. There is divine activity for blessing. I believe the Spirit of God does not go beyond the state of the company.

If you go to the house of God you get there what you could not get anywhere else, it is the necessary accompaniment of His presence. The pillar and base of the truth.

Christ is here not merely with regard to the saints, but with regard to God.

Do you connect in your mind how to behave in the church of God with the actual state of God's people?

No, I do not.

You would not exclude behaviour, but it takes in more?

Yes it should characterise you in everything.

Men are to pray everywhere, women are to adorn themselves with good works.

Suppose all the members were taken away, how would God be represented then?

There would be no house, the house would be left desolate.

If you accept the house, I want to know the great thought connected with the house. As to the Spirit not being here objectively,* how about Ananias's case, "Thou hast not lied unto men but unto God".

God dwells here by the Spirit; but if it were the question of God coming to man in grace, it must be as incarnate, as in Christ. God has come thus and now there is a vessel in which He can dwell, but not as incarnate. The Spirit in the individual is different. It is to me God dwelling in the house by the Spirit.

That explains that verse in Acts 5 just quoted. The house was here on the day of Pentecost but had not got its scope.

How does it refer to Christendom at large? The house was first formed, souls were gathered in the first instance by the testimony of Christ risen, to Him who was rejected here but chosen of God. By that testimony the house of God was formed, but you find that many have come into it who have no part in it.

Is it presented in Scripture that the Spirit of God dwells in Christendom?

It is a great fact that the house of God is here; the house of God has been formed by the testimony to Christ risen, but you have also mere profession in it.

In regard to the house and the temple?

A great many people come into the house and come under the influence of the Spirit there, but I do not believe anybody but a spiritual person enters the temple, so as to understand it and thus get the good of it.

The man who enters it, and profanes it, is no part of it. The temple is the inner part, the shrine, the holiest. If a man defiles the temple he has no sense of what the temple is. Many speak of the temple who have no true idea of it.

The house would be more connected with the place of responsibility?

Yes, they are never confounded in Scripture. I raise my voice against evangelists going out and separating their work from the assembly.

They ought to come *from* it.

** More light has since been shed on this point - see, for instance J.T. Vol.53 p.261.*

THE CHILDREN'S WELCOME

From time to time we hear stories about children and even older persons becoming lost in the countryside, especially after nightfall. What a cause for thanksgiving it is when in the end safety is reached! It is interesting that the gospel can be compared with the relief felt by some such traveller lost in darkness and storm when, unexpectedly, a friendly beam of light shines upon him from a house not far distant. Perhaps it reveals just in front of him some deep pit or dangerous obstacle which he would otherwise not have seen.

Such a traveller would surely not be satisfied with just seeing the light, however pleasant, nor with being saved from danger to his life, but he would at once follow up the beam of light which revealed his peril and would so find full safety and a welcome in the house whence the light came.

Like a precious jewel the gospel of the grace of God has many and varied beauties according to the viewpoint of the beholder. We may look first and gratefully at the outshining of God's mercy in its steady danger-beam showing us to be lost and helpless. A turn of the gospel gem would show us that God had made every provision for our rescue through the death of His Son. A further turn would attract us to the source itself of the light that leads us to safety.

Jesus said "I am the light of the world; he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life". A sunbeam may fall with its golden light upon the vilest object on earth but, if traced back to its source it would lead to the glorious sun in the heavens.

There may be unsaved travellers on life's journey who appreciate the gospel as a story but nothing more. Others may see the danger they are in but continue to go their own uncertain way.

To get the full gain of the salvation offered however the traveller would gladly trace the heavenly beam of light to its source. He would be anxious to find the house and acquaint himself with the householder who would doubtless rejoice with him. The gospel jewel would now have a hitherto unknown beauty for the traveller in learning that the householder causes the guiding light to shine

because he yearns to have as his companions persons, once lost, to enjoy with him the full provision of his house. God's house is filling fast. Are you enjoying your place in it?

J.C.Evershed