

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 246

September 1993

Contents

THE OBLATION AND THE NEW OBLATION

PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD

BELIEVING CHILDREN

THE OBLATION AND THE NEW OBLATION

Leviticus 2: 1-13; 23: 9-22

J.D.G. I was thinking that what the offerer brought in chapter 2 must have sprung out of exercise to bring what God would appreciate and which he himself had appreciated. The oblation is a type of the Lord Jesus and His life here below. Various features will open up as we go into the passage in regard to the composition of the oblation. In chapter 23 I thought we would see how the new oblation springs from the appreciation of the sheaf of the first-fruits, the counting of the fifty days involving time to consider the meaning of the sheaf of the first-fruits - Christ out of death - and leading to the calling together of a holy convocation, which would be in mind in our gatherings such as today. There is substance that lies behind the gathering together of the saints. There is just a touch at the end of the section as to leaving the gleaning of the harvest for the poor and the stranger. We do not forget that side of things either.

The brethren will help to open up the matter of the oblation which is a very precious thought. It involves the humanity of our Lord Jesus. Certain features are present and certain features are absent. One thing that is absent from the oblation is leaven, whereas in the new oblation there is leaven. We will come to that later in our conversation. There is the uniqueness of the humanity of Christ, there is the offerer and then there is the priest who takes the handful and burns it before Jehovah "an offering by fire", the distinctiveness of Christ involving that He could be tested in that way. The new oblation is not tested as an offering by fire, it is not equal to that. But the pleasure of God is in both.

I thought that first of all we might consider the exercise of the man who brought the offering. I suppose the offerer, as he proceeds, becomes the priest as far as we are concerned; the type merges in that sense. First of all there is the offerer, we are exercised to bring what we have worked out for ourselves, an appreciation of the Lord Jesus and His humanity.

E.C.B. What you are suggesting should lead us into some increased depth in our appreciation of Jesus, which I think should be the constant food of the brethren at the present time. Would you say something as to why, in chapter 2, it is implicitly at any time, and chapter 23 it is at a prescribed time?

J.D.G. I do not know whether I could say anything as to the difference, but at any time brings out the thought that it is always available to us to bring our appreciation of Christ and present it to God.

E.C.B. Chapter 23 is often associated with the beginning of the dispensation in particular. I think it helps us to dwell on what we may do at any time. Broadly speaking the offerings in Leviticus, apart from the sin-offering and the trespass-offering, are voluntary and spring out of the heart.

J.D.G. I understand what you say as to chapter 23 being related to the Pentecostal time, but the character of the two wave loaves would still be with us, coming out of our dwellings. What you bring up is the thought that was in my heart, that any one could present an offering to Jehovah by fire and at any time. What exercises the heart and soul is individual; the hymn we sang (No.228) is individual. What exercise do I carry in my dwelling that becomes available for the Lord in a meeting like this?

D.J.H. We are to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. It is not to be just a formality. Do you think that, as we do things in the name of the Lord Jesus to God's glory, it is like bringing in the oblation?

J.D.G. Yes. The man who came out of the camp to come up with his offering would be marked. There would be a distinctiveness attaching to him which characterises the behaviour of a person who is associated with the name of the Lord Jesus.

H.A.H. What you said as to the man and the priest merging is borne out by the second half of verse 2, is it not? It says "he shall take": I suppose it is the priest, but it could be either of them.

J.D.G. I suppose it is the priest. There is a need for working out personally what is pleasurable to God. Then you come up to offer it. He comes up to the priest, but in the Christian dispensation in which we are, taking it out of the type, you become your priest, you offer it to God. You are equal to that by the Spirit.

D.A.B. In chapter 23 the quantities are prescribed, but in chapter 2 the only measure mentioned is the handful; not that the handful encompasses the oblation because it is only capable of holding part, and yet there does seem to be the suggestion that, whatever our measure, we should fill it with the oblation.

J.D.G. The oblation speaks of Christ and His uniqueness. What you say is interesting, there is no measure given. God accepts, in some sense, what we are equal to, and each one has a capacity. But it would be truly an oblation, the same composition. It would be something that was of Christ, which in quantity may vary from one of us to another, but the quality would be the same.

D.A.B. Yes. It says "handful ... thereof". I suppose none of us could encompass the oblation in the way that it is presented here, but according to our measure we can be filled.

J.D.G. The priest takes the "handful ... thereof": "and the priest shall burn the memorial thereof on the altar, an offering by fire to Jehovah of a sweet odour". Then there is his own portion after that.

E.C.B. What you were remarking as to the offerer and the priest merging conveys a certain sense of the ability of the offerer to see it through. Does it not involve that it is not just something that we bring to the meeting; it is something that I can see through in my personal relations with God?

J.D.G. Yes. In the old dispensation the offerer was one person and the priest was another. A priest is equal to ministering to God, is equal to carrying his offering right through. The note says, 'offering by fire of a sweet odour to Jehovah'. He has an appreciation of the humanity of Christ; also the testing that he went through has entered into his being through his experience in life. What entered into the

hymn which we sang (No.228), the testings and trials of the wilderness, worked out in this man's soul so that he is enriched by it.

E.C.B. In regard to that hymn, I have felt recently that there is need among us for being 'joyful, bright and free', and I trust that that may be developed. The offerer here not only has ability to bring the offering but he himself has some discernment as to how it is prepared. The pan, oven and cauldron were all evidently at the discretion of the offerer.

J.D.G. Which would be some appreciation of the Lord Jesus in humanity here and how He offered, what He bore in His spirit:

J.M. Does the oblation link with "the holy thing also which shall be born", Luke 1: 35? Has the offerer appropriated in some measure Christ as the "holy thing"?

J.D.G. He has some appreciation of a humanity that is distinct; "the holy thing also which shall be born" is a very deep matter. It is brought out here that it is "mingled with oil"; it is for our consideration that it is a sinless humanity.

J.M. It is priestly food here. Is it something that we need to feed upon, that perfect humanity of Christ, what it was here for God? We dwell a good deal on Christ where He is - and that of course is right - but we need to think about the perfect humanity of Christ that was here entirely for the pleasure of God and, as we appropriate that, do you think we shall have something to offer?

J.D.G. "Found in figure as a man, humbled himself" (Phil 2: 8): how pleasing to God were those features that came out in the Lord Jesus Christ.

J.C.E. Is there room for what is individual? There is a variety of ways in which this was prepared, but one arrives at it in one way or another.

J.D.G. I was minded that we should linger on the individual side of it. The offerer is a person who has his links with God. In the chapter he is associated with the camp of Israel, but he has his own personal links with God Himself. He has an appreciation of the One who was

here, the Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity. He has gathered up some substance in relation to that and is desirous of carrying it through to offer it to God. There is a fragrance to Jehovah from the offering and it is appreciated in the heart of someone here.

E.O.P.M. It is a very simple offering, is it not? It is not a bullock, goat or sheep; it seems to come out of the everyday course of things in the experience of an individual saint, something that he would be doing - the cauldron and so on. It was not something special in that sense; it was something which came out of what was ordinary but was special because of the character of it.

J.D.G. Yes. The experiences in our lives contribute to our gathering a greater appreciation of the Lord Jesus who was here in similar circumstances.

E.O.P.M. I think that is very helpful; I may feel that I am unable to bring a bullock or a sheep or a goat, but we all have everyday experiences with God and we can turn those to account.

J.D.G. The offerings you refer to come into the burnt-offering. The offerer here would have some appreciation of the burnt-offering, his acceptance before God in Christ. He is now gathering up something as to a humanity that he is feeding upon which is sinless.

J.M. The result of feeding upon that humanity, which arises in fragrance for God Himself would be that we come out like Christ. Is that all involved in the offering?

J.D.G. Yes. You are careful to feed on what is positive, to set aside what would defile. There is the humanity of the Lord Jesus which will develop through the mind, a formation in my being which will correspond to Himself.

D.E.R. The manna also speaks of the humanity of Christ. Would you distinguish for us between the manna and the oblation?

J.D.G. The manna stresses more the humility of Christ and the lowly circumstances into which He came; the oblation brings out the uniqueness of His humanity in its sinless character - "mingled with oil", "the holy thing also which shall be born". The manna does not

quite bring out that side of things; it is more Jesus here in the wilderness. I know that this is gathered up too through experiences in the wilderness, but it really relates to an appreciation of the humanity of the Lord Jesus that is distinctive.

D.E.R. The manna refers to our day by day experiences in the wilderness, but the oblation really links with the presence of God Himself. All this flows out in Leviticus from the glory filling the house in the last chapter of Exodus.

J.D.G. I appreciate what you say; the offerer has gathered it up in his own personal circumstances. He brings it from where he is in the camp to the tent of meeting. He has gathered up something from his experiences with God.

R.T. It says about Simeon that "it was divinely communicated to him by the Holy Spirit", Luke 2: 26. Did he gather up something of this in his experiences?

J.D.G. Yes, in his experiences and in his communion too - "it was divinely communicated to him by the Holy Spirit". He must have been in communion when he received that communication.

R.T. The smallness of what was there did not hinder him from seeing the glory that was there.

J.D.G. "A light for revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel": he could see the distinctiveness of the humanity that was coming in in Jesus that was different. Could you help us as to the manna and the oblation?

R.T. The manna is food for our souls to strengthen us here, but the oblation is primarily what is for God and we share in it.

J.D.G. Yes, the offerer is bringing it forward with a view to ministering to the heart of God. It is the same humanity but viewed in a slightly different way - the manna and the oblation.

H.A.H. Luke's gospel is being much drawn upon; how many handfuls have come from the words of the thief, "this man has done nothing amiss", Luke 23: 41!

J.D.G. That was his appreciation of Christ. It must have gladdened the heart of God to hear a person say that at that time. The man is priestly in what he says there.

S.D.K.R. If we offer to God some impression of the humanity of Christ, it is always acceptable, is it not? Is it not wonderful that it is so?

J.D.G. That is one of His names! "his name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God", Isa 9: 6. I think the offerer would be dwelling on the fact that there is no leaven attached to this offering.

There is a distinctiveness in the humanity of Christ; there is no generation in that line. It says in Isaiah 53, "who shall declare his generation?" (v 8). There is no generation after Christ in that way, it is the uniqueness of His humanity in its sinless character.

E.C.B. In regard to what has been said as to the nature of this, I wonder whether Mr Darby touched it in:

'We gaze upon Thy weakness -
The manger and the cross
(Hymn 188)

The fine flour itself is a specimen of frailty and weakness - you could almost, in a sense, blow it away. I wondered whether the hymn suggests the way we gather up this fine flour.

J.D.G. He certainly pondered it in his poem, 'The Man of Sorrows', in which he went over the various features of humanity of a life that was pleasing to God. The oblation is the divine pleasure in that Man, and the believer has an appreciation of that.

E.C.B. It may be that if we fed more on the manna we would be more concerned to provide the oblation.

J.D.G. The manna would be a fundamental matter; we gather it up in the morning in reading a portion from the scriptures, and that helps us in those circumstances in which He is associated with us in the day to day matters of life. But, as you gather up something, you can bring it back in the evening, so there is the evening oblation. There is the morning oblation, but there is something worked out as

the result of the day. The evening oblation is the result of the day, the morning oblation is the result of the night. There is a continual feeding on Christ; we gather up something both in the daytime and in the night seasons. It is with a view to the heart of God being enriched. But the priest's heart is also satisfied through it; he feeds on it too.

E.C.B. "And the remainder of the oblation shall be Aarons". You always have something. Can you say something as to the way in which, if at all, we are able to mingle this with oil?

J.D.G. You would have to open that up.

E.C.B. This is all part of the offerer 's service. He brings the fine flour, he mingles it with oil. I was wondering whether we do not need some special help from the Spirit - "He shall glorify me" (John 16: 14) - to appreciate and be able to bring in fulness in this oblation.

J.D.G. The holy appreciation of the humanity as the "holy thing also which shall be born" makes our hearts worshipful. I think the oblation springs from meditation. The manna is more the appropriation of Christ here below; the oblation springs from the meditation of the person who was here below.

M.A.J.T. The Holy Spirit helps us to bring our gifts to the Lord Jesus, does He not?

J.D.G. Yes, but the Holy Spirit here, typically in the oil, is really related to the humanity of Christ. The mingling with oil would relate to the conception. The anointing with oil relates more to when the Spirit came upon Him as a dove; He goes forward in the power of the Spirit after that.

D.J.H. In the first verse it is simply that "he shall pour oil on it". The mingling seems to be connected with the preparation of it; would that relate to the exercises through which the offerer passes?

J.D.G. I thought it was a consideration of the humanity of our Lord Jesus - "the holy thing" - as related to the Spirit.

J.M. Mingling enters into the constitution. Anointing is upon: that would be in view of public service. It is beautiful that such a person

as Jesus could be anointed. The footnote says, 'his whole system is invigorated and strengthened by it'.

J.D.G. The Spirit is associated with His humanity all the way through. It is a very holy subject but it gives the offerer and the priest an appreciation of the unique character of the humanity of Christ, and to feed on that humanity we are feeding on what is sinless. Therefore it helps us.

J.M. Every breath, every heartbeat, every motivation that was in Christ was for the pleasure of God. That is the result of the mingling, is it not?

J.D.G. Mr Darby says that He responded to the impulse which the divine will gave to Him. That is the humanity of Christ.

R.T. It was essential that the twelve apostles had a full appreciation of this, was it not? In the appointing of another, Peter said that it needed to be one who had "assembled with us all the time in which the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us", Acts 1: 21. Our position is founded on these persons who were deep in the appreciation of this.

J.D.G. The apostles were equal to the fifty days. They had unique privileges with the Lord in His manhood here. John says "we have contemplated his glory", John 1: 14.

R.T. "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes; that which we contemplated, and our hands handled", 1 John 1: 1.

How it came into their constitution! This was how it was brought into our dispensation.

H.A.H. The fact that this offering which is mingled with oil was baked in the oven would involve the inward side, would it not? The other was more public, what could be seen by man, His meekness and lowliness. Would this involve His sufferings as being here in a world of evil and what went up to God in relation to it?

J.D.G. The holy motives of Jesus. It is so distinct from any other kind of humanity. "Altogether that which I also say to you", John 8: 25. "My thought goeth not beyond my word", Ps 17: 3.

J.M. While Matthew and Mark give a more pointed reference to the sufferings of Christ and the cross, the three hours of darkness, Luke gives it more in Gethsemane. The inward side, the mingling with oil, comes out there in a very beautiful way, does it not?

J.D.G. It does. The offering by fire would be Christ tested unto death. He alone was able for that in the manner in which He went forward. The pressure that came on Him: "his sweat became as great drops of blood, falling down upon the earth", Luke 22: 44. Someone had pondered that to pen those words.

D.A.B. It is interesting how many worshippers there are in Luke's gospel, especially in the early chapters - Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds. An appreciation of the humanity of Jesus should open our spirits and hearts Godward.

J.D.G. It brings out what kind of composition they can make. Those persons you have mentioned compose something; Mary did when the announcement of His conception was made, Elizabeth did, Simeon did and Anna did too. They all said what came from the heart and it is in Scripture for us. This must be in the heart of the offerer to God presently, maybe in private, in secret prayer, but there is what is offered up of the appreciation of God's Christ that is so pleasurable to the Father. It can only be brought about as we feed on the humanity of the Lord Jesus. It is not just intellect, it is springing from a formed character in the believer.

P.M. Is there a contrast between what the Lord said, "the ruler of this world comes, and in me he has nothing" (John 14: 30), and what the Father found in Christ - "in thee I have found my delight", Luke 3: 22? Do we need to see that there was absolutely nothing for the ruler of the world in that blessed Man, but everything for God?

J.D.G. The offerer here is coming into an appreciation of the Father's thoughts. We have an appreciation of Christ through divine working in us. How it makes you appreciate what God has wrought in you! The honey does not appreciate this; it is not the side of nature that appreciates Christ in this way, it is a formed personality after Himself by the Spirit.

P.M. A brother who helped us in this city said, Ask the Father what He found so delightful in Christ. Do you think that, if we linger there, the Father gives us some sense of what His delight was in Christ? That would help us not to see from human eyes but to see it from the Father's eyes and the Father's appreciation of the perfection of that manhood.

J.D.G. The oblation involves our presenting to God an appreciation that is in accordance with His own appreciation of the Lord Jesus in that humanity in all its blessedness. Those secret years brought out that remark; "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight", Matt 3: 17. He had already found it in Him. It springs from a humanity mingled with oil.

E.C.B. Would Psalm 45 be a pattern of this? "My heart is welling forth with a good matter: I say what I have composed" (v 1), but then, "Thou art fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured into thy lips" (v 2)? It is direct appreciation of Christ as the oblation.

J.D.G. "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer" is someone who has fed on it; "out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks", Luke 6: 45. As we are occupied with holy things we will be able to speak about holy things and appreciate them.

E.C.B. As to the Father's appreciation of Jesus, it is interesting that it says, "This is my beloved son". It is not 'thou art' which is more a secret relationship. It is public testimony to the Father's acclamation of the Son.

J.D.G. It is good to distinguish scriptures because I think it does bring out the testimony. The Psalm you quote is in line with our thoughts that it is a composition by someone who has had experience. It is very rich in it.

R.T. What would you say about "Thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon"?

J.D.G. I do not have any particular thought on that. It is coming down to detail when you part it in pieces.

R.T. It is not just general in our appreciation of Christ. I thought maybe Peter , in his epistle , was parting it in pieces when giving his impression of the holy mountain he spoke about His majesty, how it would stabilise the saints as he perhaps broke it up and fed upon it.

J.D.G. I think that is a help. Consideration of the details of the features of that life, particularly as it relates to experiences that we have had with Him. Peter writes as "having been eyewitnesses of his majesty", 2 Pet 1: 16. So we can help the saints as we have had experience with the Lord personally in relation to the features of His humanity in varied circumstances where such things as that have impressed our hearts and souls.

D.E.B. Would you say more about the distinction between the first paragraph and the second? The first paragraph seems to be the flour which one can contemplate in all its detail, but in the second it is the cakes.

J.D.G. I suppose it relates to various aspects of the life of the Lord Jesus and how He was tested in various circumstances - the oven, the pan and the cauldron, different types of heat applied. It is different aspects of the sufferings. Someone has remarked that the oven was enclosed, so it may have been secret pressures that He went through, whereas the others were more open, more what could be taken account of by those who were around Him.

J.W. He was always the same, whatever the conditions He was found in.

J.D.G. Yes. Mr Darby says, The hand that struck the chord found all in tune. That is in relation to the oblation.

J.W. Every feature of manhood was there in a perfect way. It blended perfectly in Him.

J.D.G. But in considering His humanity there are things that can be taken account of, such as has been remarked in regard to His majesty, and as seeing "the King in his beauty", Isa 33: 17. There are various features of that humanity that were pleasing to God which the believer can take account of. "The ruler of the world

comes, and in me he has nothing", John 14: 30. It is unique to Christ. What I was thinking in relation to Leviticus 23 was an appreciation of Christ as raised from the dead. The consideration of that in the fifty days leads to exercise that develops in us, correspondence with Christ which comes out in testimony. Though the leaven is associated with us it is negated by the baking which would be the Spirit's power in the believer. You reach a company that has an appreciation of each of the features of the offerings: "And ye shall present with the bread seven lambs without blemish, yearlings, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be a burnt offering". It was an appreciation of Christ in that way, and an appreciation of Christ in the drink offerings; then "ye shall sacrifice one buck of the goats for a sin-offering, and two lambs, yearlings, for a sacrifice of peace-offering". There are persons equal to carrying forward all that has been worked out and seen in Christ Himself.

E.C.B. There is more of a collective colour about chapter 23.

J.D.G. Yes. It relates to a holy convocation which is the collective side. You can see that in the gospels, how the resurrection of Christ led to the gathering together of the saints (see John 20).

E.C.B. Given that the new oblation in the antitype follows the resurrection, I wonder whether Peter has something of it in mind when he says, "This Jesus has God raised up", Acts 2: 32.

J.D.G. That is the sheaf of the wave-offering. Is not that in some way our appreciation of Christ in resurrection, that we wave it before God? I suppose the waving involves drawing divine attention to it. Here is a person who has appreciation of the Lord Jesus as freshly out of death, One who had been cut down. The sheaf involves what had been cut down and bound and then standing upright. Like Joseph's sheaf which stood upright. It is the invigorating power of Christ out of death.

H.A.H. Reference has been made to the one who was chosen being with them all the days in which the Lord Jesus came in and went out;

that would include the forty days, the knowledge of Him in resurrection.

J.D.G. That is right.

D.A.B. This oblation was offered on the first day of the week, not on the Sabbath.

J.D.G. That is very interesting; you do not get the first day of the week too much in the Old Testament. It is the next day after the sabbath, showing that the resurrection of Christ brings in that God is moving in relation to the first day of the week and He brings it in early in Scripture for us to grasp hold of.

J.M. It links again with Luke's writings, does it not? The labour of the Lord in resurrection at the end of Luke's gospel and in Acts 1 is to establish firmly in the affections of the saints His humanity on the other side of death. Then the result of that is what comes out in the new oblation and the company in the beginning of Acts.

J.D.G. It is interesting to bring up the end of Luke's gospel and beginning of Acts. At the end of Luke's gospel they are scattered and He has to gather them, but in the beginning of Acts they are not that way. They have an appreciation of the sheaf of the first-fruits.

J.M. It is out of that that these holy, happy conditions flow, that you get at the assembly in the early chapter. The new oblation is coming out of the dwellings.

R.T. It is a beautiful touch: "he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah, to be accepted for you".

J.D.G. What blessedness to know that we are accepted in Christ! There is divine pleasure in Christ. The first-fruits is Christ and then there are those that are Christ's at His coming; we come into that.

You get an idea of the first-fruits coming out later on which corresponds with what was seen in the sheaf of the first-fruits. It is the blessedness of our acceptance, that God has pleasure in us:

'Out of Thy death has sprung
A wondrous living throng:
All, all to Thee belong,

And in Thee live'.

(Hymn 152)

That would put joy in your heart.

E.C.B. Yes. I think that these things need to be stimulated with us.

Would the hundred and twenty correspond to the "ye" in this chapter?

J.D.G. I suppose they do. They were the ones who had a peculiar place in the testimony. They represented at that time all that there was in the earth for God.

E.C.B. They seem intelligent too. Peter speaks to them and nobody debates what he says. Some of them are named, and it says that the number was about a hundred and twenty. It seems as if there is an intelligent appreciation coming out of persons' dwellings as to what Christ raised is.

J.D.G. That would be true, but we want something to come out of our dwellings that is corresponding to what we have here.

S.D.K.R. What is the idea in the waving: "the next day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it".

J.D.G. I think it is drawing the divine attention to it? It is not that God does not see it, but I think He delights in someone drawing His attention to Christ as out of death. He raised Him from the dead by His glory, He had delight in it. But I think His heart is gladdened when He sees others bringing that blessed Person and waving Him before Him as appreciating Him as out of death, because it is for our acceptance. That is a blessed thing for the heart to grasp hold of, that we are accepted in Christ - "taken us into favour in the Beloved", Eph 1: 6.

D.E.B. Chapter 23 appears to be in the land, chapter 2 could have been in the wilderness. I do not know whether it ever was offered but it could have been. It seems to involve the saints having already placed their feet on heavenly territory.

J.D.G. It is anticipating gathering together. There is an environment where this can take place and I think that the environment is here.

There is something that comes out of the dwellings, there is the counting of the fifty days which brings us again to the first day of the week. There is something being gathered together. Paul says, "we being assembled to break bread" (Acts 20: 7), that was on the first day of the week. There is scope for expressions of appreciation of the Lord Jesus and the correspondence with us in the two wave-loaves. There is recognition on our side that the leaven is there, but it is negated. There is power, in the Spirit in the believer, to negate the activity of the leaven so that what comes out is in some way the character of the first-fruits. Do you not think that God receives something from the heart of the believer that is equal to that character, what was in Christ, now found in the believer?

E.C.B. Yes. I cannot think of my status before God without thinking of Christ the centre of the throng.

J.D.G. He ever is unique, the Lord Jesus Christ always has a place in pre-eminence, but then there is:

'Out of Thy death has sprung
A wondrous living throng'.

That partakes of the character of Christ, therefore it is the first-fruits to Jehovah. There is something blessed, particularly in the assembly, that is equal to gratifying His heart, and that is what a holy convocation does.

J.S.G. Does the bringing forth of the expression "the sweet odour" in both chapters show that essentially it is the same thing which God appreciates perfectly in Christ and then appreciated by us and presented, perhaps according to measure, but still appreciated by God?

J.D.G. The company, I think, is equal to having a full appreciation of Christ. The seven he-lambs would bring out the mature thought of appreciation of the Lord Jesus: "seven he-lambs, without blemish, yearlings, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be a burnt-offering". There is a carrying forward in the souls of these

persons of the blessedness of that One in whom these features of the burnt-offering are set out, His devotedness to God. That is carried forward in the assembly.

P.M. Does the wave-offering preceding and flowing together with what comes out of the house raise the level of what our assemblings are for? They are not primarily for us. Do you think that every gathering should be to make everything of Christ? If what is in the house is in keeping with God's thoughts as to Christ and we come from that level it will make everything of Him, will it not?

J.D.G. So that the tribes go up, from glory to glory. There is something glorious about the dwelling place, where the saint dwells, that is in correspondence with what he is going up to, only it expands as he goes up, from glory to glory, when he comes into association with other believers whose appreciations can be gathered together.

D.E.R. As in the presence of God the offerer is not occupied with himself at all but with that Man who is there in His pleasurable to God.

J.D.G. I think that is important about the convocation, the gathering together, as something for the heart of God. The believer has that in his heart and soul. The gatherings together are to be enriched. We would not come up in a casual or a careless sense but with definiteness in our mind to an area where the heart can be liberated in the way that is greater than what can be experienced in the home.

D.J.H. Often we are occupied with our blessings, in what we speak of as the service of God and generally, but it is far greater, for God, to bring before Him our appreciation of Christ.

J.D.G. We are to be occupied with the Blesser and the Man in His presence. It must gratify the heart of God to have some appreciation of the burnt offering expressed to Him, and of the sin-offering too, which is so necessary on our side; and then the peace-offering, which lays a basis for our fellowship.

E.C.B. These are the set feasts of Jehovah. It is all for Him.

J.D.G. Yes. So for us the first day of the week is one of the set feasts.

E.C.B. I wondered if what you are suggesting would enrich our yield to the Father in that service.

J.D.G. That is what the Lord has in mind: "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God", John 20: 17. We express our appreciation of the Lord Jesus, and also the appreciation of the Spirit, but what is in the mind of the Lord is His Father - "in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises" (Heb 2: 12) - that is a holy convocation.

E.C.B. Mr Wells' hymn:

'Every circle gathered round
Thee Yields of Christ some beauteous ray;
And for Thy delight and pleasure
Shines throughout th' eternal day'.

(No.83)

J.D.G. How rich it is! There is room, in our expression of appreciation to the Father, for Christ in the various features that come out in the offerings by fire, that God experiences a sweet odour from them.

E.C.B. The early part of the service should be enriching us in view of the Father. We do not come with something prepared for the Father.

J.D.G. That is right. "To him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages" (Eph 3: 21), I think, is a gathering up of all that has preceded. You can understand the Father's delight in Christ and His relationship with His brethren, you can understand the Father's delight in Christ's relationship with His bride, and you can understand the Father's delight in the Spirit's relationship with the saints; and all that is gathered up as "through him we have both access by one Spirit to the Father", Eph 2: 18. It is all gathered up with a view to providing substance to minister to the Father's heart.

H.A.H. I have been thinking a little lately of the pleasure that the Father has in the early part of the service.

J.D.G. And intelligence would understand that the expansive side of the service involves the Father, the Father's appreciation of Christ and how much we can say about that. How much we can say to the Father about Himself, too, is a test! I think these exercises in this scripture help us as to these things.

J.M. Should there not be some expression of this in every gathering of the saints? It would make us value the gatherings more and more. We get a good deal out of a meeting such as this, but think of what there is for God in it!

J.D.G. That is important because there is no doubt that there is a distinctiveness attached to the Lord's supper and what flows out of it, but I think that what you say is true, that there is in every gathering enrichment for our hearts and souls that will build us up in a humanity that is equal to the testimony. We did not gather here this morning casually, we have come with exercise, all of us. We are looking for something as well as bringing something. Spiritual things are communicated by spiritual means in a meeting such as this and each goes away with some added blessing. That enriches the gathering to each of us.

J.M. There is some sense in our spirits in an occasion such as this that divine pleasure is entering into it. There is what there is for the saints (and certainly a reading meeting would bring out what there is in the way of food for the saints) but God finds infinite pleasure in His own being together and being occupied with Christ. That is the sweet odour that is arising to His nostrils.

J.D.G. I think that is right.

E.C.B. Were you going to say something about the "poor and the stranger"?

J.D.G. I thought that the light of the assembly is very precious and we do not want to forget our brethren in Christ who may not have that light.

E.C.B. You cannot actually have the light of the assembly without thinking of all who compose it.

J.D.G. That is the truth. There is one loaf on the table which includes all the saints. We often refer to that in thanksgiving but there is to be the practical side of it. In contacting another believer our desire is to impart some impression of Christ, not the divisive side of things that marks the church publicly but the unity that marks it in relation to the Man who is in the divine presence.

P.M. Is it interesting that immediately the church is established in Acts 2 there is the witness in testimony of the manhood in Acts 3, the two men who could say "Look on us"?

J.D.G. That is right. And "his feet and ankle bones were made strong". They considered for the stranger and the poor there, the lame and the blind. It is remarkable how much the stranger and the poor come into the Old Testament. I think that the Lord would have us to bear that in mind.

E.C.B. Perhaps we should be praying a bit more for a wider outlook in ourselves in relation to all that the Lord has here, because we become very enclosed and therefore defensive which we should not be.

J.D.G. I have thought about that quite a bit in regard to the prayer meeting; assembly prayer is very wide and carries with it our appreciation of creature man in expressing it to God. If they do not express it we can express it on their behalf, but we have consideration for humanity and for fellow believers. We do not want to become proud of what we are. That would be wrong, that would be leaven, whereas appreciation of the truth is another thing; we should value it and desire that others be brought into it. We comport our lives in a manner that will attract others; that is Peter and John.

E.C.B. The fact that on this day they bring not only the new oblation but the burnt-offering and the sin-offering and the peace-offering would help to keep us right in our spirits, and wide, too.

J.D.G. All these things are to be appreciated by us. Then, "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life", Rev 22: 14. It is for each of us to establish that right.

LONDON

21 November 1992

Key to initials

London unless otherwise stated

D.A.Burr; D.E.Burr, Redbridge; E.C.Burr; J.C.Evershed; J.D.Gray, Edinburgh; J.S.Gray; D.J.Hutson; H.A.Hutson; E.O.P.Mutton, Walton-on-the-Naze; J.Mitchell, Bexley; P.Martin, Colchester; D.E.Remmington, St.Albans; S.D.K.Roberts, Croydon; M.A.J.Terry; R.Taylor, Barnet; J.Wright, Redbridge

PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD

Peter Buchan (*now with Christ*)

Isaiah 6: 1-7; Acts 16: 22-34

I was encouraged to read this scripture as we sang that hymn:

'With souls that glow, with hearts that yearn
Thy glory, Lord, to see'

(No 192)

It was just that word - 'souls that glow' - that confirmed me because I had been thinking of this scripture, "a glowing coal", a glowing coal from the altar. I greatly desire that tonight a glowing coal may be used in applying in the power of the Holy Spirit a word that will meet the sinner where he is in his sins. If there is a sinner here, there is a Saviour here, and that Saviour is Jesus. Perhaps you have never thought that you needed Him. It is a remarkable thing that this man - the prophet Isaiah - says, "for mine eyes have seen the king". I would like to raise the question with every person in this room: have you seen the King? That is something to answer. Isaiah says, "Mine eyes have seen the King". Later on in the prophecy he says, "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is far off", chap 33: 17. But here he is as a guilty sinner. He heard a voice in the temple, a voice that shook the foundations of the temple: "And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried". One of the seraphim was speaking: "Holy, holy, holy". Ah! when you are into the presence of God, dear friends, you are made to realise that you are in the presence of One who is supreme and must be listened to. But there is a beautiful touch at the altar: the touch of the seraphim. Isaiah said, "I am undone". He had to say it for himself. He says, "Woe unto me! for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips". He had nothing to say for himself! I often wonder at people who talk about somebody else, but they have never come to this: "Woe unto me!" It is a searching matter: it searches me too. "Woe unto me!" he says. When he had said that, immediately it says, "And one of the

seraphim flew" - a witness to the activities of divine love and grace, the swiftness of such activities! It says that he flew with "a glowing coal which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar". It has rightly been said that there were no tongs in the sufferings of Jesus; they were absolutely direct. I am speaking with the utmost reverence and feeling of the sufferings of Christ. The holiness of God and the rights and the claims of His throne were met by the offering of One for whom there was no mitigation of wrath. No mitigation! But here the seraph uses the tongs and he touches the lips of this sinner. He says, "thine iniquity is taken away". And who bore the iniquity? My friend, it was Jesus, it was He who bore the curse. At a reading recently we were speaking of the wrath, the curse and the altar. If you take away the altar and leave only the curse, where are you or I going to be?

There is nothing but wrath and distance from God left for me - no hope for the sinner because the curse is on him. But there was One who bore the curse. That is why we get the altar - wonderful divine provision! These are things that should touch our hearts. So here there is provision immediately in the mercy of God, yet His holiness, His justice and righteousness were maintained. Every attribute of God is upheld and maintained by the cross of Christ, beloved; it remains and stands.

I would like to tell you about this glowing coal. The very fact that it is glowing shows the current application, at any time, of the cross of Christ and the blood of Jesus. It can never pass into history. The things of this world, things that you see at any time, pass into history: "the world is passing, and its lust, but he that does the will of God abides for eternity", 1 John 2: 17. The cross of Christ stands; there is a hymn which says that: 'The cross still stands unchanged' (No 349). It does not mean that you could go to Calvary today and see it there. No, that has gone. But the word of the cross remains, it is "to them that perish foolishness, but to us that are saved it is God's power" (1 Cor 1: 18), and it is the wisdom of God.

The cross of Christ stands, it remains unchanged and unchangeable, and the blood of Jesus remains unchanged. It

cannot be otherwise and it will be so throughout eternity because Christ has won, on your account and on mine, an eternal redemption that is based upon His finished work and His present position in glory. That is the truth of the glad tidings. I trust that what I have to say will touch the lips of some person in this room.

The important thing is that the lips are to be touched. That is to say that you are free. What are you set free for? It is to magnify the One who is your Saviour. One of the hymns that I often think about is:

'Unloose our stamm'ring tongues to tell
Thy love, immense, unsearchable!' (No 289)

Those who have been touched with a glowing coal will do that, they will not fail to be responsive. That is the great thought in being rescued as a guilty sinner, not simply to clear your guilt, but to make fallen creatures - that is you and me - vessels of His praise. You say, it is matchless. That is the fact. He uses the very fact of the fall to turn the whole thing round in matchless grace and infinite love, to make the very creature that fell the vessel of His praise. That will take place and will be displayed eternally, when He will "display in the coming ages the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus", Eph 2: 7. O friend, I urge you to get a touch of the glowing coal. Saul of Tarsus had it on the way to Damascus. There he was! Think of those lips "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" - with the authority of the high priest, to bind men and women who were of the way and bring them to prison and to death. That was the attitude of the man. And on the way he heard a voice. It was a glowing coal to set aglow. It never consumed him though. It could have done so. He says, "appointing to ministry him who before was a blasphemer and persecutor, and an insolent overbearing man", 1 Tim 1: 14. That is what he was, but mercy was shewn him. Then he adds "But the grace of our Lord surpassingly over-abounded with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus" - towards a person like that! He was touched by a glowing coal, beloved, and he became a fervent lover of Jesus. That is what a glowing coal does to a person, it will make you a fervent lover of

Christ. Friend, I am asking you again: are you a lover of Jesus? The gospel is to make you a lover of Christ. I urge that everyone here might get a touch of a glowing coal.

In the sixteenth chapter of the Acts there are two men in a prison. What are they doing there? Their feet are in the stocks. The jailor is there, of course, and he received a remarkable charge, "such a charge", it says: "having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and secured their feet to the stocks". The inner prison: make them absolutely safe! But there was one thing that the jailor could never stop and that was the touch of the glowing coal. I earnestly urge that you get a touch of the glowing coal tonight. What are they doing in the prison? They are praising God with singing and it says "the prisoners listened to them". I have often wondered how many of those prisoners were converted. I was speaking last week about the man who pierced the side of the Lord with a spear. When He was on that cross soldiers came and broke the legs of the other two but they did not break the legs of Jesus. It says, "but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water", John 19: 34. It was flowing for that soldier; I wonder if it affected him. I have often wondered whether he will be in glory. The narrative does not say that it affected him but the very fact that it flowed immediately meant that it was for him; and it is for you, dear friend. So these prisoners heard. The testimony of grace is going on and will go on until the Lord Jesus comes. Then it will be finished, but it is burning brightly tonight. I trust it is burning brightly in my soul to reach anyone here that they might be converted.

So we get a man converted. You say, Who was converted? Ah! At midnight there was an earthquake and the foundations of the prison shook, and it also shook that jailor. It was intended to shake the jailer. I wonder if it is shaking anyone in this room. The doors were all locked. The prisoners - what happened to them? Not one of them escaped. It was a fine chance to go but not one of them moved. What held them? It was the glowing coal. It was the sufferings of Christ, beloved, exemplified in two suffering believers, but they were shining as a glowing coal. It is very touching. It

reached this man; he looked around for a sword to kill himself. He knew what would have happened: if all the prisoners go, what is going to happen? He calls for a light. Paul says, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here", and the jailor says, "Sirs, what must I do that I may be saved?" The answer is immediate - just like the flying seraph in Isaiah 6 - "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house". That is the highway to salvation and he accepted it. Gladly did he accept that word. What did he do next? In the same hour of the night, converted, he washed those men's stripes, the stripes that he had inflicted. He was the one who washed them and, as another has said, not a nurse would have done it more tenderly. Do you know why? It was the touch of divine love and grace, beloved, it was the glowing coal. He brought a glowing coal from off the altar with the tongs. No tongs for Jesus! There was no mitigation for Him. But, beloved, there is a touch in the power of the Holy Spirit of the sufferings of Christ. I remember a brother, the last time he preached, who appealed to us to come to the cross. That is what I am saying tonight: Come to the cross. You had better start there. When you start at the cross you will start where the glowing coal was taken from; and that is how you will proceed. So here you get a converted man brought into fellowship; he spread a table for them. Beautiful what grace can do in one night! I trust it will be effective in this room tonight.

7 February 1993

BELIEVING CHILDREN

The letter from Paul to Titus in Crete, mentions the children there.

Paul was concerned that they should not be guilty of being unruly, since it would dim for them the light of the Glad Tidings. As regards younger children, Jesus Himself spoke of the "little ones who believe

in me". None were too young to be blessed, and even infants were brought to Him for His blessing.

Like Timothy, many children who read this have had the favour of knowing the "sacred letters" as they grew up. With him it was the Old Testament but we can tell that he had come to know the Lord Jesus because he is called a disciple when we first hear of him. The children we hear about in the Gospels knew the Lord in humble form, whereas He was known to Timothy and is known to us as glorified in heaven. The conversion of Timothy may not have been as vivid as that of the apostle Paul, but the effect of it was clearly known from his life. It is always right and good to accept the word of God as truth. Do not, however, be satisfied just to say 'yes' to it, but seek a personal word from the Lord Himself such as made Timothy and others His personal followers, living and working for Him. Do you do this?

J.C.Evershed