

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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MY ASSEMBLY

Matthew 16: 18; 18: 19,20; 1 Samuel 10: 1-8

W.L. One's thought, beloved brethren, is that we should find mutual encouragement, as the Lord may help us, in looking at these scriptures. Firstly, what He says about "my assembly", we might say His chief joy. He is not exactly interfering in the affairs of the world although He is in the position where He has all power in heaven and upon earth. But His activities presently are related to "I will build my assembly". It is an encouragement on which we can rest our souls that "hades gates shall not prevail against it". It is not exactly related to what is numerical but that what He is building is impregnable and as to the administration of evil, which is so evident all around and very much so in Christendom where the enemy has been largely successful, in the Lord's own words "hades' gates shall not prevail against it". It is encouraging in Matthew 18 to see that that can be worked out by two or three. It is a special encouragement to us in these days in which we live. The Lord saying, "hades' gates shall not prevail against it" would show clearly that there might be circumstances in which the truth would be held by two or three. That is very much the day in which we are, even in this city there used to be large numbers, in most of our places large numbers of brethren, alas, we are down to days of twos or threes.

But that does not nullify the Lord's thoughts as to the working out of the great truth of the assembly, the great light of our day - Christ and the assembly. There are many other features of the truth but we would cling to this great truth of Christ and the assembly. The enemy is set against it, as the Lord indicates, the whole administration of evil determinately set against it, the devil opposing anything that the Lord does. But we can rest in this that hades' gates shall not prevail against it. The thought in reading in 1 Samuel 10 is to see in type the principle worked out; two men by Rachel's sepulchre and three men going up to God. In this chapter we have the principle of the two or three working out, persons who can work together. These two men at Rachel's sepulchre would involve

acknowledgment of the experience of death and what results from that: we know that Benjamin came to light as Rachel died. Then these three men, you might say, are considering for God which would be a prime feature of our exercises at the present time as we are among persons who understand what is involved in Rachel's sepulchre. Just two men, not large numbers. It is not great hosts that are going up to God; that will be so in the quickly coming day, the whole church will go up - what a host it will be - but in the meantime things are being maintained and preserved in two or three. I wondered if we could get help to follow that line of thought.

L.McF. I am sure what you are bringing before us is very fruitful. I thought of the stability of what the Lord is building. It is immovable and it goes through into the eternal day. In Revelation 21, it will come out into display, but now the test is whether we are being helped to maintain things in a day of small things. The quality is to be maintained despite reduction.

W.L. I think that is helpful. What the Lord is speaking about here is a whole thought, "I will build my assembly". He is thinking of the way it will be done, you might say this process of building, but then He has in mind the finished product and I thought that such suggestions as we see in 1 Samuel 10, the oak of Tabor, would suggest this thought, "hades' gates shall not prevail against it". Do not let us underestimate the gates of hades - it has been seen in this city and most of our places, the gates of hades have been seen at work and it was against "my assembly".

L.D.P. In Genesis 2: 22, "And Jehovah Elohim built the rib that he had taken from Man into a woman". Would that fit in?

W.L. Yes, the process of building. Here it is the Lord Himself, "And I also, I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my assembly". I suppose we are all quite clear that it is really the work of God in Peter, Peter's confession, that is the rock. As we have often been taught, there is nothing being built in but what is of God Himself and what reminds God of Christ.

L.McF. Say more about the gates of hades. It is a whole administration, the mystery of lawlessness and so on, involved and it is in view of overthrowing the assembly, which is a very serious matter.

W.L. I think it comes down to local assemblies. The Lord here is speaking about the assembly as a complete entity but in chapter 18 He is obviously speaking about local meetings, two or three gathered unto My name. We were remarking elsewhere as to Satan coming to every meeting. He came up into the presence of Jehovah in Job; twice it is recorded there. In chapters 1 and 2 it says he came up with the sons of God, he presented himself before Jehovah. What effrontery that Satan should come with the sons of God and present himself to Jehovah. He is a bold enemy, we should recognise that.

L.McF. Would that not be through persons? How guarded we have to be as we come up from time to time.

W.L. Yes: I thought we might touch briefly on Gilgal, where the features of the flesh are judged, and where that is so he can gain no point of entrance. We cannot say of course like the Lord "the ruler of the world comes, and in me he has nothing", John 14: 30. We cannot say that. But we can resist him and he will flee from us (James 4: 7), and we can judge ourselves so that we are not marked by features of the flesh, because he would exploit features of the flesh. I think in these days we need to be more careful than ever, each of us, especially as we gather, because we do not exactly judge ourselves as we gather; we should have judged ourselves before we gather, so that as together Satan has no inroad.

K.N.P. Do you think the appreciation of "my assembly" would help us in that?

W.L. That is fine. What is your impression of that?

K.N.P. I was just thinking of the level on which it puts it. It is not anything that belongs to us but it is His assembly and that would give us a greater appreciation of it and help us to be more guarded.

W.L. Yes; that is a great comfort. This was a great comfort to me, it always is and will be as long as we are here, it was especially a great comfort to me at a time of great crisis. The Lord turned my thoughts to this, "my assembly". It is His.

G.D.P. Thinking of the gates of hades, it has been said that the enemy can bring in a very good counterfeit. So we have to be on our guard, (as was said) about detecting these things.

W.L. Yes. This is the gospel of counterfeits: the virgins, five wise and five foolish; the wheat and the tares. It is quite remarkable that this gospel brings that out. But we are dealing here with the real thing, "my assembly", it is the genuine article. It is unadulterated.

That is what the Lord is bringing out here, it is of Himself, He is building, it is the product of His own workmanship.

J.A.P. It is noticeable in this gospel that there is a counsel against Christ, beginning with Herod. He called a council about the babe and later in this book the word 'counsel' is used when the Lord Jesus comes into Jerusalem (Matt. 26: 4). It was collective opposition in Matthew, was it not?

W.L. That is helpful. We did not read it, but Peter comes very near to it in verse 23, "But turning round, he said ... Get away behind me, Satan; thou art an offence to me, for thy mind is not on the things that are of God, but on the things that are of men", immediately after he had this wonderful revelation from the Father, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". How quickly the enemy can get in. I do not pretend to understand it, but the Lord directly addresses Peter as Satan; that is a solemn thing. He does not even address Judas in that way, He calls him a son of perdition, but He directly addresses Peter as Satan. Not that Peter was Satan of course, but I think Peter had allowed himself to become influenced in that way that he began to rebuke the Lord. What an affront that Peter should rebuke the Lord.

C.F.D. Is it noticeable in what the brethren are saying that when the Lord was here that was the devil's prime attack. He was attacking Christ from the beginning, even from the time He was in the manger

he was attacking Christ; but is this anticipative, looking on to our own day, "on this rock I will build my assembly, and hades' gates shall not prevail against it" showing that the Lord was anticipating our own time? The Lord is going to bring in an edifice in the assembly which the devil cannot overthrow.

W.L. That is fine. We need to see that. It is a living organism of which we are a part. We cannot eliminate our responsibility as to preserving this holy area and being in line in our thoughts and words and deeds with what the Lord is doing.

D.McF. In Revelation 1: 18 it says, "I became dead, and behold, I am living to the ages of ages, and have the keys of death and of hades". Would that help in any way?

W.L. It certainly does. He is in control of everything. I would recommend, especially younger people and all of us, to read that early address of Mr Taylor's 'Christ in control of the powers of good and of evil'. We can rest our souls on that, that the enemy can only go as far as God allows. We see that in Job. Satan said, You have hedged him around, I cannot get at him. He is only allowed to go as far as God permitted him. There is One who has the keys of death and of hades, and at the end of this gospel, "All power has been given me in heaven and upon earth".

C.F.D. So that the issue of prevailing is a constant thing. It was when the Lord was here, coming all the way down to the garden, but now the issue of prevailing is with the saints. Are we going to prevail or is the enemy going to prevail? You reminded us earlier of Moses; when his arms came down Amalek prevailed but when his arms were up the people prevailed. This comes down to where we are and how we are maintaining things locally.

W.L. Yes, that is very important. And if we weaken, as you are drawing on that scripture, the enemy will prevail. We should be thankful for that element of support in Aaron and Hur, they held Moses' hands up. And I thought again, they put a stone under him, that is the rock, that would link with "on this rock I will build my assembly and hades' gates shall not prevail against it". Right

through the dispensation there has been what has been stable and we can thank God that we can take account of one another as persons who are stable, who are rock-like in a right sense. Not persons who are implacable or unyielding - that is not the thought - but persons you might say who are rock-solid in regard to the great truth of Christ and the assembly.

L.McF. I am thinking of the necessity of this solid foundation in our souls. Many a time when brethren go astray you have to go back to, What was the foundation? We all need to be concerned about that, do you think?

W.L. I am sure of that. One was thinking of David in the Psalm, "if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy", Ps 137: 6. The great object of all our lives ought to be Christ and the assembly and everything else in our lives related to that. That is very practical and if we have this before us - as you say, "I will build my assembly" - let it get into our affections; prefer it above our chief joy. It is a searching thing because we live in a day when there are so many attractions, so many things that appeal to us naturally - one speaks for oneself - and so many diversions and things with which we can occupy our time. But our time ought to be used as related to this great thought of Christ and the assembly. Would you agree with that?

L.McF. Fully.

J.A.P. What you referred to later in the chapter is Peter diminishing in his mind the importance of the sufferings of Christ. That has been perhaps the underlying cause of many going away, a little less separation, a little less suffering for Christ - "Be it far from thee, Lord", do you think?

W.L. Well, there are many believers and in speaking to them you can bring them along as far as their love for the Saviour, their appreciation of what He has done for them and that is wonderful, but a point comes in the conversation when you find a barrier when they realise that it will cost them something. Many believers, from one's

experience want two things, they want Christ but they want a measure of the world as well or earthly things.

G.D.P. Paul reminds us in Corinthians, "let each see how he builds upon it", 1 Cor 3: 10 That is my responsibility, is it not?

W.L. I was thinking about that. Please say something about that.

G.D.P. That puts it on me. His building is going through but what am I doing.

W.L. It is not, Let each see what he builds, it is, Let each see how he builds. There is a way of doing things, is there not? I think we learn that especially in the history of the recovery, a special phase of building since the 1820s when the saints were recovered to this great truth. A special character of building has come out in these years, largely lost in the Dark Ages. As we remarked elsewhere, it is significant in Acts 27, in that chapter of the shipwreck, that it is the sun and the stars; the moon is not mentioned. That is that in the Dark Ages the truth of the assembly was largely lost. Old hymns are very fine as to persons' appreciation of the Lord personally, that is they appreciated the person of Christ: then the stars, they are outstanding individuals in these times, we can name many of them; but the thought of the assembly was largely lost. That is what has particularly come to light in the recovery, the great truth not only of Christ but of Christ and the assembly; and they are inseparable.

J.A.P. That hymn, "Jesus! the very thought of Thee" (hymn 279) is a very beautiful hymn but it does not touch the assembly, and yet we would like to have the appreciation he did of the Lord Jesus.

W.L. Bernard of Clairvaux, yes. He was one of the stars, showing the distinctiveness of an individual. But he had not grasped the great truth of Christ and the assembly. Also men like Luther - the truth of justification by faith - and all these great reformers they had great affection for the Lord yet they missed the point of Christ and the assembly and that has been revived to us in the recovery. We should value the recovery, and the enemy, if he is out to do anything, he is out to destroy the recovery.

K.N.P. Say something more about Christ and the assembly being one thought.

W.L. Well, it is a big subject, but the thought of man according to God involves Christ and the assembly, that is that manhood according to God as seen in Christ and the assembly and is what answers to the heart of God and will do so eternally.

K.N.P. I wondered that. He has great delight in Christ but the answer that He has in Christ and the assembly in His presence is something that is wrought as a result of this building, is it not?

W.L. The brethren will remember that after important meetings in Chicago (1904) persons said J.T. made much of the assembly and not enough of Christ. His answer was, In making much of the assembly we make much of Christ. These were important meetings, the great truth of salvation in the assembly came out. We are safe here in this holy area where the Spirit of God is.

C.F.D. The Lord gives us the clue to this. Before sin came in the two shall be one flesh (Gen 2: 24). So that the man and the woman merge into one, do they not?

W.L. And then that great truth - I do not think we understand it too well - "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit", 1 Cor 6: 17. Paul draws on the marriage relationship in Ephesians as illustration of Christ and the assembly. A husband and wife may be one flesh but they could not be said to be one spirit; they retain their individuality, husband and wife, that is well known to us. But "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit"; it is a most intimate, remarkable thing, is it not?

C.F.D. That is very interesting. I am glad you said that because it takes the thought of oneness further, does it not. May be you would say a little more about the one Spirit.

W.L. I do not know that I could say much more. But it shows the intimacy of it. The type of it is 'one flesh' as you say, "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh". The assembly is one with Christ, that

is what we touch in union, that intimacy of relationship that is of oneness, do you think?

C.F.D. Yes. That is what comes in, does it not? At the time of the service of God we get through to that. That principle of oneness goes through into the presence of God. We do not leave behind all these beautiful thoughts that come before us in the Supper and flow out of it; we take them with us and all are gathered up into the presence of God for His own pleasure.

W.L. That is fine. That would link "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit" with what Paul also says to the Corinthians "But we have the mind of Christ", 1 Cor 2: 16. Some think that that means that if some issue comes up we can find out what the Lord thinks about it - that is true also - but what it means as I understand it is that we have His very thinking faculty. I do not know that we understand that too well. We would like to know more of it - we know something of it, the very same thinking faculty as He has. We are on very spiritual ground in speaking of these things.

J.A.P. Are you saying - I would like to just get this right - that there is something a little more distinctive in "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit"? You said a husband and wife still retain their identity. What you are saying, I think, is something that we need help on about the Lord Jesus and the assembly being one Spirit.

W.L. I think we need to inquire into that and see that there is no divergence between Christ and the assembly. To use that illustration, husband and wife may approach a problem and divergent thoughts arise even as to practical matters in the household, simple matters that are easily resolved even. But that never arises as far as the Lord and the assembly is concerned - they are one in everything; "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit".

And as we were saying, "we have the mind of Christ", that in everything that may arise there is a oneness between Christ and the assembly that is inviolate. We need to get through to that I think in a better way.

C.F.D. Would 'one Spirit' involve the peculiar line of intelligence? The soul is more the feeling side, but 'one Spirit' would involve that on every matter, whatever it might be, there is this line of 'one Spirit', meaning that in that sense Christ and the assembly are inseparable.

W.L. Yes, that is helpful. And it would be expressed practically. In Ephesians 3: 110, "in order that now to the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies might be made known through the assembly the all-various wisdom of God, according to the purpose of the ages, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord". That is, every thought of God was purposed in Christ our Lord, but now to these principalities and authorities it is seen through the assembly, and there is no divergence. I am not so sure that we have gone too far through to that.

J.A.P. I think it is important what you are bringing up. Elsewhere we saw the Spirit of His Son in our hearts in another relationship as the service proceeds on the Lord's day, the Spirit made way for, it is the Spirit of His Son. There is mystery in that, is there not? We look at the breakdown and we would have to say, Well, we have not been holding fast the Head.

W.L. Quite so. One's thought, just to go on to chapter 18, is that it is workable, the Lord indicates that quite clearly, it is workable where two or three are gathered together. That is a great comfort because as we all know we have been greatly reduced. And maybe the Lord has been in that. In Judges God says, There are too many for me (Judges 7: 4). Think of God saying that. That is a most remarkable passage. God says, This number is too big, I am going to reduce it and there were those who lapped like a dog.

L.McF. So it is a time of testing. They went down to the water where they were tested, three hundred came through.

W.L. And they were being tested and did not know it. When children at school are sitting for an exam they know that they are under test. If you go for an interview for a job you know you are being tested, but these men did not know they were being tested. That is a very sensitive thing. Even in our own circumstances God is testing us

and we may not realise that we are being tested. I think these two or three are very precious to the Lord, He comes down to that.

C.F.D. "Where two or three are gathered together unto my name", that is the secret here.

W.L. Yes. Earlier on He is speaking about "the assembly" – chapter 16, as we know - "the assembly" in verse 17 of this chapter is as if He is viewing the assembly as an entity. But then He says in verse 19, "Again I say to you"; He is indicating something different, and that great thought of "the assembly" which we must hold to in its practical expression might come down to "two or three gathered together unto my name." That is a wonderful thought.

L.McF. That is seen in Peter and John going up: "Look on us" (Acts 3: 4). They had agreed, they had one objective.

W.L. That is a helpful thought. Men united - one object: so divergent, these men, in personality. That is a thing that we have had to learn, I suppose in every local meeting, viewing each other naturally we are divergent in personality. Peter and John I think had to learn that.

K.N.P. Is that the idea of 'gathered'? There are congregations, are there not, and there are clashes, but 'gathered' involves dependence on the One who has drawn us together. That is the common bond, is it not?

W.L. And "gathered together unto my name". It is not gathered together unto Me, I have often wondered why the Lord does not say that; I think "gathered together unto my name" supposes His absence. And then He says, "there am I in the midst of them". Where persons are gathered unto His Name as absent the Lord is prepared to link on with them and be with them.

J.A.P. The Name that He has in glory is the Name to which we are gathered, the Name of the Lord Jesus.

W.L. Exactly. "There am I in the midst of them". One has often heard that quoted as "there am I in the midst", but that is not accurate and does not convey the meaning of the passage. The

passage is, "there am I in the midst of them", that is persons of a certain quality, persons who have gathered together unto His Name. That is, every other name has been set aside and we are glad to gather unto His Name. And the "of them" is undoubtedly persons of a certain moral and spiritual quality. Just as the Lord says at the end of the gospel, "And behold, I am with you all the days until the completion of the age", chap. 28: 20. We do not want in any way to be sectarian, but that chapter clearly indicates, I think, that the Lord's support is with persons who are prepared to go into Galilee. It is the "of them" of Matthew 18. The Lord is not supporting Christendom as such, we should be clear about that. Some draw on this and say, "I am with you all the days" but there is a moral import to this and He is speaking to persons who are obedient. "Bring word to my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me". That is a remarkable passage. Where we see the Lord and where he will link on with us is in the position of reproach and it is such persons to whom He pledges His support. Not that He does not support other believers - I am not suggesting that for one moment - but His special support and His power is for those who are prepared to take this Galilean way.

G.D.P. Have verses 19 and 20 of Matthew 18 anything to do with that prescribed method that you spoke of earlier?

W.L. Yes. What do you say?

G.D.P. You were speaking about the prescribed method as to how we build. Is that followed through in verses 19 and 20?

W.L. I think that is helpful. There is great dignity about this, "two or three gathered together unto my name".

J.A.P. The word "assembly" is a fine word, is it not. 'Church' is all right but "the assembly" is living, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God", Matt 16: 16. There is a living side in that word and it means called out ones. We have to get together to prove the Lord's presence in this way.

W.L. That is fine. Paul had that in mind I think when he approached Corinth, "the assembly of God which is in Corinth". Paul held the

saints in Corinth, in spite of all the terrible condition which existed there, in the dignity of how God saw them,"the assembly of God".

C.F.D. It begins with the thought of "two of you", "that if two of you shall agree on the earth concerning any matter". Does this power of spiritual agreement lie behind the two or three gathered?

W.L. Yes, I think so. You have more on your mind as to that.

C.F.D. I am just inquiring because these are scriptures that are quoted and often quoted incompletely, but what lies behind what is in this verse is the fact that there are two of you who agree on earth concerning any matter. That would be not any matter after the flesh but it is what pertains to Christ and the assembly. This is what they are agreeing about. And then the two or three involves a condition of things where the Lord can be found in the midst of them, do you think?

W.L. That is fine. I have often linked this, "if two of you shall agree on the earth concerning any matter" with what we spoke of, "But we have the mind of Christ", 1 Cor 2:16. If a matter comes up we are agreed on it, not from a human standpoint, but from the standpoint of having the mind of Christ. It is a possibility, is it not, a wondrous possibility?

K.N.P. It is not just agree to maintain peace, is that your thought? The mind of Christ is almost like being joined together, thinking the same thing, thinking one thing.

W.L. "Joined in soul", Phil 2: 2, that is a very remarkable expression. I think it is illustrated practically in this passage in Samuel. The Lord speaks about "two of you" - the two men by Rachel's sepulchre, and then it goes on to three men - "two or three". It is a very positive outlook, no matter how small the numbers may be.

J.A.P. Is it not marvellous that in this day- really the early part of Samuel as judge is extended - that there were three men going up to God. Where did they come from? Who told them to do that?

W.L. That is one's thought. These two men, "Thou shalt meet two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah". A very interesting thing occurs to me; Saul here was a Benjaminite and I think Rachel would be his great grandmother, and Saul of Tarsus was a Benjaminite. To me that is very appealing that this Saul, a Benjaminite, failed God, but not Saul of Tarsus, not the Benjaminite that we know: he was brought into things in a very real and living way.

L.McF. We had this scripture recently and we thought of the matter of death. Samuel would bring in this side of things that bear upon Saul at the very outset. It is something we should think about; Rachel died as Benjamin was born.

W.L. I am not speaking in a morbid sense, but these two men at Rachel's sepulchre would be interested in the matter of death in a moral way. It is a lesson that we have to learn; using the type 'by Rachel's sepulchre', these two men would understand the "two of you". We must view everything from the standpoint of the death of Christ, and must learn that lesson and how to apply it - Gilgal, we shall touch on that later, the application of the death of Christ to every feature of the flesh. Why these men were there was in the divine ordering and not just by chance. Two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah. I am not particularly concerned about Saul (as we know he had serious failure) but then these three men are men of spiritual substance. And they did not give away all they had. It has been said, don't tell the brethren all you know. We speak to each other and it draws out exercise with one another. Meetings cause one and another to think, that is the value of the temple. Suggestions are made and that prompts spiritual thoughts - that is the value of the temple.

C.F.D. It says that these men were going up to God. I think that is a very remarkable thought. I would be glad if you would say something about it.

W.L. We can apply it simply as to the great privilege in the service of God of going up to God. There is tremendous dignity in that over

against all this activity, all the terrible failure in Israel, the ark of God taken, the priesthood, I think, tailed and there was Samuel who was holding things in a prophetic way, but there were three men going up to God, God is their objective.

C.F.D. Do you ever think of yourself as going up to God?

W.L. Certainly. Do you?

C.F.D. Well, I may not put it in that language, but for instance I will think of having a word of prayer and sometimes it goes through my mind, Well, I will have a talk with the Lord. Maybe it does not carry this dignity. This is a very dignified thought, going up to God.

W.L. It reminds me of entering the holiest. Mr Raven thought that that was a very special thing until he spoke to the old brother and the old brother said, I go in at any time. So there were three men going up to God. I wondered whether we could apply this, not to be fanciful, in our day as like the response being equal to the revelation. These three men had substance as going up to God and they had sufficient even to give to Saul on the way up. Have you any more to say?

C.F.D. They are going up to Bethel, that is the house of God, as we know, and one was carrying three kids; obviously the service of God was in their minds.

W.L. I thought that. And another carrying three cakes of bread, and another carrying a flask of wine; they had everything that was needed for the moment. I think that is the suggestion. And going up to God would refer to "none shall appear before me empty" Exod 34: 20. That is how we go up to God and into the presence of God as persons who have acquired spiritual substance and we catch on to God's feelings as to what it means to Him.

L.McF. You referred to freshness. I think these three kids would have that in mind, what is fresh and what is pleasurable to God.

W.L. That is a good touch, freshness.

J.A.P. These two men and then the three men all served Saul. What would you say about that?

W.L. I thought how gracious God is. As has often been pointed out Saul was anointed with a vial of oil whereas David was anointed with a horn of oil. The vial of oil did not require death but the horn of oil required death. David was anointed with a horn of oil, you might say typically, in the light of the death of Christ. And that is what Saul never learned, the implications of the death of Christ. For instance, he could not wait in this area of Gilgal which is to us the application of the death of Christ to the flesh. He could not wait in that area. And yet they serve him in grace. These three men go up to God. All the activity here, the searching out of the asses on a horizontal level, whereas the three men going up to God is an ascending matter. So we are very often engaged in what is horizontal and much of it right, but we should learn what this upward movement is.

K.N.P. They seem to be at one, these men, there is no arguing, there is no taking up with what they are carrying. I notice it says of the two men and also the three "they will ask", not one of them will ask but they will ask. I wonder whether that would link with Matthew 18 to which you referred to?

W.L. That is one's thought: they are acting together. Now in the assembly really is the only place where this is possible, where men can act in a coordinated spiritual manner. In business matters and other matters, where men are in any way together, you will soon find there is divergence.

J.A.P. So we can be encouraged, I feel, from this passage. Sometimes we may try to help a brother or someone, but even if we do not help him we are to do what is right ourselves. These three men gave what they had to Saul. Maybe in the long run it did not help Saul, but they did what they should have done.

W.L. They did. Saul was God's anointed, he remained that right to the end but I have often linked these men giving this to Saul - it is not quite the same but there is some measure of likeness - to the Lord giving Judas the sop. I understand the sop was a gesture of greatest favour, and He gave Judas that special portion - He did not

give it to John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, He gave it to Judas, what grace.

J.A.P. Elsewhere it was the exercise of the brethren to have some five brethren not at present walking with us at the meetings.

Someone might say, Well, they did not get help. But the principle was maintained that we are trying to help them.

W.L. It was indeed. Well, the next thing is prophecy is a company or prophets coming down. Three men going up and a company of prophets coming down. It reminds me of Mr Stoney's word as to the man from Baal-shalishah - he met many people going to heaven but few coming from there. These men here, this company of prophets say "And the Spirit of Jehovah will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man". How favourable a position Saul was in and he missed it, he did not take advantage of it. This was the hill of God of course, "After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where are the outposts of the Philistines". That would link with what we were saying as to Satan coming to every meeting. The Philistines of course would be typical of persons who are not Christians at all. What havoc that has caused even in Christendom. You think of men that we can all name who are in high ecclesiastical positions in Christendom and they are not Christians at all; that is evident by the things they say. What havoc has been caused in the hill of God where things of God are to be cherished and protected and preserved. Hence we should be very careful that we preserve the hill of God and be on this prophetic line.

NEW YORK

7 January 1995

Key to initials

(New York if not otherwise indicated)

C.F.Dadd, Plainfield; W.Lamont, Cumnock, Scotland; D.McFarlane;
L.McFarlane; J.A.Petersen, Plainfield; G.D.Pfingst, Plainfield; L
D.Phillips; K.N.Pye

MINISTRY MEETING IN PLAINFIELD - 1

G.D.Pfingst

Revelation 12: 10-12

I suppose the writer here is the same as the writer of John's gospel; he is given great things to see and to understand. Our brother who spoke earlier said the disciples did not understand everything; we will never understand everything, God knows everything. The hymn at the beginning impressed me, 'Thou art, O Lord, the centre of that vast world of bliss, where nought of sin can enter, where joy eternal is;' (hymn 259). I suppose that is hard to conceive, a place where no sin can enter and where there is uninterrupted joy. "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit", Rom 14: 17, and one thing it says about the kingdom of God is that it is not in word only, but in power (1 Cor 4: 20). We know this section is future; it is a picture, I think, a little of the present time. We are praying about the authorities, "the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ". We are thankful for the authorities and they are ordained of God, that is fine, but at the same time there is weakness, tremendous weakness in authority, a lack of power. Here it says, a great voice, and it has salvation and power - pretty fine I would say, just to anticipate these things and have something of the good of them in our heart. It is difficult for me to enter upon these things, I am so used to what is changing, what is subject to change, what is weakening all around. We mentioned last night in prayer the deterioration in government. Why is it? Well, it is a wonderful thing here that these persons have overcome him, the enemy, by reason of the blood of the Lamb, and by reason of the word of their testimony. I wish I could put myself in that, "by reason of the blood of the Lamb, and by reason of the word of their testimony". It is fine to have that power in the word and to think of the precious blood of Jesus as a Lamb without spot or blemish. It does not talk about nuclear wars and all those kinds of things, and these kinds of weapons that are being built up and used in various ways to intimidate persons and governments.

In any case this is the time of victory, they have overcome the enemy. "Therefore be full of delight, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them". It is quite a thing even at the present time with these forebodings of what is soon to come in and which we see every day around us. You think of that image in Daniel, a mighty thing and Nebuchadnezzar the head of gold, and then it comes down to the iron and the clay. Well, I think anybody with eyes who wants to see, can see it is the iron and the clay at the present time and they will not mix. Men can do what they like to, amalgamate all these different factions, and they talk about living together in a beautiful way. It never works until that stone not cut out with hands comes in and destroys the whole thing and sets up a kingdom that cannot be destroyed. It is wonderful to take account of that kingdom. Our brother spoke about behaviour in the kingdom, a kingdom that cannot be destroyed. I think that is fine to have that in our hearts now at the present time. The kingdom of God is amongst you and the Spirit here. We have been speaking about making more room for the Spirit, I am sure that is what we have to experience in our own individual histories, that these things while future have a present application, that is just my point and I hope, therefore, we will be encouraged, because it is full of delight. We have been speaking about fullness, "full of delight, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them." Of course we are not in heaven yet but we are talking about heavenly people, a heavenly company and they are full of delight. Think of being full of delight to see this victory that overcomes" and they have overcome him by reason of the blood of the Lamb, and by reason of the word of their testimony". How wonderful to think of this kingdom that is being established that cannot be destroyed. I think that is a fine thought to hold to and look forward to. The time will come, the time at the end when He delivers up the kingdom that God may be all in all. I think it is the kingdom and the kingdom conditions that bring about order, and that is all based on this wonderful power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. We see how things are decaying in the world around us, and the lack of moral power. Well, there is no lack here, "the authority of His Christ". As we have been saying, it is sad to see that brethren are

scattered and divided and not able to work together, it is a sorrowful kind of condition, but you just hold fast to what the Lord is able to do and bring about in His own time. In the meantime by the Spirit we can have some anticipation of these wonderful conditions which are soon to be introduced because of the faithfulness of these overcomers. May we be faithful too at the present time. For His Name's sake.

PLAINFIELD

7 April 1995

MINISTRY MEETING IN PLAINFIELD - 2

C.F.Dadd

Revelation 3: 8-11

When the Lord addresses Philadelphia He really addresses the whole assembly, not just a part of it. This eliminates any possibility of any claiming to be Philadelphia. But He addresses this assembly and one thing that is clear is that they carry the approbation of the Lord and their faithfulness is very distinctly implied. I was thinking of that in relation to what has been said tonight, the thought of faithfulness - "because thou hast a little power, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name". I think the principle of faithfulness is implied in the way that the Lord addresses this assembly. I think it is very beautiful. "Thou hast a little power", not much. Our brother has referred to the fact that we are in a day when things are broken and scattered, and whatever there is it is only little. But He says, "thou hast a little power, and hast kept my word", that would be faithfulness - keeping the word of the Lord. How wonderful it is that the word of the Lord has come in. The first word tonight was in the beginning, the early part of John's gospel, and again we are calling on John as to what the Lord delivered to him, "and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name". Much at the present time, even in Christendom, is really the denial of the name of the Lord; it is denial in the sense that it is not confessed, it is not brought forward.

You can read about religious bodies today and it is interesting to see how they all say that they believe in God - practically everybody says they believe in God - and yet the name of the Lord Jesus rarely comes into the matter. I believe that is involved in what the Lord is saying here, "Thou hast not denied my name". Well, beloved, it is the Name that is the issue, at the present time, the name of Christ.

But then verse 10, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience" - thou hast kept that. I think we are in a time when our patience is being tested, certainly our faith is being tested, but our patience too. We appeal to the Lord for recoveries and we do not see very much in the way of recovery taking place, and our patience

might be tried. But the Lord says, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial". That is a promise; what a promise that is that we will be kept out of the hour of trial "which will come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. I come quickly". We often speak about the Lord's coming. He says, "I come quickly: hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown". In this setting I think the holding fast and the crown would involve the knowledge of God, and it is open to all. So He says, "Hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown". I think the crowning point of what the believer has is the knowledge of God and the love of God, which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. So that we are to hold fast, hold fast to the knowledge of God, the knowledge of Christ; we cannot exclude Christ because we have had the thought of fulness tonight, the full idea is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that would be involved beyond doubt. "That no one take thy crown". The enemy is out to rob us if he can. I was thinking a little of that today, how the enemy would rob us of the food supply, how he would undermine and weaken the ministry if he could. And we want to hold fast to that, and to what has been recovered to us in the day in which we are, which is open to the whole church. It is not our property, it belongs to the whole Christian position. Whether persons take advantage of it or not is their responsibility, but we are to hold fast. I think that is one of the things that our brother, now with Christ, left with us, Hold fast and stand firm. That is a fine word for us tonight that we might be encouraged and in faith we might be found standing as the day comes to a close. For His Name's sake.

PLAINFIELD

17 April 1995

Ephesians 4, verse 10

John Gaskin

Thou art there in exaltation,
There we see Thee, blessed Lord,
For our joyful contemplation –
Thou, the blest incarnate Word.

Thou the effulgence of God's glory,
With its wondrous radiance bright;
Now hearts bow down before Thee,
Rendering to Thee every right.

Blest expression of His substance,
Who its boundless scope can prove,
Who could compass His existence,
He who is in nature love.

Far above all heavens exalted,
There in majesty divine;
By Thy power all things sustaineth,
Power which could be only Thine.

Unto Thee be ever glory,
To Thee honour, power and might.
In adoring love we hail Thee,
Worship in Thy heavenly light.

ABERDEEN

December 1994