

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 233

August 1992

Contents

THE LORD'S HANDS

AT A MARRIAGE

THE BROTHER

GROWING CHILDREN

THE LORD'S HANDS

John 13: 1-11; 20: 4-10, 19-23

A.C.C. In chapter 6 of this gospel Peter confesses on behalf of the disciples that "thou art the holy one of God" (v 69). We have been very interested during the week with the way in which the Lord Jesus is concerned about the Father and God in connection with His pleasure and satisfaction. While He would serve in view of having His own portion, His concern would be that there might be something for the Father and God. We have been looking at the Lord's hands in that connection. We thought about His hands in Luke 24 when He showed them His hands and His feet: it is not only that they saw His hands but He showed them. Here in John 20 He showed them, as if He would open up to us how ready He is in His service that we might be with Him and fitted, as with Him, to have part in the divine service. We have also seen how He laid His hands on the woman who was bent double and made straight, and she glorified God. It is a very touching matter that the Lord would impress us with - His readiness to serve. I wondered if these two scriptures, well known, might help us further, that there might be no defect, no defilement, nothing to hinder our being with Him. He would serve us first in that connection. Then there is something further in John 20 when He showed them His hands. In these two scriptures there might be the two parts of His priestly service - towards ourselves that there might be suitable conditions with us and then the hands of the Minister of the holy places having in mind the great forward movement of the service of God.

L.McF. The word in Exodus is "Let my son go, that he may serve me", chap 4: 23. Do you think the Lord is setting that forth in His movements here in this scene? He was here to serve as a bondman.

A.C.C. And God coming into the matter Himself to deliver. How He would come into things is very touching. That is what you have here, the Lord in the greatness of His love - having loved His own who

were in the world, He loved them right through; right from Egypt into Canaan, that is the idea.

J.A.P. "Now before the feast of the passover": the passover would be to help us to get out of the world, but the Lord seemed to have a deeper matter in mind: "having loved his own who were in the world, loved them to the end". Is this a great fresh thought as to what is eternal and the saints being taken through all the way?

A.C.C. I thought that. I was impressed too with the fact of the pressure on His spirit and what is entering into this; right from chapter 12 there is great pressure on His spirit. Yet in the face of that He would devote Himself to service in view of there being no hindrance to our being with Him in that scene. For instance, the Father's house comes up in the next chapter and, here, the great fact that He knows that all things have been delivered into His hands. It is with the consciousness of that that He proceeds to serve His people.

C.S.E. Could we get some further help on verse 3: "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given him all things into his hands"? Then, with reference to the Lord's hands, I thought how great those hands are that the Father could commit all things into them. What might we learn from that, as to the greatness of the Person, for the strengthening and encouragement of our own souls?

A.C.C. I think it is good that we have the difference in our minds; He makes a great point of His hands in that connection. His hand - "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand" (John 3: 35) - is in view of administration. The whole development of chapter 4 of John, going out to find the woman and communicating the Spirit is all in view at the end of John 3: "The Father loves the Son". One hand can support the universe, one hand can undertake to execute the whole matter of administration, but when it comes to this service, both His hands are involved in an intimate way because of the saints, that they might be served by Him in view of having part in the testimony and in the service of God. It is very touching - we all should be impressed with it - that His hands

are involved; and it is with the knowledge that all things are in His hands that He proceeds in this service.

L.McF. Formation seems to be mainly in mind, do you think? The hands are involved in formation so that the disciples would be able to have part with Him.

A.C.C. I think that is a detail entering into His devoted service, that there might be everything with them that would facilitate the service of God. I think we should keep in our minds that He is concerned about the end of the service, what there is in the ultimate. There is what is for Himself as we proceed, and that is quite right (and we should be concerned about that too and be ready to be under His hand in that connection to minister to His own pleasure), but I think the main thing in His mind, being a blessed Man and for the divine pleasure, is that the Father should be rightly served.

C.F.D. I think that is vitally important. The whole gospel of John seems to be permeated with the thought of the greatness of God, the greatness of the Father. In the first chapter it says, "No one has seen God at any time", but it goes on to state that the Son has declared Him, He has made Him known - what has come into expression. But do you think here the motivating factor is the Son's love for the Father? He came out from God and was going back to Him, and He is going to depart to the Father.

A.C.C. That is what I thought. When Joseph was seeking his brethren he came out of the vale of Hebron (see Gen 37: 14). That is like the beginning of John, the Father and the Son together. Joseph went out with the purpose of finding his brethren. It took him time and service before he had them suitable. He worked out the whole truth of reconciliation, so to speak, amongst his brethren, but all in view of there being conditions suitable for the father. He was seventeen when he left Hebron, and after Jacob went down to Egypt there were still another seventeen years. Jacob thought he was going to die but he lived seventeen years in Egypt. Now the whole position is this: there are the father and the son alone together in the vale of Hebron, but after the whole work of reconciliation in the

service that Joseph rendered you have the father and the son and the brethren. That is the idea in John 20, that He might have the brethren there for the Father's pleasure.

C.F.D. The way the Lord brings that in, starting in this chapter and moving forward, is to show that the Spirit of God is the power to bring all this about. John makes much of the place of the Spirit, and the Lord does so too, as if the whole realm will be enjoyed in the power of that Person.

A.C.C. Certainly, that is the idea.

T.E.D. The hands are necessary for the washing and the wiping - the closeness and handling, would it be?

A.C.C. That is what I thought: perhaps you would say more.

T.E.D. I was thinking of the closeness of it. Peter, like us all, did not understand initially, but when allowing the Lord to come that near it would leave an impression never to be forgotten.

A.C.C. That is the idea. I was hoping that we might get some touch as to Him laying aside His garments.

J.A.P. Does that indicate more liberty to serve us?

A.C.C. No doubt, What else is in it?

S.E.H. Having taken a linen towel He girded Himself follows what you just mentioned. Does that bear on what you are saying?

A.C.C. Yes. He rises from supper and lays aside His garments. Contemplate the Lord with His garments laid aside. What a sight! I do not know that we have sufficiently rested on that.

C.F.D. Do you think it involves that in taking up this service He lays aside everything that might be official, what might relate to the side of the glory of His own Person? He takes up a position where He can in humility - laying aside His garments would bespeak all that He is in His Person - serve the brethren.

A.C.C. I wondered if Philippians 2 would be involved in it. I wondered if it would be what the coat of many colours suggests that He laid aside. What do you think about that?

C.F.D. That is very suggestive. I had that in my mind because He lays aside the glory of all that He is in Himself. He takes it up again - He takes His garments up again here - but for the moment in serving in lowliness He lays aside what can be attached to Him in the sense of glory and therefore takes a position of a bondman, does He not?

A.C.C. Any distinction that was rightly His amongst them; I think that enters into the washing of their feet. Any distinction that rightly marks Him amongst them He would lay aside for the moment. He is setting an example that they were to follow (see v 15).

C.F.D. Do you view Him as taking a bondman's form here? Are you linking this with Philippians?

A.C.C. He girded Himself with a linen towel; it is not only that their feet might be washed but that that was the attitude of His mind. That is Philippians 2. Do you not think this enters into His service? It would impress them, and ought to impress us with the way the Lord would serve us in His love and grace that there might be suitable conditions with us.

L.McF. So, speaking reverently, the greater is served. As we in any measure seek to serve the saints they are above us: is that not right?

A.C.C. That is right. But He is getting down to their feet here and that is what is to impress us, right down to the detail of things. I want us to rest, dear brethren, on His laying aside His garments. We run over it and speak to one another and it is so easy just to be satisfied with that, but it is a scene for our contemplation that the blessed Lord has laid aside His garments.

A.S.H. What do you have to say as to the linen towel? Linen is something soothing; would this be adding to the comfort of the disciples?

A.C.C. No doubt. Linen is a basic material in the divine system, that things might be according to God.

G.H. Do you have in mind in all this that there might be a portion for the Father? It says in Philippians, "to God the Father's glory", chap

2: 11.

A.C.C. That is good. That is what it ends in that all might subscribe to God the Father's glory'

G.H. Say something more about laying aside His garments.

A.C.C. I wish I could. I would like us to be impressed with it and to look at Christ there amongst the disciples with His garments off. Think of that! It is His readiness to serve; there is no hindrance on His part. It is to impress us with His devoted love and His service, His readiness and His availability with that water-basin going round to the disciples. They did not come to Him; He did not expect them to, but He went round them. It says "He comes to Simon Peter" showing that He went round the disciples.

J.A.P. It is very fresh to me about serving the feet of the saints. You serve and others serve - perhaps we have not thought of the feet enough. The minds of the saints are one thing but it is the feet here. Now what does that mean?

A.C.C. You cannot go into the service without your feet washed.

J.A.P. The Spirit of God is at the state of the brethren that we might enjoy reconciliation and justification.

A.C.C. Enjoy it, that is the idea. Part with Him would mean that; and I think you and I and all of us should endeavour to make more room among us for the water. I have been impressed in looking at the early chapters of Numbers that, in the carrying of the furniture of the tabernacle, the priest went in and the first thing he did was to take down the veil and put it over the ark and cover it with badgers skins and then a cloth of blue, and he covered the table and the candlestick and the two altars, but there is nothing said about the laver being covered or carried; it is totally absent, and I have come to it that it would not have done to have covered the laver - it was always available, it had to be. It brings out the readiness and availability of the service of Christ that we might always be in a condition for the divine service. In the conditions that they passed through in the wilderness, even in transit there would be that that

would have caused defilement, so to speak, but the laver was always available, it was not wrapped up. It is very touching how the blessed Lord in His service would be ever ready to serve us in His love: "Having loved his own who were in the world, loved them to the end". No matter what might come up He is there to serve us in His love, all in view of what is ahead of Him.

A.R.S. In this gospel Jesus speaks of Himself as the sent One: does that involve securing what is for the Father's pleasure?

A.C.C. That is very good. We would want you to say more about that.

A.R.S. Would it involve His lowly service, a service which is rendered to secure what is for the heart of the Father?

A.C.C. Yes. It shows that alongside the glory of His Person, as this gospel clearly establishes, there is that great matter of Him being sent. That would bring out His readiness to serve and to bring about the divine pleasure. "The pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand", Isa 53: 10.

C.S.E. I was wondering if laying aside His garments would prefigure His sufferings, the thought of Him laying aside, you might say, what attached to Him officially, His glory, and then how He suffered as a man. Ought that not to affect us that He suffered as a man, the real sufferings that He went through on our account?

A.C.C. I think that He is going to take them again, but for the moment it seems to me that He has laid all that on one side in view of being free and to impress them and us with the way that He is ready to serve. You will have noticed that on the day of atonement the priest, Aaron, had to be clothed with four linen things: a vest - it is called a holy vest - and then the linen trousers, a linen girdle and a linen mitre, these four linen things (see Num 16: 4). He entered the sanctuary and did his service, carrying in the incense and the blood, with the linen garments on. But then he has to come out and offer the sin-offering, the bullock and the scape-goat; he had to take these linen garments off and leave them in the sanctuary before he came out to render the service outwardly. There is that that belongs to the

inside position: do we understand how Aaron was instructed to take off these garments and leave them there? The disciples, we might say, must have thought about these things, the way the Lord laid aside His garments to impress them with the detail of His service and how things have to be kept on a sanctified basis. They are coming into that service and would be impressed, I believe, with Him laying aside His garments. All these things are instructive for us. These garments are left there, they are not to be brought out. They will be taken up again; at the end of that chapter in Numbers the priest is consecrated, he had to wear them again (see v 32). That chapter is very instructive in showing how one set of garments is to be used inside but not in making the offering.

J.A.P. You are linking that with John 13.

A.C.C. Yes, and also with chapter 20. The linen cloths lying there in the tomb are left there. We are not told what He wore in John 20 when He came in amongst them but I believe He wore the garments of glory and ornament. They were worn only once by Aaron on the day of his consecration when he was anointed, but I think in the Lord coming in amongst the disciples in John 20 it has in view wearing those garments of glory and ornament in view of the whole service of God.

L.McF. So that in the service we need to be free of any irritation or tension or even mental activity in our approach to the Father especially.

A.C.C. Yes. It is our feet here, it is the disciples' feet.

L.McF. I was thinking of the use of the linen.

A.C.C. He was girded with a linen towel. You sit and contemplate that; you and I and all of us need to sit down more and contemplate Him taking off His garments, watch that sight. Mr Taylor used to speak about visualising the scene, call it up in your mind - the Lord taking off His garments. Do you not know where He stopped? He took off His garments, not only one but garments and then He girds Himself with a linen towel. What impression is It making on us?

G.H. It speaks in Revelation of the linen which is the righteousness of the saints (see Rev 19: 8). Would righteousness be an important matter in relation to the linen?

A.C.C. Yes that is true, that is our righteousness there. But then basically linen garments are righteousness, where there is no sweat, no irritation; linen does not cause that; it is the sobriety and condition in view of service.

C.F.D. You were emphasising *the feet*. You have more in your mind about that.

A.C.C. There is what is in contact with the scene below. I was going to say they are bound to be defiled. You cannot go through a world like this or a city like this without getting defiled feet. It is not exactly responsibility - there is the responsibility to have them washed - but you can contract something unwittingly. But the service of Christ is there that that might be removed.

C.F.D. So there is the idea of defilement and the idea of refreshment but as to defilement is it not important for us to see that, as we approach according to the tabernacle system, it is impossible to go in without passing the laver? It is impossible to move into the area of the service of God or even into the prayer meeting or the reading, whatever it might be, without passing the laver. Is that right?

A.C.C. That is very important. I am glad you mention these things because it is vital to bring out this matter of the water more and more. As a matter of fact the priests had to wash both their hands and their feet; they had to pass the altar to get to the laver. That is my thought this morning that, as passing the altar, you would be impressed with how the water has become available - by the death of Christ.

C.F.D. Is that not John's gospel, because John is the only writer of the gospels who gives us the blood and the water?

A.C.C. That is right. So Aaron goes forward to the laver and washes both his hands and his feet and then he comes back to the altar. But it is at the altar that he is impressed with the fact that the

water has become available. In Luke 24, which presents the great Priest, He showed them His hands and His feet. He would say, so to speak, Here are My hands and My feet, what about yours? What about your feet, are they clean? I want to wash them. Is that not touching? If the Lord was here He would say, I want to wash your feet. He would get right down to your feet and wash them. I want you with Me in the suitability and in liberty. Why should there not be a greater use of the water?

C.F.D. You are raising a vital matter amongst us because I think there is a tendency, maybe not intentionally, to be careless about this so that we sit down collectively without going past the laver, and in the mind of God this is impossible, is it not?

A.C.C. That is very good. It is most important that we come to every meeting in a condition to proceed into a spiritual realm.

S.E.H. This setting is prior to chapters 14 to 17 where the Lord opens up much in the way of the truth to the disciples, but it is here also a collective setting. Could you say something about how the Lord washing our feet would work out in the present time? Do you look at that as something that transpires before we come to the gatherings of the saints or would it be as we assemble collectively?

A.C.C. Any time, everywhere, it is always available. As I tried to say, even in transit the laver was available for the saints and they needed it. Think of the multitudes that died in the wilderness, the dead bones and the graves that there were; they were to be clean from all that. I think that chapters 14, 15 and 16 to which you refer are the running water. You remember that the bird was killed over the running water (see Lev 14: 5): that running water is the Spirit in His activity using the death of Christ for the liberation of the live bird that is let loose into the open field, indicating to the cleansed leper his liberty, let loose in the present value of death of the first bird. That is divine love; it would release us into the open field, whether it be in walking in the testimony here or in the service of God, divine love by the Spirit and the use of the death of Christ would have us free and pure that that might be true. What do you say about that?

S.E.H. I am getting help to see how that is something that follows on the washing of our feet and being clear from defilement so that we can have part with the Lord.

A.C.C. It is impossible to have part with Him unless it is so. We may as well come to it that we come to the meetings and go through all the motions as we often hear, but what has been my reception of the water?

G.D.P. In having part with Him on Lord's day morning we contemplate His glory; He is the only-begotten in the bosom of the Father. But then, as we go on as having part with Him, we realise His manhood, do we not, in a greater way? Everyone bowed the knee to Joseph, but then he could say to his brethren "Come near to me". Gen 45: 4. They were to have part with him.

A.C.C. That is very good indeed. Peter serves to show how important it is to have our feet washed. He says, "Thou shalt never wash my feet". I do not think he had the gain for the moment of the Lord laying aside His garments. But then he says, "not my feet only, but also my hands and my head". The Lord says "He that is washed all over needs not to wash save his feet". Now I think that is most important. He does not make part with Him hang on being washed all over. There are people in Christendom who are washed all over, that is to say, the Spirit has been communicated to them and they are justified, but that is on the ground of the blood. The Lord does not make part with Him hang on that but on the fact that they have their feet washed. Now this is most important. As was said, it is totally impossible to go ahead unless this is so; that is the current service of Christ's love and His grace. That is what part with Him hangs on.

G.D.P. Peter gets to the living side of the thing: "To whom coming ... as living stones", 1 Pet 2: 4,5.

A.C.C. That is good - the idea of living. As I said, it is the living water in these chapters. He brings forward the Spirit to make things living for us; we belong to a living system. "We have believed and known that thou art the holy one of God", John 6: 69. Peter is

apprehending that the whole system of things is marked by life, and unless I am in a condition for it down to my feet I have no part with Him. I would like to emphasise that because we take far too much for granted; we come along, so to speak, and it may be we are no asset to the system - maybe a hindrance. That is a very solemn thing.

G.H. I would like to get hold of this matter of washing the feet. Do you mean my walk down here?

A.C.C. It is the part that touches the earth, touches this scene here below, and it is almost impossible to go through without getting defiled. The first verse of 1 John 2 makes provision for not sinning but here it is defilement. There is divine provision made for it in the death of Christ, and you apply that, that is the water aspect, you apply the death of Christ, cleanse yourself.

L.McF. Would the washing of water by the word (see Eph 5: 26) link with what you are saying?

A.C.C. That reference shows that before the presentation of the assembly to Himself there must be that process. It is the same in Revelation 22, wash your robes, go in through the gates into the city - the moral side must precede. Going up to the Supper a man proves himself and he eats; there must always be this side prior to the entrance into privilege or blessing. Part with Him is most essential.

C.F.D. Paul brings it forward and gives us the light of the Supper in 1 Corinthians 11; the washing there would involve "let a man prove himself". That would involve all the way down to the feet, as you say, and it is on that basis that a man proceeds to eat and to drink in relation to the Supper.

A.C.C. That is the idea.

K.N.P. Was this what brought out what was in Judas. It is just after this that he goes out, as though he did not accept this. It would appear that the Lord carried the same service out to him.

A.C.C. If He did it would be a very solemn matter for him. It would only increase his culpability and responsibility. But I do not think the Lord washes anybody's feet today who is unregenerate; the priestly service of Christ is rendered only to His people, not in regard of man who is unregenerate. I think Mr Darby makes that point that for the moment Judas represents something and it may have been that the Lord washed his feet. Mr Raven said it too, but came to it later that the Lord did not wash his feet (see Vol.13, p.417). However, as I said, He does not wash anybody's feet today who is not His own; He gives all His attention to His own. He loved His own who were in the world.

K.N.P. This is the inside position; it is not done in a public place.

A.C.C. Very good.

J.A.P. We need it every day of the week, but especially on Saturday; as the Supper approaches, you would be concerned not to expose yourself, or as little as possible, to anything that might hinder you in view of the Supper. We have to go to our business, we have to go to our schools, but as the Lord's day approaches I find help in getting ready for that occasion.

A.C.C. Yes, I am the same. I think it is a necessary exercise, a very practical one, as to how much I have in mind that I might be available in view of the service.

T.E.D. I was thinking of the submission to His Person, the greatness of Christ Himself, but on my side does it involve my submission to Him? In view of this scene taking place it is a personal matter, is it not?

A.C.C. Yes, it is the Lord's personal service. I wondered for years about what Mr Taylor said as to that, that it is the Lord's personal service. Even though you are doing it to me and I to you, he said that is the Lord's personal service. He is doing it; He is using you or me but it is the Lord's personal service. That is very touching.

T.E.D. It impresses me. I have often thought of this section in connection with the example of what I am to be for my brother, but

your emphasis is on the actuality of the Lord doing it to me.

A.C.C. Yes, that is what impresses me. To think that it might be available and I may not come into the use of it is very sorrowful, is it not?

G.H. Would "let a man prove himself" (1 Cor 11: 28) mean that by the help of the Spirit I am to go over and see if everything is clear?

A.C.C. Yes, that is the idea. He will help you to get the gain of the service of Christ. We all ought to be concerned more and more as to our moral state and condition and our suitability to be under the hand of Christ. That not only applies in view of the divine service towards God, but part with Him would involve the public testimony, that there is nothing about us in any way that would discredit the name of Christ or the name of God. We should be very careful. There is ample provision made for us that there be no discredit on the testimony, do you not think?

G.H. I am sure that is very important.

A.C.C. We have a lot to live down and it would be a question for us now of getting the gain of the service of Christ and the water in view of there being something in the way of a testimony as to purity here in this world so wicked, so defiled.

L.McF. What do you have in mind in John 20?

G.D. Before we go on I would like to ask a question about verse 7. Peter asks the Lord, "dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said to him, What I do thou dost not know, but thou shalt know hereafter". Can you open that up?

A.C.C. I think that would refer just to what we are saying. They would be in the gain of the full implication and benefit and knowledge of the example set out by the Lord here when the Spirit came in. You find that through the gospel, they did not know until He was risen, and so on. Once the Spirit came in, the running water, the thing becomes potent and vital and effective. It all relates to the present time, the wonderful moment that we are in, the Spirit here to give us the immediate benefit and effect of the death of Christ. I

trust you young people will begin early to value these things, but to a lot of us they become just historical and technical whereas the running water involves that the thing will be kept living, kept effective. Divine love would ensure that.

G.D. So in the next verse Peter says "Thou shalt never wash my feet". He missed the point, would you say?

A.C.C. Yes he did.

C.F.D. Is that not there for us? It is not just to expose Peter but to show us that, as to this whole matter of the laver and the washing, we might be missing the point?

A.C.C. That is quite true. The more you think about it, it is grievous to the Spirit that the service of divine Persons, the Lord mediately and the Spirit Himself in it, is being slighted. That must be grievous to him.

I read those verses in chapter 20 to get the point of Him leaving. They saw the linen cloths lying and the handkerchief which was upon His head not lying with the linen cloths, but folded up distinctly by itself. That is what they saw - those things were left there. They are the great testimonials to the victory, are they not? The napkin about His head was something different, but the linen cloths lying there is a great testimony to the fact that death has been overthrown. Then He appears amongst them. I think it is all in view of the forward service; there is that idea I think in this section, so He showed them His hands. It is not the hand of administration, it is not even the hands with which He washed their feet, so to speak; it is another application, the great forward movement into the service of God. Do you think so?

C.F.D. Yes I do; and would it not suggest that the hands in John 20 relate to how He Himself will serve in relation to what is to be secured for the heart of God?

A.C.C. That was my thought, that it is not only for Himself; He is standing and He has before Him the whole idea of the service. He is like the great priest with his hands full.

C.F.D. Would it be in the mind of the Lord here that what you have been saying as to John 13 has already taken place? He would give the disciples the credit for having come that way and now they are ready under His own leadership and touch, the touch of His own hands, to have part with Him in the service of God.

A.C.C. That is the idea. I think when they shut the doors they were in the gain of the feet washing. Everything is excluded that would in any way interfere with the upward movement. I think His hands full would involve the ascension: "I ascend". It has been carried forward into the company; His hands being full reminds us of the consecration of the priest, it means his hands full would cause Him to ascend. In Leviticus 8 Aaron is consecrated by himself; then his sons are consecrated with him.

J.A.P. It then says the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. It is wonderful when He comes in at the Supper and the brethren are stimulated and their affections aroused and joy is found in the affections of the saints. It takes place because He is there.

A.C.C. That is very good. It is the proper state, you might say, for the service of God, and that comes out of being clean, having your feet washed. You will not have joy if your feet are not washed.

J.A.P. So in the Song of Solomon, as has often been said, there was an ebb and a flow in her enjoyment of the love of the beloved because of her state; her state was to be up to his movements.

A.C.C. That is very good. I am glad you refer to it because looking at that as a type, His hands are referred to, His right hand and His left. Think of that, His right hand and His left engaged with the disciples. He showed them; not only that they saw them - that is not the idea - but He showed them. There is something specific in His service towards them in view of this upward and forward movement.

G.D.P. The priest had both hands full and then there was the incense arising. In Leviticus 16 it is just the thought of the fulness in the service, I suppose.

A.C.C. Yes, very good. What pleasure for the Father and for God in all this! I think He is there with the garments of glory and ornament. I would love to have seen Him coming in there through the closed doors - what a sight! We are not told what He wore but I think that those garments had lain, so to speak, unused for centuries and now here He is among His disciples. How lovely!

A.S.H. In Luke He lifted up His hands in blessing: does that add to it, both hands in blessing? Here He is going out; those hands that were nailed to the cross, those hands that washed the disciples' feet, are now extended in blessing.

A.C.C. Yes, that continues and we should prove that too, that His hands are outstretched in blessing. But then think of Him with His hands full in view of the great service of God. Those twelve defects in Leviticus 21 were all met in Luke's gospel, and there they are at the end, every defect met, and they are in the service with Him and His hands outstretched in blessing.

G.H. I was thinking of the expression that the Father seeks worshippers; that must be very, very real; there were deep feelings in that, would you say? It says that the Father seeketh worshippers (see John 4: 23).

A.C.C. The Lord is saying that.

G.H. There are very deep feelings in that.

A.C.C. That is good; and in saying that, it shows how He is feeling, not only for the woman's extrication and relief, but He is thinking about the Father, He is thinking about God. I just wish we could get hold of that more, that there is His own portion but what He is concerned about, what He has come in for, is that there might be the filling out of the Father's portion. We should make sure too in our giving out hymns that the Father is getting His portion. In the week-night meetings make sure that the Father is getting His portion. We do not need to have two hymns to the Lord, you will pardon me. The Lord is concerned about these things, I am quite sure He is, that there might be hymns to the Father too during the week.

G.D.P. It says, "For both he that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one", and then it does on: "in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises", Heb 2: 11,12.

A.C.C. That is what is here; it is the midst and the Lord is appearing there. This is not exactly John 13; in John 20 the Lord is in the midst and, as the great Priest or Minister of the holy places, He is carrying on His service. Get a sight of Him! Get a sight of Him taking off His garments in John 13: how touching that is! But then think of Him robed in the service; He is so ready and in the midst in the service of God going on.

S.E.H. You mentioned the week-night meetings and the hymns: would you say something too as to the prayer at the beginning and the end.

A.C.C. The same thing.

S.E.H. It would not just be the thought of prayer but a response to the Father.

A.C.C. Absolutely. Make sure too that incense is present on Monday night. Give it out on Lord's day morning, do not only say a meeting for prayer, say a meeting for incense and thanksgiving, or thanksgiving and prayer. Why not? And make sure too that the Father has His portion.

T.E.D. In giving it out that way is that the testimonial side that you were speaking about?

A.C.C. Say more.

T.E.D. I would like to understand what you brought out two weeks ago and again today about the testimonial side. We need this intimacy side in view of there being the testimonial side.

A.C.C. How are you going to get on when remission or retaining comes up if we have not the spirit of Christ? You get that at the time of union. You have to be at home with Christ at the time of union before you can come out into the public testimony and represent Him. You will misrepresent His spirit if you have not the sense of Him breathing into you.

T.E.D. Would the way they said here to Thomas, "We have seen the Lord", be the result of the Lord's impress upon their spirits?

A.C.C. How powerful that would be, "We have seen the Lord".

L.D.P. Would what we are saying now affect us as to "lifting up pious hands", 1 Tim 2: 8? Would this help us in our prayer meetings? It is a challenge as to whether my hands are pious.

A.C.C. That is a very challenging thing. That would link on with your feet because in Luke He showed them His hands and His feet; that is the great Priest. As I said already, He would challenge us as to what ours are like. We have to wash our hands and our feet if we lift up pious hands. These are very important matters and I think we should aim at these things, not just subscribe to them mentally and accept them as things that are held amongst us rightly, but that each one of us should contribute to them.

G.A. It says here, "And the two ran together, and the other disciple ran forward faster than Peter, and came to the tomb, and stooping down he sees the linen cloths lying". The two running together, one running faster than the other, would involve their feet.

A.C.C. Yes it would; it shows how quickly John could run. Someone ran faster than John. But that is good, he saw the linen cloths lying: I think we should study that. He has other garments, the linen cloths are left there. Who knows?

C.F.D. Somebody ran faster than John - Peter and John ran together and John was the quicker of the two.

A.C.C. John outran him.

C.F.D. You are not going to leave that hanging like that are you.

A.C.C. Why should I not leave it like that. Let us all find out who was there first. Who was first there? Who was the first to greet Christ risen?

G.H. Do you have something more to say about the linen cloths lying there?

A.C.C. I think that is a testimony to the disciples that death had been dispossessed. I think the napkin means something else, "folded up in a distinct place by itself", but I did not have in mind to go into that, it was just the fact that they saw them, they saw these linen cloths lying there. But then how does He appear when He comes into their midst? That was my impression.

A.S.H. I wanted to ask about the handkerchief which was upon His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but folded up in a distinct place by itself. What do you have to say as to this distinct place?

A.C.C. Peter and John had to leave that, they could not touch it. They had to leave it and go away home, but Mary is standing there. They had to go away home, that is the official side and the ministerial side. John reflects on these things; he brings out the moral conditions and spiritual state of the saints. Mary standing there, I think, is the answer to the napkin laid in a distinct place by itself.

J.A.P. Coming to the meeting in the mid-week, which is a concern to us in almost every locality, it seems to me that what you said about Mary would help us. We come by affection, not only knowing that it is right. She was there out of affection; and I think, brethren, if that was a little stronger with us there would be a better response to the gatherings.

A.C.C. There certainly would be. If we had more affection for Christ we would not be absent; that is what you meant. She was there and prepared to wait. While the other two went away home she still waited. It is very significant; they went to their own home and yet they were in Jerusalem, whereas they really belonged to Bethsaida up in Galilee. I think John is making Mary stand out so clearly against themselves; he is giving the background, so to speak, as dark as he can to make Mary's devotion and committal stand out.

A.G.S. Sometimes we are not physically able to come to the meeting: you have to make allowance for that.

A.C.C. Oh yes, that is about the only reason why you should not be present.

J.A.P. I think what you are saying is encouraging, that John is making the most of this woman; and I think we have to do that, that where we see greater devotedness than is in ourselves, surely I can say there is much in others, make much of that. We know we should do what is right but the great motivating power is affection for Christ.

A.C.C. That is it really.

G.H. You say that the handkerchief which was on His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded up in a distinct place by itself is Paul's ministry. Would that be Paul's line, a distinct place by itself?

A.C.C. That is what I think.

NEW YORK

16 April 1988

Key to initials

G.A. G.Ashby, New York: C.F.D. C.F.Dadd, Plainfield: G.D. Garth Druckenmiller, Plainfield: T.E.D. T.E.Druckenmiller, Plainfield: C.S.E. C.S.Elliott, New York:

A.S.H. A.S.Hinkson, New York: G.H. G.Hesterman, Plainfield: S.E.H. S.E.Hesterman, Plainfield: L.McF. L.McFarlane, New York: G.D.P. G.D.Pfingst, Plainfield:

J.A.P. J.A.Petersen, Plainfield: K.N.P. K.N.Pye, New York: L.D.P. L.D.Phillips, New York: A.G.S. A.G.Spooner, New York: A.R.S. A.R.Stevens, New York

AT A MARRIAGE

Alex Craig

Revelation 19: 6-8; 21: 1,2

Marriage is a divine institution. What you heard read out of that book - what the judge read today - was from the Scriptures. That has its own weight and a voice to every one of us. Marriage is a divine institution. Whatever it has become amongst men makes no difference. They will be responsible to God for that. It is a primary institution: that means that it belongs to the beginning. You may not know, but I can tell you, that what is primary with God He will never let go. Whatever marriage may become in the history of time and the history of men with all man's depravity and departure from God, God will carry His own thoughts through. His primary thoughts will go right through to the end. Time, history, make no difference so far as God is concerned, although in all that comes in between, man is responsible as to how far he honours the divine institution.

I was very glad today to be in this country to hear that read. I do not think we have that in our country. How responsible this large nation is to God for the Scriptures and for the responsibility to honour them. Now, I will give you the reason for the primary institution being divine. The state was a non-ashamed state. It says that Man and his wife were not ashamed. That cannot be said today about marriage amongst men. What shame, what degradation has come into the marriage bond! They were not ashamed. God will not let that state, that condition, go. It is primary, meaning that it will, so far as God is concerned be carried through. A Christian marriage, in measure, maintains this. That is what we have today. Our brother and sister have committed themselves to a bond - in effect a divine bond. They have committed themselves to carry it through according to God. Whatever may be the circumstances amongst men, they have decided to maintain it, to carry it through, according to God. Now that is proper to every Christian marriage and every marriage. Man may not think that, but that is the truth. Marriage is a

divine institution. Man did not think about it: God thought about it. He introduced it and brought the woman to the man, as you heard read, before sin ever came into this world; marriage belongs to that era of things. Marriage was not instituted after sin came into the world, it was before. That is what I meant when I said it is a primary institution.

Now I want to show you how, when time has gone, so far as God's people are concerned and they are gone home to the courts above, there will be the marriage supper of the Lamb. I am going to be there because I belong to that. Every believer belongs there, belongs to that which has already been united to Christ. So far as Christ and His people are concerned the marriage bond has already taken place. We are not waiting for that, the marriage bond is already formed. All we wait for is the celebration and this is it - the marriage supper of the Lamb. The Lamb who suffered so much is going to be set forth. There is not a name more blasphemed than the precious name of Jesus. One day God is going to honour Him, and before He brings Him out for a thousand years in glory He is going to have this celebration and He will be set out in His preciousness. But His wife is there. We read about His wife - "his wife has made herself ready". His people constitute the wife, they are going to be there, too. There would be no celebration if she was not there. She must be there. But this is my point in reading it: it says "And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and pure". That word clothed here is not only to meet the condition that has come in in connection with the shame in the marriage bond, because it says in Genesis that they were not ashamed. The clothing here is not only to meet that. In the Authorised Translation it says that she should be arrayed. I want to fasten on that word arrayed, that is to say that she is to be in every way equal to the Bridegroom - to the Lamb. He is the Bridegroom and she is the bride, only called here the wife. She is to be in every way equal for the coming out and at the moment of the celebrations. They are going to come out for a thousand years, and she must be arrayed for that. She must be suitably clothed and arrayed to have

part with Him in administration of the world to come because He is already raised up and made Head to her and she shares in the headship of Christ. What a wonderful thing that she should be clothed in bright linen! There is to be a shameless position. Dear friends, we are going on to what is out of the world altogether. There will be no shame attached. God comes back to His original thought of not ashamed. Rather she will shine in her glory, and its fine linen, bright and pure, is the righteousnesses of the saints, not of God. We all partake of the righteousness of God through faith in Christ. If anyone is here never exercising faith in Christ you do not stand on the ground of righteousness. You ought to do it and do it today. But this is the righteousnesses of the saints. That is to say, it is the fruit and evidence and working out of the details of a Christian's life; all the details are coming into their own. Nothing happens in the Christian's life that is not the product of the blessed God in the way of some feature that He gathers up and is saving up in heaven. And in that day, when this celebration comes, it will be given to her, all that has been wrought out in wonderful detail through all the circumstances of life - the painful ones and pleasant ones whatever it might be. The believer looks at this whole pathway and he has that in mind. He is aiming at it all the time. It will come out and it is all precious to Christ; she is arrayed in what is wrought out down here.

Now in the second scripture it is not the idea of being arrayed; it is being adorned. This is a new scene altogether, past the millennium, past a thousand years, and there is a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth have passed away and the sea exists no more. It is a new scene entirely. God is going on to a new scene and you can be sure there is no shame attached to that. God looks back to his original thought. That issue is carried through in this great matter of Christian marriage at the present time, but all in view of finally being seen in its perfection when this time comes, before the millennium and, too, when there is a new heavens and a new earth. She comes down out of heaven: "Coming down out of heaven from God as a bride adorned for her husband". There

will have been a thousand years of public glory and she is still the bride - not the wife any more, it is the bride. Things are reversed with God. A woman is first the bride then the wife; in Christianity it is the wife now in all the scene of testing in which her faithfulness is required, but after a thousand years she is the bride adorned for her husband. It is for the eye of Christ. She is coming out resplendent in glory for His eye. Think of that! Are you a lover of Christ? She is a lover of Christ and she is coming out adorned, "a bride adorned for her husband". How choice that is!

Well now, that proves the point, that the thing is carried through, carried through by God. But at the present time, as our brother and sister are being married here today, there is some semblance, some reflection, some indication of what God has in mind in the marriage bond. He would have that now carried through in some way and shine in the day to come, first in view of the world to come and then in view of eternity. The bride will not be out of place, not one whit, she will be in keeping with her husband. May God bless the word.

Marriage of W.A.Moseley & M.Lown

16 December 1991

THE BROTHER

"A brother beloved ... both in the flesh, and in the Lord" Philemon 16

To be a preacher some aspire, while some desire to teach;
This word appeals to every saint and comes within his reach,
To be a BROTHER day by day. Nay, strive for nothing more,
But seek the grace of Christ thy Lord, to be one evermore;
Striving to fill the lowly place, of self forgetful be,
And in your brother look for Christ - then Christ you'll surely see.

The brother's link is all of God; it has been ordered so,
Then let thy brother be thy care, and keep his love aglow;
Yes, be a brother day by day, in this sad world of need,
And win the confidence of those whose hungry souls you'd feed;
Think of those lone and empty hearts, who look for such as you,
Take them the sympathy of Christ, and be a brother true.

Think of that brother gone astray - will you not win him back,
And bring those wand'ring feet again along the narrow track?
Embrace him in the arms of love and with a righteous grace,
Lead thou thy brother back again to see the Saviour's face.
O, tell him of a perfect love, so constant and so true,
For is not this a useful work for loving hearts to do?

So walk, my brother, ceaseless pray! Be strong in His own grace!
Be exercised in heart and soul to fill a brother's place;
And be a brother through and through, spending and being spent,
One will, God's will: one way, His way; so happy and content.
To live for others, not for self, is love's excelling way;
O covet this above all else, till dawns love's perfect day!

W.Bridges

"A brother is born for adversity." Proverbs 17: 17.

"Thy brother ... when he seeth thee, will be glad in his heart."
Exodus 4: 14

From Words of Truth: May 1946

GROWING CHILDREN

I remember, as a small boy, being taken from time to time to visit an aged and blind widow. Each time she would put her hands to the top of my head and exclaim how much I had grown. That, of course, was but the normal thing for a child's youthful body. Increase in soul and spirit should go with such growth and is by the true knowledge of God. Timothy, in childhood, had known the sacred letters which would develop him by faith in Christ Jesus. A child growing up in the physical way would at first be able to reach up and touch something, but in time would be able to grasp it. Paul desired that Timothy should lay hold of, or seize, eternal life of which he already had knowledge.

Our heavenly Father looks for us to grow up in the standard of His thoughts for us. When the boy Samuel's mother came each year to see him she would expect him to fit the new and larger coat which she had made for him. No doubt the coat had some new feature of which he would be worthy. There have been times when God's work depended on quite young persons such as Samuel, the shepherd-boy David, Jonathan, the little maid in Naaman's house, the boy with the loaves and fishes and also Paul's nephew. Can He depend on you?

J.C.Evershed