

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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OCCUPATION WITH THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Matthew 17: 1-8; 2 Corinthians 3: 18; John 14: 1-7, 15-18

A.J.E.W. I have been thinking about the measure of our sustained engagement with the Person of Christ. We can have Him before us, I take it, with the help of the Spirit, at any time; there is that which we experience individually, and, as we also experience, there is the greater advantage of being occupied with Him as together. But I feel for myself the need of greater intentness in occupation with Christ, a definiteness of purpose in our approach to Him, and a deeper manifestation of insistent desire to appropriate more of what we discern in Himself. We have often noticed that in Matthew 17 the Lord took with Him Peter, and James, and John, up into a high mountain apart. The Lord shows His concern to have something in these men through beholding Him that would fit them for what He would later have in mind. There is no question that this remarkable experience on the mount was singularly productive in those beloved servants in what they set forth. Peter speaks of it very feelingly we know, in the first chapter of his second letter; the whole character of John and his ministry are evident in his gospel and epistles; the stature of James, is touched more lightly, These men come out as the choice produce of close engagement with Jesus. Whilst our pathway here embraces experiences of many kinds, some involving discipline or necessary moral adjustment, it is borne in upon me that the most productive elements in ourselves, productive in what He Himself delights in, what the Father delights in, and what the Spirit can link with, are gained through the enriching contemplation of the Person of God's beloved Son. These scriptures bring out some points as to that, and would helpfully engage us with the difference of the approach to the truth by Paul and by John. We have often said to one another (this goes back, of course, to a very early point in the recovery) that in principle Paul sets us in heavenly places; John, on the other hand, brings down to us as here the new and glorious order of life in manhood that we see in Jesus.

What we read in Matthew would particularly support Paul; a high mountain apart was evidently deliberately selected, and being the place to which the Lord Himself took His three disciples, it is suggestive of what is elevated, taken into the heavenly level. It is also stable, it is well founded, it is a mountain, and a high one. In relation to all this we see God's beloved Son acknowledged to be such with the deepest of feelings possible in the voice out of the cloud: "This"; that word 'this' is very provocative of positive thought - "This". It raises an enquiry which has an immediate answer. Was there ever anything like this to be seen before? Well, it was seen then, and these three men came down the mount, no doubt, with an outlook and features relating to it that were fuller and richer than anything they had carried before. That is to be the product, in any one of us and in any local company, of beholding God's beloved Son. We would all acknowledge, I think, that without in any sense limiting it, we know the experience of this, particularly in the wealth of the occasion of the Lord's supper; how productive, and indeed formative, the experience of the Supper and what follows from it can be. But I am thinking of this in a more general sense, because the Lord, if I understand these things rightly, is never beyond the range of the reverential contemplation, sustained in the Spirit, of those who love Him.

G.A.P. Why is particular attention drawn to His face and His garments?

A.J.E.W. I think to bring out that the centre of everything for God, and indeed for man too, is really in the disposition of God which that face, shining as the sun, would convey. It is a universal suggestion. The sun is the centre of the universe, and Jesus, for us, is the centre of the universe, nothing less. But then, do we answer to that? As the centre of the universe, is He in the reality of our way down here, and our experience, the centre for me?

E.O. You referred to discipline; I have been reading a portion of Mr Taylor's 'Liberty in Suffering', and he says that the Lord has met all the governmental circumstances and external circumstances that He might have us with Him (see Vol.57, p.106). So whatever our

experience circumstantially we still carry that impression, that the Lord wants us with Him. He has met all that might hinder.

A.J.E.W. That shows the positiveness of every thought in His mind and heart for us, the positiveness of it. It comes out in these scriptures, I think. But we want to come into the full richness of what in such positiveness He holds in view for us; even if it be the object of chastening and discipline, I believe He would deepen us through the contemplation of Himself.

E.C.B. Does it go with your thought that in Matthew, when the Lord says "There are some of those standing here that shall not taste of death", He says "until they shall have seen the Son of man coming in his kingdom"? In the other two gospels it is until they have seen the kingdom, but in Matthew it is until they have seen the Person.

A.J.E.W. Very much so; they have seen the Person. In divine things, if you have seen the Person you have seen what stands related to that Person, because the blend of the two is perfect.

There is no feature of the kingdom that would not be manifested in Jesus, and no feature of Christ that would not come into some expression in the kingdom when He comes into His rights. That is very confirming of the simple point I have in mind, that as having Christ personally engaging our affections and holding our minds, we really come within range of the whole divine scheme of things in view of God's pleasure.

D.J.H. So the gospel would have that in mind. Romans begins with "God's glad tidings ... concerning his Son" and it concludes with "my glad tidings and the preaching of Jesus Christ". We have the preaching week by week, generally to those of us who through divine grace are believers, but the object would be to occupy us with the Person, would it not? ·

A.J.E.W. I am sure of that. After all, the gospel in its true wide scope is an immense matter. We need to be there and hear the preaching, whoever we are.

E.P. Would that touch this word from the Father: "hear him"? He has something to say, but if we have had a sight of Him how attentive we

would be!

A.J.E.W. How attentive we would be! That just sums up my point.

Are we attentive? And if I could use the expression, without in any way infringing what is due to Christ, are we insistently attentive? You may go to the Lord and something else may come into mind and you go away; the pressure of events is such that any of us might just fail to grasp the need for intentness to discover what the Lord might convey or impart to us as we go to Him. What a vast extent of things is under His hand to convey to those who love Him!

E.P. Just to follow that suggestion of yours as to intentness, in a quite different connection would it be conveyed in what Jacob said to the man that wrestled with him; "I will not let thee go except thou bless me", Gen 32: 26? Is that the idea. You stay there to get some fresh impression?

A.J.E.W. I believe that resoluteness is what we may take up, in sympathy with God's mind, is not a question of driving something through in the force of will (we know some thing about that too, perhaps, in our experience). I believe it is precious to the Lord to find in any one of us an intentness to grasp fully what He may have to show us or to say to us; so that it may become formative and bring out something characteristic in us which finds its place (and is cherished of Him in finding its place) in the assembly.

D.J.H. I was thinking of the scripture referred to as to Jacob and his insistence. It is in the setting where he said that he had seen the face of God. Well, we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, do we not?

A.J.E.W. Surely.

D.J.R. Would you say something more as to Him being transfigured. It is an unusual expression to use for the Lord Himself.

A.J.E.W. It is an unusual expression, but of course it comes in again in connection with the saints in 2 Corinthians 3 in regard to the change.

D.J.R. I can understand it more in regard to the saints; we need it.

A.J.E.W. Yes, quite so. The Lord had something to convey to these men, something, we would think, quite specific. He really looks on to the new order of things as He is transformed; that is to say, they had a preview of Jesus as we shall yet know Him.

D.J.R. Do we get a touch of it when He said "Tell the vision to no one, until the Son of man be risen up from among the dead"?

A.J.E.W. There are things that we become accustomed to; even in the course of seeking to apprehend the truth, there are things that we become accustomed to, but it may be that the Lord would change these things and bring in what, from His side, is fresh and different, something which we have not seen before and which when apprehended will produce distinct and definite increase, responsive to Himself, in any one of us.

E.C.B. Is it a question whether we can get beyond what Jesus was in His humiliation to what He is in His glory? You will remember the remarks of Mr Stoney, that many appreciate Him as greater than Jonas, but not many appreciate Him as greater than Solomon.

A.J.E.W. Well, that is appropriate as to the whole of what we are considering, because appreciating Him as He is, appreciating Him glorified, is a very extensive matter which is vital for us. It is a question whether we shall ever contribute to the true fragrance of assembly response to the heart of Christ if we have not developed in that understanding of Himself, appreciation of Himself as glorified.

E.C.B. The substance of Christianity rests in the fact that Jesus is glorified, does it not?

A.J.E.W. Just so.

E.C.B. Therefore, if we are to enter fully into what Christianity is by way of privilege or of testimony, we must penetrate into what He is as glorified; this requires the Spirit.

A.J.E.W. I am glad you bring the Spirit in, because the Spirit is very closely alongside to sustain engagement with Himself in those who love Him. That will give scope to the Spirit, if I may reverently use the word, to bring out the vital features of what the bride is.

D.J.H. Does the reference in Mark show the continuation of this, where it says "he was manifested in another form to two of them", chap 16: 12? I was wondering about this word 'transfigured' ('transformed' as it is in Corinthians), whether there is something distinctive - 'another form' - each time He manifests Himself to us.

We are not able for it all at once, you might say, but would the point be to grasp the distinctiveness of any particular manifestation?

A.J.E.W. And we need to be reverentially careful, in the recesses of our minds, not to hold the Lord to some preconceived character of things. He may, as you are suggesting, change what He may elect to convey to those He loves. We want to be ready if He does so.

J.S.G. Does it fit that what Moses and Elias spoke about with the Lord is not specified here? It is in Luke; they "spoke of his departure which he was about to accomplish", Luke 9: 31, but the subject of the speaking is not mentioned here.

A.J.E.W. What do you see in those two references?

J.S.G. Does it confirm what you were bringing to us just now, that the matter is spiritual, and if we have the Lord before us and His glory we cannot at all limit what He may have to say. Is that what you had in mind?

A.J.E.W. Yes. In one way it waits for Paul to get the full bearing of this, and that is why I suggested the well known passage in 2 Corinthians. It may be better known as a passage than the experience is. But that is how Paul seems to expand to us the beholding of Jesus: "we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit". That expression "from glory to glory" is intensely attractive and it links with what was said as to how much we may know of or embrace these things, because it is from glory to glory. It is not from bondage to glory, it is from glory to glory; that is, it belongs to the positive area of spiritual things which stands related to a glorified Christ and the Spirit here.

E.C.B. Do you think that each of us would find ourselves tested about this, because we could find out how much we had been

looking on the glory of the Lord by how much we had experienced change, either individually or collectively? This scripture embraces what is collective, does it not?

A.J.E.W. I understand it to embrace what is collective; it is a matter of experience with us that our choicest experiences come in the collective setting.

E.C.B. I am sure that that is right. It is remarkable to see though, in this part of Corinthians, how strong a line of what is individual Paul is pursuing. Does that not connect with what has been said before, that unless we grasp what is true of us individually, and experience it, we shall not fully enter into what is true of us collectively.

A.J.E.W. Quite so; I believe that.

E.O. In view of what it says of Peter, James and John, were there settled relationships between them? The Lord wanted them with Him; and this thought of 'we all' conveys that the Lord wants us there whatever the relationships among us may be. Is that very affecting?

A.J.E.W. Yes. There is a real field of study, I think, in these three beloved apostles and what this experience meant to them. When Peter records it he says "we have not made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, following cleverly imagined fables, but having been eyewitnesses" (in the plural) "of his majesty". So that Peter is, by inference anyway, conveying impressions that all three shared in this remarkable time. It is remarkable, too, how Peter brings out references to the heavenly in the course of his epistles, although he is a kingdom man; he refers to an "incorruptible, and undefiled and unfading inheritance"? 1 Pet 1: 4. He takes us there into the heavenly, and really presents an invitation to experience the verity of what he is saying.

D.A.B. Does Peter then prove the truth of the scripture in Corinthians? He had looked on the glory and he had been changed, and the more he thought about it, the more it changed him and developed with him. I was thinking that, even when Jesus resumed His path of humiliation here, the three could never have looked on

Him without seeing that glory there. It was the same face, was it not?

A.J.E.W. Well, that brings out a little what I discovered to be a deficiency in myself, the tendency to get an impression and pretty quickly leave it and look for something else.

C.B. When Paul recites the divine intervention he recites it twice; the reference to the glory of the Person increases to its fulness in the last account. Is that the right effect?

A.J.E.W. I was thinking of that; Paul is a remarkable instance. Of course you cannot define just how much or how little that experience meant to him, but it would be a question of how much rather than how little. It really formed the whole man in view of what he was now in Christ's interests. I think Paul is, perhaps, the finest example we have of what I ventured to suggest, that the most formative element in the course that we have down here is gained in the contemplation of Christ.

E.C.B. Could you say more as to how we might retain impressions and find them expand?

A.J.E.W. Does that not involve the Holy Spirit closely? We might ask ourselves, was that first impression just the point? I might keep it, have it in my mind, but was it really the point that the Spirit of God had in view to commit to me? Maybe you go to the Spirit and speak to Him about it, and He comes in with something to augment what you had already, or to adjust it, and you get the point. Is that just?

E.C.B. I am sure that that is right. I was thinking of what we were saying together last Lord's day, that if we could pass on some of the benefit of our experience we would help one another. Is not Paul's experience of a man in Christ and hearing things that he could not repeat, an example of what you are saying? We would infer that we get the benefit of that in all his subsequent ministry.

A.J.E.W. Exactly; and it would impart the heavenly colour to all that he presented. That is something which ought to affect any of us who serve, do you not think, that there is a colour about the ministry? Is it

a heavenly colour or is it just a circumstantial colour derived from something here? You long to elevate the beloved people of God, every one of them into their true portion by setting forth what is characteristically heavenly in the sense of colour - the detail of the ministry is supported by something in the way the truth is presented which keeps it at the heavenly level. Is that just?

E.C.B. I think it is not only just but vital. If the ministry is on any lower level the progress of the saints will be hindered. I think that those who serve can help the saints forward so far as they have ability, only by setting forward something that is somewhat above and beyond where the saints are at the moment. That in itself is challenging in view of what we have so often been taught, that no one can take the brethren beyond where he is himself.

D.J.R. Peter, in recounting the experience, refers to "being with him on the holy mountain". That puts Peter where Christ is, even though at that time it was before He went into glory; he was already there in company with Jesus, and he was able to appreciate that throughout the rest of his time of ministry.

A.J.E.W. Do you not get the impression that the Lord delights to have us with Him in His own circumstances?

D.J.R. Is that what we experience in the verse that you read in 2 Corinthians?

A.J.E.W. You remember how Mr Darby used to press upon the saints that the assembly shares everything with Christ as Man. Well this is another thought on the same line. The Lord loves to have us with Him in His own sphere, where all that is of Himself shines in the distinctness and glory of it. I believe that is how what we speak of as spirituality is going to be developed. Get with the Lord in His own sphere.

D.A.B. Is it your thought that we should seek the Spirit's help to exploit our experience with Christ, with Jesus? If I may speak simply, we had the transfiguration before us where I was a fortnight ago and I can say I received something fresh from it, but how much it has grown according to its potential I could not really say.

A.J.E.W. Yes, indeed.

C.B. It says "looking on the glory of the Lord". Where is it to be seen? Of course we know it in heaven but is it to be seen among the saints?

A.J.E.W. In your long time in the testimony you have been in meetings and gone away afterwards and just thought to yourself, well, we have seen the Lord tonight. You have been on your knees many, many times and you get up from your knees (you do not get up too quickly) and you say to yourself, I have seen Jesus, I have heard His voice. Have you not had those experiences?

C.B. Indeed, I have, and we fall back on His faithfulness; the word is, at the end of Matthew, "I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age". If we get away, He is still with us.

A.J.E.W. The Lord does not give us these experiences to adorn us in any way, or to bring ourselves forward, but that we may enter more fully upon the divine interests in the widest sense under His hand. He loves to work with us, to work on our affections, to deepen our feelings as to what relates to Himself. Nothing is to be lightly held, carelessly regarded, that concerns the interests of Christ.

K.G.S. I am still thinking about Jacob. The transformation there was complete; he had his name changed, and he limped. Looking on the glory of the Lord should have a permanent effect with us, should it not? The sun rising upon Jacob, too, as it rose over Peniel, would be for him the light of another day, a Man in another world dawning into his heart. Is that in line with what you are thinking of?

A.J.E.W. That is very much the line. It is failure to apprehend that line, or to take it on, which leads to poverty oft-times. Do we want to be poverty-stricken Christians? That is not really a right expression, because Christians characteristically are not poverty stricken, but you know what I mean. Are we just going to sink back into contentment with something less than the excellence of what the Lord is striving to press upon us and to develop in us for His satisfaction, for the Father's heart?

B.W.W. Does that bring out that there should always be His side to what the Lord grants? Reference was made this morning in thanksgiving, to "I am coming to you"; we delight and count upon that faithfulness, but, in a certain sense, the "you" and what is for Him in that, is greater, is it not?

A.J.E.W. Your quoting that raises in my mind the question, Is it just that He comes and then that He goes out; is that all there is to it? It is not just a movement on His part, it is a movement with divine intent, and we are often searched as to what intent we have as to it and how deep our appreciation of it and of Him is in consequence. I wonder how many of us here, through passing through this, another Lord's day, if the Lord leaves us another few hours, may get up in the morning with the impression that divine grace has linked us with the most wonderful order of things in the universe. That is the kind of impression that the Lord would give us, to help us to see His part in relation to it, His face shining as the sun. All these things are meaningful, but to what degree are they formative of our impressions and character spiritually?

E.P. It is quite significant, is it not, that in John 20, where it so majestically says "Jesus came", a little lower in that chapter the testimony is in mind? I wondered whether "Jesus came" would touch our experience at the Supper; but the testimony if we are left here till tomorrow is to be in the light of that.

A.J.E.W. Yes, quite so.

E.C.B. Just, perhaps, to touch John, are the verses in chapter 14 a kind of Pauline aspect of the Lord's ministry in John, that is to say, as you said earlier, not bringing what is heavenly down here but taking what is here up to heaven?

A.J.E.W. Yes, I think that; and I believe it is good to see that side. But you stop and ponder a long time over this reference to the Father's house. It is brought in as if Jesus alone could bring it in, if you follow what I mean. He, the beloved Son, going to the Father, and going, too, with this in mind also: "I go to prepare you a place".

What this brings out as to the Father's glory, the glory of His

affections, the way that those affections find their answer in the only begotten Son! Then those affections, as they enlarge so to speak, embrace the saints as with Him in the many abodes. It is a wonderful touch of wealth, is it not? John evidently took this in.

There are many indications of the quality that there was with John the apostle in taking on what was opened up to him and passing it on, imparting it to the saints. You would covet to be a John, would you not?

E.C.B. Well, who would not? 'John's simple page', we hear of. In 2 Peter 1 "the excellent glory" is the Father's glory, is it not? I was impressed with it this morning, that Peter uses the word 'excellent' as that which surpasses; it is not that which is good in itself but what surpasses. Having been occupied in the glory with Jesus we learn that there is a glory greater than that, the Father's glory.

A.J.E.W. Well, this passage was read just to touch that point of the Father's glory, and the fact of the Father being seen in Jesus - a stupendous thing! And a little lower down we have the Spirit being known in Jesus. That is another interesting point which carries out in the Person of Christ. "Ye know him" the Lord says as to another Comforter. That is manifestly that the disciples in being with Jesus Himself had seen in Him, in His Person, that which would perfectly represent what another Comforter would maintain

E.C.B. Are you suggesting that our sustained occupation with Jesus, with which you began, would help us further to understand the glories of the Father and of the Spirit?

A.J.E.W. Indeed so. What do you say to that?

E.C.B. I think that is right because it is in Him, in the Son, that that revelation is.

A.J.E.W. Yes, quite so.

E.C.B. After all, "nor does any one know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son may be pleased to reveal him", Matt. 11: 27. I think if we are occupied with the Son we shall learn more about the Father.

A.J.E.W. It may not be wholly relevant, but I often think of Mr Raven's fine expression, how God has put Himself into communication with man, that is, in Jesus.

D.J.H. Do we see the effect of all this in John in the Revelation? "Immediately I became in the Spirit", he says, and then he was carried away in Spirit and he was on another high mountain. There he saw substantially what had been formed through occupation with Christ, and it was able for the glory of God. Do you think that is the full answer?

A.J.E.W. I was wondering that earlier in this meeting; Revelation would enlarge many of these thoughts to us. John was on the Isle of Patmos, a limited spot, becoming in Spirit on the Lord's day. That has often been referred to but it is a challenge to us and an encouragement to us.

D.J.H. Would the link with Matthew 17 be that it was apart, a high mountain apart? Patmos was apart, it was not a high mountain in one sense, but as becoming in Spirit he was on the same level, was he not?

A.J.E.W. Well, we have to see, I believe, that there is a whole course of things which John speaks of in different ways, but he speaks of it in his epistles as "the world", which is totally apart from what we have been speaking of and the realm of what is heavenly and spiritual. And I believe, I say it with sorrow, that through not realising the 'apartness' of those heavenly things, some are still making shipwreck in the world.

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Key to initials

(All local unless otherwise stated)

C.Beale; D.A.Burr; E.C.Burr; D.J.Hutson; E.Oliver; E: Palmer;
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THE COVENANT IN THE SUPPER

E.E.Hoyte

Genesis 9: 12-17; Isaiah 42: 6-8; Hebrews 13: 20,21

I want to say a little on the word 'covenant' and on what a covenant is. We make covenants in the business world and have to stand by them; they cannot be broken, you cannot give them up. I wondered if we understood that the Supper to which we committed our hands to-day involves that, on my part and on yours. You put forth your hands to the emblems as committed to what the Supper speaks of.

The covenant is an agreement and you have to be true to it. So from the youngest to the oldest we want to ask ourselves whether we are true to our committal, true to what we have committed our hands to. Hands are what we use for doing things.

You cannot think of anything more sacred than the Supper because it brings before us not simply the person of Jesus but His death, the death of One who is spotless, who is holy. When you put your hand to it you should know what is involved. Why was His death necessary? Why did our Lord Jesus have to die? He was holy: "the holy thing also which shall be born shall be called Son of God" (Luke 1: 35) and that holy Person never sinned, He was perfect. As you take the emblems in your hand, whether it be the loaf or the cup, what you have in your hand is a suggestion of perfection, not in yourself - certainly not - but the perfection of a Man who did the will of God. Have you ever thought of it? If you have not, think of it now, that when you commit yourself to the Supper you are committing yourself to something very great, the death of Jesus. That is what you are saying to the world: I am committed to that, the sacrifice, the holy sacrifice, of a Man who is perfect in every iota. But He had to die, He had to die for me and for you, in order that we should live.

So you get the idea of life out of death. That is God's great thought. Adam was created and on account of his failure death came in. God said "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat", Gen 2: 17. The enemy came in as deceiver

suggesting that God was not true. God is always true to His promise and His word. He said, You have everything here, Adam, everything here for your use; you can take of all, eat everything, but you are not to eat that. And, you know, people are very bold. They might say, Why did God have to forbid him, why did He put that tree there and forbid him to eat of it? That is the boldness of man's mind. They cannot be any bolder than when they say "There is no God" (Ps 14: 1) but they might say even that.

God has rights, God is sovereign. We have to think of that, and if He says, No I am setting you up here and I want you to have the full run of it, I want you to be in blessing, but you have to observe My word, He has His rights. People do not think of God having rights over them, sovereign rights creatorially. The potter has rights over the clay. God has rights over us, so He can tell us what He wants us to do. Our part is to obey. Adam failed and death came in, but God had in mind life out of death, that was the life God had in mind.

God was not disappointed, He was not baffled. He had made a promise, the promise of life in Christ Jesus. That was before Adam was created; God saw there would be the need for it and He made the promise, the promise of life in Christ Jesus (see 2 Tim 1: 1). Have you ever thought of that? How wonderful that is! It was made before the foundation of the world (see Eph 1: 4) and He has life in mind, and the kind of life God had in mind is life out of death. So we speak of the death of Jesus; it involved that promise of life in Christ Jesus. How has it come about? By the death of Jesus. He had to die and bring in life, life according to God, and incorruptibility - think of that: incorruptibility through the glad tidings.

Well, we have the glad tidings to-night but we are coming to this matter of your committal to the emblems. As I say, it is an agreement; it is not an empty thing. You may put your hand to a piece of paper and perhaps you are signing away your life, so you have to be very careful what you do and commit yourself to: a piece of paper may sign away your fortune. It is no mean thing but you have to stand by it. What the covenant demands you must stand by, you cannot depart from it. I am just bringing that forward, dear

brethren, to help us, especially the young ones, as to this matter of committal. You cannot turn back you have made it: it is an agreement and you have to stand by it.

Now I want to show you how God stands by everything He says. But, you say, I would expect that. But do you know in the first scripture I read there is a covenant that God made with the whole earth? Have you ever noticed the rainbow? Do you see the rainbow much here? Good! In the United States you hardly see it, but it is there. Have you ever thought that God made this covenant with the earth? And He gave the sign of it that he would not destroy the earth again by a flood. You see a great downpour and you say, What a swimming we have to do here to get through this. But you say to yourself it does not matter how much it rains, that rainbow is a sign that the earth is not going to be destroyed by flood again. That is what God said to Noah. On what basis has He made that promise, that covenant to Noah? I will tell you what it is. Noah had just come out of the ark. The ark had just gone through the flood. The flood had destroyed everything on the earth and Noah came out, himself and his family and all in the ark, they were brought through in the ark.

And as Noah comes out of the ark what does he do? He offers to God of every clean animal and fowl as a sacrifice. But what it says is that God smelled an odour of rest. It says, "Jehovah smelled the sweet odour" (the note says 'an odour of rest') Gen 8: 21. Noah was reclaiming the earth for God. God had just cleansed it; it was so bad, so corrupt, that He says, I cannot go on: "My Spirit shall not always plead with Man", chap 6: 3. Now we have the same conditions, but God is not changing that word, His covenant. See down the ages, He is not changing it; He stands to His word. And so God now found rest in the new world in type, and Noah said if there is to be something for God in this one it must be on the principle of death, of sacrifice. So it says that he "took of every clean animal, and of all clean fowl", chap 8: 20. He did not say, We have to live, we have to exist. But he took of every one "and offered up burnt offerings" - not a burnt offering - but "burnt offerings on the altar", and God was pleased; He smelled an odour of rest that He did not

get before. He says, Now Noah, I am going to make a covenant with you and I am not going to break it. He says "that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living soul of all flesh that is upon the earth". How sweeping that is!

Well, you say, why am I labouring to tell you about this flood? It is a very important thing, because what I want to come on to next is the death of Jesus. What I want to come on to savours of that.

What is it? It is to show me God's disposition towards me. I am a sinner and what I learn from it is that God has given Jesus to be a covenant; notice that, He is the covenant, that is what it says in the scripture in Isaiah. What kind of person must God give for that? If you read the beginning of the chapter you see who He is speaking about and what He is going to accomplish, He is going to do everything for God. It does not say that here, but he is going to bring in a world for God, for His pleasure and delight. What kind of Man He is? So God begins from that point to describe the person whom He is giving as a covenant. Notice what He says at the beginning of the chapter. He is calling our attention, He says "Behold". That is something we want to observe. "Behold my servant whom I uphold". He is speaking about a Man, He is speaking about Jesus - that Person whom we remember the first day of every week. He is speaking about that Man and this sweeping character of the death of Jesus. So He says "Behold my servant". Do you want to see His Servant, dear brethren? Do you want to get to a servant? It is this Person. God has spoken of others in that capacity - "my servant Moses" (Num 12: 7) - but there is not one like this One, not persons who are "to open the blind eyes, to bring forth the prisoner from the prison, them that sit in darkness out of the house of restraint" and so on. None of the others did that. It involves a sweeping thing - the deliverance that man needs for his soul. You may say that Moses brought them out of Egypt. Good, so he did, but this is soul deliverance, soul salvation, eternal salvation for souls. No one can redeem the soul or can give God a ransom for it (see Ps 49: 8). It requires such a death as this, as I said just now, a perfect one, and so God presents Him to us. Why does He present this to us? He

wants us to appreciate this blessed Person whom He is bringing before us.

'Of all the gifts Thy love bestows,
Thou Giver of all good!
E'en heav'n itself no richer knows
Than the Redeemer's blood'.

(Hymn No 1)

See how rich it is! But He speaks of the perfect servant: "Behold my servant whom I uphold". There has not been a man anywhere like Jesus. You say, But there are the saints. I admit that. He has brought us into that position of saints, but if we are to be called saints it is on the basis of this that I am talking about. So "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth!". God finds delight for His soul. That is how the scripture puts it. God has not a soul like we have, but that is how it puts it. Why does He put it that way? Because we are human beings He puts it in language that we can understand. That is what He is saying - One who delights His soul. Is the Lord Jesus the delight of your soul? You say, I have been breaking bread for twenty, thirty, forty years. Very good! But have you reached that point where Christ has this place in your heart? "Behold my servant": God is calling attention to Him. That is the Person whom you remember, or assumedly remember, every first day of the week. The fact that you do that is your committal, putting of your hand out to the emblems. The point is are you true to that? You have committed yourself to it. It is an agreement. The point is to keep it, keep it inviolate. Whatever you do must be consistent with those emblems - the Holy One. So it involves holiness, dear brethren.

So He says "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth! I will put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the nations". See this Person! "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment according to truth". Oh these statements! I

have not time to go into them but the bruised reed and so on speaks of the meekness of Jesus. "He shall not cry": think of the meekness of Jesus! So you think of the lamb, think of the sheep: Led before His shearers is dumb so He opened not His mouth. That is Jehovah's servant. That is what Isaiah brings forth: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? For he shall grow up before him", Isa 53: 1,2. Who is the He? The scripture is calling attention to Christ without mentioning His Name.

"He shall grow up before him as a tender sapling". Do you ever ponder over the life of Jesus, dear brethren? Do you ever meditate upon it? You say, I like to think of His death and what it has effected for me. Thank God! But go over it and learn something about the life of Jesus. That is the thing to look into, the life of Jesus. Paul says "that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh", 2 Cor 4: 11. That is what we are here for, to be an expression of the life of Jesus. You go over it to see what kind of Man He was.

Now He comes ready to face death. He does not open His mouth. Remember that He said not a word. And they are going to kill Him: that is what they are going to do. It is the Lamb, dumb before its shearers, He opened not His mouth. "He was led as a sheep to slaughter, and as a lamb is dumb in presence of him that shears him, thus he opens not his mouth", Acts 8: 32. He said not a word. He is the One who is bruised: "bruised for our iniquities". Do you recognise your iniquities, dear brethren? He has been bruised for them. You say I have had to do with Him about my sins. Well; but maybe we have some transgressions that we have to think about. Let us think about them. He had to be bruised for them. Our iniquities were put upon Him and by His stripes we are healed. That is the Servant; that is this Person.

Well, God has given Him as a covenant for us. Notice that word 'covenant'. God says, There you are, that is My disposition towards you - nothing but blessing. I am going to show you that, I am going to give Him up as a covenant - to death. So as you take the cup you remember that it is "the new covenant in my blood", 1 Cor 11: 25. I just want to leave with you that Christ has been given

as a covenant; it is a *Person*. The rainbow is just a sign, it is in the creation, but God has man, ourselves, in mind, and He gives a Man as a sign of the covenant, gives Him as a covenant indeed. He is not drawing Him back, He could not. So the Lord had to go through. The Lord came to a point with His Father: "if it be possible let this cup pass from me", Matt 26: 39. Think of that! He was not answered: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?", Matt 27: 46. It is Christ on the cross. Have you pondered over these things, pondered over the life of Jesus here? It is a study for us. It is the oblation, the life of Jesus here. So look into it, dear brethren. The oblation! What it was! Life that sprung up, was cut down and baked, to be sent to God, an oblation, the fruit, the product of the earth. The type refers to Christ in Manhood growing up for the pleasure of God and being cut down and submitted to the fire of divine judgment in order to carry out that covenant. He says: "(in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, thy will", Heb 10: 7. That is something the Lord pledged Himself to before the foundation of the world - "(in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God thy will". And as pondering over the cross He says "not my will", Luke 22: 42. He had come to do it. And He had to be held there; He could not get out of it. Peter says, Lord save Yourself, this would not happen to You (see Matt 16: 22). Ah! He could not get out of it. It is the covenant: see what is involved in it. It is fixity. And so the Lord goes through to the end.

But more! His blood - a very touching thing: the blood of the eternal covenant". In other words He sealed the covenant. You seal a covenant, you put your signature to it and you put a seal to it. It means you cannot deviate from it, you have to stand by it. How does the Lord seal it? By His blood, "the blood of the eternal covenant". How precious that is! So you see how great the emblems are. You put your hands to the loaf which speaks of the Person who was devoted to the will of God in perfection. And then His blood; His blood means His life. His life had to be given for us. He died that we might live "that they who live should no longer live to themselves, but to him who died for them and has been raised", 2 Cor 5: 15.

So that blessed Man has been raised and there He is now. The covenant cannot fail! It is ratified in His blood. The evidence of it is in Exodus 24, where Moses had to use the form of sacrifices. It is the volume of it "the blood of the covenant" (v 8). You see therefore, brethren, how great is our committal to the Supper. It is not an ordinary thing; so we have to keep it, we have to be true. That is the word - 'true' - to the covenant, true to your agreement. God is true to His. Christ has paid the penalty in His blood, precious blood. No wonder Peter says that: "precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish": 1 Pet 1: 19. That is what He was! There was not a flaw in Jesus. Can you find it? You will not. You will find it in me; you will find it in any other man. So do not expect to find any man without a flaw, you will not find him, not in this world anyway. There is only one such Man - that is Jesus. May the Lord help us to take account of this covenant. It is something that we go over the first day of every week. We are committed to it. Let us be true dear brethren, young and old, to that covenant. Stand by it! Christ has stood by it. When you take those emblems you have a sense that you are true to what you are doing. "The holy, the true" (Rev 3: 7) go together, the Holy and the True. It means that I have to exercise holiness. Holiness becometh God's house (see Ps 93: 5), "whose house are we" Heb. 3: 6.

May God bless the word.

GRIMSBY

19 September, 1971

(Revised, but not by Mr.Hoyte)

THE CHILDREN'S HANDFULS AND HANDS FULL

Harvests are not now gathered by hand but in the years of plenty in Egypt in the days of Joseph the land "brought forth corn by handfuls". The impression given by the Scripture is that the hands of everyone available, young and old, were employed in gathering up God's bounty which was "as sand of the sea exceeding much". The lesson for us is surely that we should apply ourselves as reapers and gleaners to gathering up the blessings which are for us in God's purpose - "every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ". In Egypt all was under the hand of Joseph to whom everyone had to go to meet their needs. He was a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus Christ as exalted.

In the well-known story of Ruth in the fields of Bethlehem we read that, besides what dropped by chance, some ears of barley out of the handfuls cut by the reapers were allowed to fall especially for her to glean. In one day's gleaning she gathered and beat out a whole ephah of barleycorns. This measure was large and enough and to spare for herself and Naomi. For Ruth however it was a greater favour still to know the wealthy man Boaz also a type of Christ. She belonged to him by right of redemption just as the Christian belongs to the Lord Jesus.

Children growing up amongst the Israelites and learning about Jehovah their holy God must have often wondered about the matter of sins and failings in their families. The answer to the hard question was the day of atonement, a divine provision. Once a year blood was shed as a covering for the sins of the nation, type of the precious blood of Christ which atones for all the sins of those who trust in Him. The first thing that the High Priest had to do in the yearly service was to go into the holiest part of the tabernacle with both his hands full of fragrant incense. This he burned in a censer so that a sweet smelling cloud filled the holy dwelling-place. It was a figure for us that the choice perfections of Jesus are ever before God and the sins of believers are covered by the blood of One so acceptable personally to Him. Although we can do no work of

atonement ourselves we can come before God in prayer, thanksgiving and communion with both hands filled, as it were, with the perfections of Jesus. Do you do so?

J.C.Evershed