

A
WORD
IN ITS
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THE DAYS OF HIS RECEIVING UP

Luke 9: 28-51

A.P.D. I was thinking about this reference "the days of His receiving up" and, perhaps what would correspond, that we are in the days of our receiving up. It says of the Lord that He was received up in glory (1 Tim 3: 16), or gloriously. Peter speaks about the one whom heaven must receive (Acts 3: 21). No doubt He has His own distinction in every way but there should be some correspondence with our being received up, which is just before us. This passage may encourage us and exercise us that there might be a moral correspondence. I think Luke suggests the Lord as pattern; it is perhaps general throughout this gospel, the Lord is the pattern as the heavenly Man. He is pattern for us. As I said, He retains His own distinctiveness and would always have that place in our affections, but what is seen in Him by the Spirit is to be seen in us.

So Luke only, I believe, speaks of Him praying in this section. It says, "he went up into a mountain to pray." I thought we might think of this section in view of the suggestion of our being received up.

L.McF. The Lord's attitude in praying would very much be becoming to us, do you think, in view of our receiving up?

A.P.D. Yes. He is viewed as the dependent Man. It says, "the fashion of his countenance became different". So there is what is to be different in the saints, a heavenly character is to come into expression.

A.S.H. It says of Luke that he spoke with accuracy (Luke 1: 3).

A.P.D. Yes. He gives things in moral order. I think there is what is seen in Christ uniquely and distinctively, and we must keep this always in mind; yet the attractiveness of what is seen in Him is to be seen in the saints, and it is different.

C.F.D. In the Acts it says, "they recognised them that they were with Jesus", Acts 4: 13, these men that were near to Christ testimonially.

They earned on the features that were seen in Him because morally they had taken them on.

A.P.D. I am sure that is right. I think we are in the days, we can say, of our receiving up. Morally attractive features that shone in Christ are to be seen substantially in the saints.

J.R.C. Christ is the pattern of God's world.

A.P.D. So we have in this section what we might enjoy as together, a little preview of what we enjoy and touch now by the Spirit. But then we have things that we have to meet too. The section we read goes on to how the Lord Jesus met them.

J.A.P. What is the force of "the days of his receiving up"? In verse 22 He speaks of "the Son of man must suffer", but it is put here "the days of His receiving up". What does that imply?

A.P.D. I think it suggests heaven's eager anticipation. What would you say?

J.A.P. I think we are very worried about the sufferings before we go into glory, but there is this wonderful matter of being received up; 'Received in glory bright up there', (hymn 350). It lifts our hearts a little, does it not?

A.P.D. I am sure it does. And it is to be glorious - we are to go up gloriously. He was received up in glory (1 Tim 3: 16), not into glory but in glory, meaning gloriously. And I think there is to be a moral glory shining in the saints that is attractive to heaven. Is that too much to say?

L.McF. I do not think so. I was thinking of these two men who are also appearing in glory. These were men of the Old Testament and yet they are in sympathetic support, do you think, of the Lord Jesus as He is seen there?

A.P.D. That is very attractive perhaps giving us a little preview of the happy, mutual side of things that we will enjoy and touch now by the Spirit as we are together.

L.D.P. I wonder if the suggestion of moral correspondence can be seen in Acts 7, "And they stoned Stephen praying, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit", v 59?

A.P.D. Beautiful. And then he says, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge", the Spirit of His Master shining in Stephen. He went up in glory. He may have gone up as suffering as having been stoned, but there was what was glorious there, morally glorious.

J.R.C. The end of Luke's gospel makes that comment that He was carried up, a very attractive matter, that that Man was received into heaven - carried up - as if the whole of heaven was celebrating the incoming of Jesus to heaven.

A.P.D. I am sure that is right. I think in Acts 1 it says He was taken up. But then there is to be some impression of that amongst us. It says of Enoch that he had this testimony before he was translated that he pleased God (Heb 11: 5). We are in those days, I think, and are we conscious of being pleasurable to God?

C.F.D. It says here, "And as he prayed the fashion of his countenance became different"; it refers also to His clothing, "his raiment white and effulgent". But I am thinking of "as he prayed the fashion of his countenance became different". What would you say about that?

A.P.D. You help us please. Tell us what your impressions are.

C.F.D. I wondered whether His immediate link with heaven - "as he prayed the fashion of his countenance became different" - resulted in a reflection of what was heavenly in His face which could be witnessed to by the disciples here, and whether, with ourselves, that as we move forward in relation to what is of Christ and what is of heaven there should be not only a moral change but something that would transpire in the believer which persons would be able to say, Well, he is different.

A.P.D. Yes, very good. "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord." It is the way we come into it, is it not, "are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory," 2 Cor 3: 18? So we can see it

in the brethren's faces. "Such as the heavenly one, such also the heavenly ones", 1 Cor 15: 48. I think that suggests what is substantial, a reflection of what is heavenly in the faces of the saints. Our brother referred to Stephen, it says his face shone as the face of an angel (Acts 6: 15). That is not only the thought of judicial glory; it is the thought of what is heavenly reflected in his face.

C.F.D. I am glad you refer to that because that was a public witness. He was sitting before the court in a sense and there was a witness which they must have seen. And who was it that would say that his face was as the face of an angel? Somebody must have had that idea spiritually. I for one have not seen an angel. It became reflective of what was heavenly, did it not?

A.P.D. I am sure that is so. Our brother alluded to the side of suffering, what suffering Stephen endured, sufferings which none of us will endure, and yet what is heavenly is reflected substantially in Stephen. He looked right into heaven. There is a remarkable piece of Mr Taylor's entitled Cloudless Dispensation. I trust the brethren have all read that. In a sense Acts begins with the introduction of a cloud, "a cloud received him out of their sight." It is almost a backward allusion to the cloud in the Old Testament, but a forward look is that he looked right into heaven, no cloud, nothing between them.

A.S.H. As you were speaking the scripture came before me, "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit" 2 Cor 3: 18. I wondered whether the thought of glory to glory had any place as to what you are speaking about.

A.P.D. Very much so. Not from degradation to glory, as has been said, but from glory to glory. You said something about His raiment, what do you say about that, "white and effulgent".

C.F.D. I wondered whether what He is experiencing does not bring in a kind of a complete change. The whole thing is there, "white and effulgent" would be a reflection of what He was morally. You might

say what He is shining about, even in His raiment there is an expression of what is heavenly.

A.P.D. I think that is helpful. So it would perhaps have its bearing on our associations of life, what comes into expression.

J.A.P. Hebrews 2: 14 says that the Lord Jesus not only overcame death but He annulled him who has the might of death. So the Lord foresaw that Satan would oppose our going into heaven and we need faith to see that that power is broken and that the saints are heavenly and there is this side of the days of receiving up. The Lord would have us enjoy that.

A.P.D. I think so. I think we are in those days. We want to think about that and that there is the desire with us all that we have this testimony that we please God before we are translated. It is not a question of being snatched from the burning; it is a question of "from glory to glory"; not from degradation to glory but "from glory to glory". The saints are to be glorious, they are to be different. Something different is to come into expression, and I think that what has been said that that would be what is characteristically heavenly.

C.F.D. Does that shine out in Moses and Elias, "two men talked with him, who were Moses and Elias, who, appearing in glory"? You might say, here they were. They were no doubt given bodies and the reflection of appearing in glory no doubt was provisional with them, but would be a heavenly aspect of things so that they would see these men and they would say that that is what heaven is like.

A.P.D. I think this mutual side of liberty is most attractive, which we are to enjoy. I think someone said we are in the current of what is going on in heaven in this section, but then we touch it now by the Spirit. It is not formal and official here; they talked with Him. There is a holy, mutual conversation. It would give us some indication of the liberty and mutuality that we will enjoy when we are with Him. But then we can touch it now, I think.

D.McF. Peter speaks of His majesty (1 Peter 1: 16) as far as His glory is concerned. Would there be a link?

A.P.D. "Having been eyewitnesses of his majesty." I think we must always keep the Lord Jesus in our minds and affections in His own distinctiveness. "A voice being uttered to him by the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son", 1 Peter 1: 17. What an impression Peter received. While he was not up to it here, as he goes over it by the Spirit, he comes to those remarkable conclusions - "having been eyewitness of his majesty."

J.R.C. Would it be right to think that there is no change in the Person?

A.P.D. I think what was there comes into expression.

J.R.C. It is the way scripture speaks of it, "became different". Is that not the view of the persons who were there to see the heavenly character of the Person?

A.P.D. I am sure that is right and it is well to realise that.

J.R.C. In Corinthians it says, "we shall be changed" 1 Cor 5: 52, that is the physical change into what is spiritual; but with the Lord Jesus there is no thought of change in Him at all, He is what He is.

A.P.D. I suppose it is like removing of the veil for the moment to see what was there in its intrinsic and moral beauty. But then we need to be changed, do we not, to be brought into correspondence with Him? Then we might just see that we have these matters to meet here. "And it came to pass on the following day, when they came down from the mountain".

K.N.P. I was thinking about what you were saying in relation to the change and the Person being the same - what they were speaking about was what He was going to accomplish. I was thinking of the perspective they had; they spoke of His departure which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. It is not so much what men were going to do or men's view of things, but it was what the Lord's objective was. I thought that that would maybe link with what you are saying about the view that these persons had of Him, the occupation that Moses and Elias had with the Lord was about what He was about to accomplish.

A.P.D. That is helpful. We often are occupied with our matters. Of course in a sense that would be right, but here we are elevated in our thoughts as to what He will do. According to 1 Thessalonians 4 that is a wonderful prospect that we have: "the Lord himself". Of course in Luke 9 it looks on to His death and what He would accomplish in His death, but in 1 Thessalonians 4 it is what we are looking for, "the Lord himself, with an assembling shout, with archangel's voice and with trump of God, shall descend from heaven; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we, the living who remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we shall be always with the Lord. So encourage one another with these words." So we can well be occupied with what the Lord is going to do. "The Lord himself" a beautiful reference, is it not?

J.A.P. A brother was saying lately that we anticipate this in the Supper. It is a question whether there is a change with the brethren at the Supper. Whether we are affected by the Lord - some impression from Christ.

A.P.D. I am sure that is helpful to see. A manifestation of the glory of the Lord; when He comes to us. "I am coming to you." It has been said that a manifestation is a new way in which the Lord may present Himself, different and fresh. We want to be alert and ready for that. And then I think that would effect a change in us.

C.F.D So that the Lord's coming in amongst us at the time of the Supper is not a stereotyped situation; it is something that is marked by the freshness of heaven as He would come in. So it says here "but having fully awoke up they saw his glory". I wonder whether that is a suggestion of what it would be on the Lord's day - some fresh impress of that glory.

A.P.D. That is helpful. There is a tendency, I suppose, with us to lethargy. Paul speaks in Ephesians about waking up; chapter 5: 14 "Wake up, thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee." What you say about it not being stereotyped is surely confirmed in the three manifestations in

the end of John's gospel, each different, each distinctive, each no doubt having its own effect on those that saw Him.

J.R.C. I think we were encouraged a few days ago about the particular glory of the Son of God at the Supper. That is a feature which is so essential for us. We are prone to bring in our blessings and what we enjoy, and that is right, but there is something for God distinctively, as in this scripture here, in Christ alone. Do you think that would be right?

A.P.D. Very good. It says, "And as the voice was heard Jesus was found alone". I think in all these things, although we speak rightly about our being conformed to His image, made like unto Him, we must always keep in our minds His peculiar distinctiveness. Perhaps you are referring to our brother's address in Denton, Christ on God's side; it helps us to take account of Christ as the Son of God. Now, to touch on these practical matters. I would like to inquire as to why he says that the days of His receiving up were fulfilled? You might say it was still before Him.

C.F.D. The Lord brings in what is anticipative, does He not? That they were "fulfilled" suggests that from His own side everything was complete and He was ready to fill out the great thought of "the days of his receiving up" - a marvellous matter His being received up. Receiving Him up, shows the attitude of heaven, does it not, and the Lord, it seems, was ready here. I would be glad to hear what you have to say about that.

A.P.D. I wondered if it would be right to suggest that these incidents that come in immediately are in the light of the days of His receiving up.

C.F.D. What is in your mind?

A.P.D. It is very interesting to me that it says that He healed the child and gave him back to his father. In these days there should be faith, and a great need for prayer and fasting; what the Lord might accomplish as we beseech Him. He says, "I beseech thee look upon my son". In these days in which we are, the days of our receiving up, what might not the Lord do for us if we have faith, if we

are believing and if we are in the attitude of prayer and fasting? I do not know what the brethren would think of that.

C.F.D. So from the Lord's side He has to say, "O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and suffer you?" But later on after the son had been restored to his father, it says, "And all were astonished at the glorious greatness of God." That is what shone out in Christ - did it not? - as He was moving here, but I wondered if the unbelieving and perverted generation is not put in for us to examine ourselves closely to see if there is any strain of unbelief with us. It might be more with us than we realise.

A.P.D. It included the disciples; that is a solemn thing. His remarks "O unbelieving and perverted generation," included the disciples. It is interesting that these three matters come in before it says, "the days of his receiving up were fulfilled," as if in these days, these wonderful days in which we are looking forward to the Lord's return, the Lord coming for us, the Lord would give us to realise that He has the power and the means to meet these conditions. What would you say?

L.McF. Coming down from the mountain would suggest our everyday circumstances and how the truth is worked out there.

A.P.D. I am sure. What might not the Lord do for us if we are believing. Another scripture says "But this kind does not go out but by prayer and fasting" Matt 17: 21. All of us have some circumstances similar to these, perhaps not so extreme and yet extreme. What might not the Lord do for us if we beseech Him and are believing - believing persons?

J.R.C. You emphasised that the disciples were included in that statement.

A.P.D. Yes, they were.

J.R.C. I think that is something for us to hold on to. What difference was there between the disciples and a perverted generation. There is something the Lord was rebuking.

A.P.D. He was.

J.A.P. There was this underlying matter of "who should be the greatest". What the brethren are saying is very important. This was lurking at the hearts of the disciples and a few days later when the Lord introduced the Supper the same thing again.

A.P.D. Yes. It is very attractive the way Luke brings it in, He took a little child and set it by Him It Would challenge our hearts could the Lord take me and set me by Him as having the spirit of a little child? It is not in the midst here - in Matthew it is in the midst - but He put it *by* Him. I think here He would say, Look at Me and look at the little child there is a correspondence - the spirit of a little child. He would say to any one of us, Could I put you by Me to set out the principle of the spirit of a little child?

C.F.D. You would relate the simplicity and yet reality of faith with a little child. The child would represent the principle of unswerving faith do you think?

A.P.D. It would be a test to us as to whether the Lord can put us by Him and say, I want to show you something, I want to show you the spirit of a little child. "In the midst" - they would be all around and taking account of the child, but here He put it by Him. That is a very attractive suggestion, I think. We are in the days of our receiving up and it is interesting that these matters come here before it says, "the days of his receiving up were fulfilled", as if we are to encounter these things, and we surely do; we are to be marked by faith and believing and the spirit of a little child.

L.McF. So the Lord says, "Whosoever shall receive this little child in my name receives me, and whosoever shall receive me receives him that sent me." So this reception with us it is "in my name". We had much as to the Name in the beginning of Acts recently.

A.P.D. So it is a representative and in Luke the representative is morally like the Sender. Governments are represented, but do they represent in any sense the government except officially? But here the suggestion is that the one sent is morally like the Sender. That is

a wonderful thing that whatever you might do and say you represent morally the One that sent you.

J.R.C. That is the way Paul speaks of Timothy; he is a complete representation of Paul amongst the saints.

A.P.D. "No one like-minded" Phil 2: 20 – very good.

J.R.C. He also says of him "my beloved child" and "my true child", that is how he speaks of him in the two epistles (2 Tim 1: 2 & 1 Tim 1: 2).

A.P.D. It is a great test, I think. I think the days of our receiving up need to be kept before us, that in these days, these wonderful days in which we are just waiting for the Lord's return, His soon coming, these elements or these moral thoughts should come into expression. Would you say that?

J.R.C. How needful that the younger generation is included in our thoughts and our love and directions, because that is what the Lord is displaying here, is it not? After all, the young people, speaking naturally, are thinking about what lies ahead of them, but the great thing is the Lord's coming. Therefore we want to keep that livingly in their minds by what we can express in ourselves.

A.P.D. Very good. I think the Lord would say there is a certain correspondence between this little child and Me. Would you not like in some sense to bring out the moral loveliness of Jesus, the moral features that shone in Christ? We may say, if the Lord came in we would listen to Him, would we not? If He physically, corporeally, came in we would listen to Him. But there is a suggestion here that the principle, the spirit, of this little child is to be seen in the persons and we should receive them even as we would receive Him.

J.R.C. That immediately negates any ideas of importance. The disciples were concerned about who was the greatest. It is the reasoning of their hearts it says! perhaps they were not saying it but they were meaning it.

A.P.D. That is a great test; do we move amongst the brethren with the desire to leave an impression of Christ? We all know our own

hearts and the tendency to seek prominence and appreciation, but what really matters, what will be lasting and what will abide in the hearts of the saints is to bring in some impression of Christ.

C.F.D. He says in Matthew 18 "Whoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child," v 4. He goes on to speak about "he is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens". That little child represents the principles of humbling ourselves, another world of things which is centred in Christ.

A.P.D. That is the way to true moral greatness, is it not? You think of what He does here, "taken a little child set it by him," and then you read in Philippians 2, "For let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but emptied himself, taking a bondman's form, taking his place in the likeness of men;" v 5-7. This is the One who took a little child and put it by Him. That going down mind, that going down spirit, is to be seen in us. It goes on to say, "becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him," v 8,9. Of course He has His own distinctive place, but then Paul says, Let this mind be in you - the little child by Him, really. That is what we want to demonstrate, that spirit. Then finally you have this reference in verse 49, "And John answering said, Master, we saw some one casting out demons in thy name, and we forbid him, because he follows not with us. And Jesus said to him, Forbid him not, for he that is not against you is for you." Well, those were the days of His receiving up, those are the days of our receiving up. What does it convey to us?

L.McF. We do not want to assume that we are the only ones. Do you think that was what John was saying - "we forbid him, because he follows not with us." I think we need help as to that, the Lord knowing those that are His.

A.P.D. So John would perhaps emphasise "because he follows not with us" - us. But we are not to think, as you suggest, that we are the only ones. Thank God for the light and truth that the Lord has

given to us, but it is for all, and what others may be doing we must leave that and be thankful for it.

C.F.D. I was just thinking that - 'and be thankful for it'. Whoever these might be, they had the secret to the power, because it says, "we saw some one casting out demons in thy name". Whoever that was, they had the secret as to where the power was and evidently the Lord was quite prepared to provide it, and the domain of the enemy in principle is being overcome.

A.P.D. I think this is something for us to consider. Our brother said in Aberdeen, "Lord, and what of this man?... what is that to thee?" John 21: 21,23. He linked it with what others might be doing. What is that to thee? "Follow thou me." What others might be doing, thank God for it, if they are spreading the gospel thank God for it: but His word to us is "Follow thou me." I was helped by that.

J.R.C. It is a very positive statement here, "he that is not against you is for you." Chapter 11 brings in the other side, "He that is not with me is against me," v 23. The great difference, as has been pointed out, is the truth of the Holy Spirit.

A.P.D. Help us about that.

J.R.C. In chapter 11 it says, "If therefore ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much rather shall the Father who is of heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" v 13.

So if you have the Holy Spirit you soon have Christ in your heart: in fact it works the other way, if Christ is in your heart, you will soon have the Holy Spirit. I point this out because there is a line drawn, because these persons in chapter 11 were denying the power of the Lord Jesus and connecting it to Beelzebub.

A.D.P. That is helpful to see. Here I think it is that we should not be confined in our outlook as to what may be amongst us. Thank God for what is amongst us, but I was very much helped by that word at the end of John's gospel, "Peter, seeing him, says to Jesus, Lord, and what of this man?" Well, we may say that, What of this man, that man or the other man. You hear of things happening, of the gospel preachings being effective, persons saved - what of this man? And

what the Lord says is, "If I will that he abide until I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me", v 22. That is the Lord's injunction to us, is it not? Maybe this would encourage us not to be sectarian and narrow in our thoughts but to be thankful for what God is doing.

A.S.H. The Lord Jesus is in control at all times. Here it says, "And Jesus, seeing the reasoning of their heart"; He knows our hearts, He is a heart-knowing God. These persons that the disciples saw, the Lord knew that they were doing, He was acquainted with their movements. Think of Him as in control at all times, "his departure which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem", not only that something might happen but He knew what is going to happen. He is in control at all times.

A.P.D. He is. I would like to finish with the impression of what the Lord can do for us in our circumstances. He is able for it: He is able to restore the child to his father. Would that that might come home to each of us. Many of us are going through much in relation to our families. What the Lord can do if we beseech Him and if we believe, if there is faith with us. I think this is in the setting of the days of His receiving up, and I would suggest that, in the setting of the days of our receiving up, what the Lord is ready to do for those that have faith. Would that be right to say?

G.A. In Mark 5 we see the ruler of the synagogue and how the Lord came in. He healed the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue. There was much tumult, but the Lord says, "Damsel, I say to thee, Arise. And immediately the damsel arose and walked," and then it says that He charged them that no one should know this; and He desired that something should be given her to eat. This food is still coming down at the present time, would you say?

A.P.D. It is available and surely our young ones need food, spiritual food. There should be food for them in the meetings. In the breaking of bread there is food, there is what will build us up constitutionally. In Matthew says, "Take eat" Matt 26: 26, it has in mind there that the Supper is food. So there is food to sustain life, to sustain our young life amongst us. I trust that we might get some

impressions of what is available to us in the days of our receiving up. We are not going from degradation to glory, we are to go from glory to glory. It is what is morally glorious being worked out among the saints.

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READINESS FOR THE SUPPER

Paul Devenish

Numbers 10: 1,2; Exodus 21: 1-6; 1 Corinthians 5: 7,8; 11: 23-26

The Lord's supper is before us on the morrow, a wonderful occasion in which we look forward to a fresh manifestation of the Lord Jesus. Perhaps the Lord would help us about what lies behind the Supper, which if entered into, would give depth to us - spiritual depth. It is not to be just a superficial matter. I think it has been said that maybe with most of us, or with many of us, the impression of the Lord's coming is second hand. For myself, I long for a first-hand impression. I would desire that each of us here receive it first-hand. Thomas in chapter 20 of John learned about the first manifestation second hand, from others. There would be a certain blessing, I suppose, connected with that. Perhaps we do not have the personal experience of His coming to us, but the fact that He has come leaves a certain blessing with it which we can partake of or participate in. But I would desire for myself, and I trust for each one of us, that the experience may be first hand; "The disciples rejoiced therefore, having seen the Lord," John 20: 20. What is in mind is what leads up to the Supper and what lies behind it that would help us. The injunction in Hebrews is, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together," v 25. In that connection I desire to speak about the silver trumpets. What lies behind the suggestion of the silver trumpets is that the Lord Jesus has a right to us through redemption. We are not our own, we have been bought with a price. Think about that when it is meeting night or on the Lord's day. We are not our own, we have been bought with a price: glorify now then God in your body, (1 Cor 6: 20). When you are ready to put your feet up and be comfortable for the evening when there is a meeting on, I hope your wife says to you, Have you heard the silver trumpets? You are not your own, you have been bought with a price. Of course the great occasion that the silver trumpets would announce, is the Lord's supper, "when ye come together in assembly," 1 Cor 11: 18. But it would apply to all our gatherings. I would suggest that these things

that I desire to speak about lie behind the Supper, they are in view of the Supper, all looking on to the Supper. We are often reminded that we are never more than three days from the Supper and we want to have it in our hearts and minds because that is when the Lord is going to come to us and we will see some manifestation of His glory. Do not miss it.

Then we might speak for a moment of the new covenant. It is referred to in chapter 11 of first Corinthians, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood". But then the new covenant is to form us, it is to form us in love. The spirit of the Hebrew bondman is the spirit of the new covenant. It is spoken about in Galatians as our mother (Gal 4: 24-26). It is linked with Jerusalem above, which is our mother. It has a certain forming character. and we are to be formed in love. So that the spirit of the Hebrew bondman is the spirit of the new covenant and it is to form us in the Divine nature. Hymn 456 says, 'A people formed to show, Thy praise, ... Thy willing people formed in love'. The character of a mother is linked with the new covenant, having in mind formation, spiritual formation, but formation in love that would go to an excess beyond any legal requirement: "I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go free". Well, let us just be nurtured, let us be formed in love as we contemplate the Hebrew bondman. It says his master bored his ear through with an awl. We know it required the Lord's death to bring into force the new covenant. Scripture is clear about that, but it has in mind that we should be formed in the divine nature. And that would involve excess, not just meeting the legal requirements. "I love my master, my wife, and my children. How does that work out? Not only our love for God, but our love for one another is to be marked by excess. The spirit of the Hebrew bondman, I say it again and I hope it leaves an impression on your heart, is the spirit of the new covenant. It is wonderful to think about the way the Lord Jesus went in love - "I love" - not only a requirement, He must indeed needs go that way, He must go that way if we were to be brought into blessing, into the gain and the enjoyment of divine love the Spirit shedding abroad God's love in our hearts. But that spirit is to mark us. The mother

character comes out in Galatians involving that we are in spiritual liberty as formed in love.

Then I refer to the passover. In the teaching in 1 Corinthians it precedes Paul's reference to the Lord's supper - these very affecting words "our passover, Christ has been sacrificed". Moses says *your* lamb is to be roast with fire (Exod 12) involving the sufferings of Christ. Perhaps it is not normal to emphasise the sufferings of Christ at the Supper, although they may come in to move the hearts of the saints, but lying behind our appreciation of the Lord Jesus is this reference to the passover, the passover lamb - *our* passover, *your* lamb. Let us take that home to each of our hearts, your lamb. "Our passover, Christ, has been sacrificed; so that let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven". That would link back with Adam's transgression, Adam and Eve's transgression of disobedience; old leaven would be disobedience. The leaven of malice and wickedness would come out in Cain. It says, "but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The appropriation of the passover I think is to deepen us in our appreciation of Christ and His sufferings on our account. Dear young ones, He suffered in your stead and in my stead. He is the One that is our Substitute. He is your Lamb, take Him into your heart - your Lamb that has been roast with fire involving the extremity of His sufferings. Matthew and Mark give us that, the unmitigated character of the sufferings of Christ. O, beloved, go over those sufferings and take Him into your affections! What depths, what wealth in spiritual affection would be available to the Lord as we come to the great matter of the Supper if we appreciate and appropriate our passover, Christ, it says, "has been sacrificed".

In chapter 10 you have the matter of loyalty to the fellowship, the fellowship of His death. Let it not be that our coming to the Supper is just a superficial matter. Oh, dear brethren, let these things that we have spoken about enter into the depths of our feelings and affections as we make ourselves ready for that great occasion. Let us not minimise the wonderful occasion that is before us. It is the time when the Lord will manifest Himself and we are to

have some impression of His glory, of His beauty. Our brother spoke about Peter's reference to being eyewitnesses of His majesty (2 Peter 1: 16). The prophet speaks about seeing the King in His beauty (Isa 33: 17). Do not miss it. Do not have it second hand. Dear brethren, let us come up this way, let us be loyal to the fellowship. There is a great need for that. You say, What I do out of the sight of the brethren is my business. It is a great test what we do out of the sight of the brethren. We may conform and be true when we are in the sight of the brethren, but what do we do out of the sight of the brethren. The fellowship involves a partnership and it involves loyalty, loyalty to the truth, loyalty to the death of the Lord Jesus, it is the fellowship of His death. These things all lie behind, I might suggest, our coming up to that wonderful occasion of the Lord's supper.

I trust we might be formed in love, that we might realise that we are not our own, we have been bought with a price, that the Lord has that claim over us, "glorify now then God in your body" 1 Cor 6: 20 and that these things may help us as we approach the great occasion of the Lord's supper. So He says in chapter 11, "For I received from the Lord, that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, in the night in which he was delivered up, took bread, and having given thanks broke it, and said, This is my body, which is for you". A most touching matter, "This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after having supped, saying This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye shall eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye announce the death of the Lord, until he come." What a privilege, beloved brethren, is ours! And one's concern is that we might have this experience of the Lord's presence first-hand. And it involves exercise. It involves that we work out the truth in our souls so that there is depth and meaning to this wonderful occasion. And one would encourage one another with these words. I trust that each one of us might be ready for the Lord's supper. You say, Well, you have been speaking about the Lord's coming, and that may transpire

tomorrow, but what we are looking for if the Lord tarries for a moment, is the Lord Jesus coming to us. May we know it first-hand, not like Thomas who missed that wonderful occasion. It has been said before, the disciples did not say to him, Why were you not at the meeting? Where were you? They did not say that. "The other disciples therefore said to him, We have seen the Lord", John 20: 25. O, do not miss that wonderful moment, dear brethren. May we be led along the line that I have suggested in these scriptures that there may be depth and meaning, there may be spiritual formation with us in divine love so that this wonderful occasion may have the great place that it should have in our minds and hearts because we have the prospect of seeing the Lord. May it be so in His Name.

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THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Roland Brown

John 15: 26,27; 16: 13-15; Revelation 21: 9,10; 22: 16,17

I desire, dear brethren, to say something as to what might be described as the mission of the Holy Spirit of God. You find when

you speak to many believers about that Person of the Godhead that they regard Him only as an influence and as a power. They will speak appreciatively of what He does for them, as we would, I trust, but what is not always apparent is the recognition that He is a divine Person with feelings, with prerogatives that are all His own. We often speak together of His activities, how He joins His help to our weakness, how He sheds abroad in our hearts the love of God. What great things these are! The very familiarity with the text can eclipse in the soul the greatness of it, that He should shed abroad in your heart and mine the love of God. But is that all we see - His activities as a Help, as a Supporter, as a Comforter, as a Sustainer? I do believe that there is room for enrichment in our thoughts as to the Holy Spirit of God. There is scope for greater depth and fulness in response to Him. "But when he is come": what a moment when He came at Pentecost! What grace that He should come at all, One so great and glorious that the Lord speaks anticipatively of His coming, that He would come with a mission. I believe that all those other activities to which we have referred, wide and diverse as they are, are directed to that objective. His activities and His power are not indiscriminate, but all that He is to us and all that He does for us is directed towards the objective for which He came. Now, it is important that we should know what that objective is. It is important that we should align ourselves with the objective of the Holy Spirit of God because we can be sure that if the objective that He has before Him is the objective that we have before us, we shall prove His power perhaps in a way that we have never known before. The Lord speaks of Him in this first passage as "the Spirit of truth" ... "whom I will send". He has come as the sent One, but immediately the Lord Jesus refers to Him as having His own prerogatives, "the Spirit of truth who goes forth from with the Father". We need to speak of Him with reverence. In His presence we need, as the scripture exhorts us, to be careful. He "goes forth from with the Father" and the Lord says, "he shall bear witness concerning me". We often dwell at length on what is described as His lowly service. But I think these passages would enhance the Person of the Holy Spirit to us, that our response to Him might be richer and fuller and reverential, that it

should not only be occupied with His activities but with a Person and I think we shall find that those activities that we describe as lowly are indeed very exalted.

"He shall bear witness concerning me". Since the outset of time that has been the activity of the Spirit of God. Peter tells us in his epistle how the prophets "searched out; searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them pointed out, testifying before of the sufferings which belonged to Christ, and the glories after these", 1 Pet 1: 11. How wonderful to think of that, that from the outset of time the subject of divine testimony, empowered by the Spirit of God, has been Christ. Indeed, you go right back to the garden of Eden and in the presence of the greatest catastrophe of all, the incoming of sin into the world, a testimony was raised as to Christ, the woman's seed, and in the presence of what was possibly the greatest human disaster ever, God rendered a testimony to the victory that Christ would gain; how He would crush the serpent's head. Right down through the Old Testament you find persons who were brought into sympathy with the Spirit of God as they bore testimony to Christ: "Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet ... like unto me", says Moses (Deut 18: 15). David said, "And he shall be as the light of the morning, like the rising of the sun, A morning without clouds", 2 Sam 23: 4. I am sure many references will come into your mind of how the Spirit of God was pointing to Christ, pointing to His incoming, pointing to His sufferings prophetically and pointing to His coming glory. Enoch prophesied, "Behold, the Lord has come amidst his holy myriads", Jude v 14. What a theme of prophetic testimony from the outset of time! And as Stephen ranged over it in his address to those who were about to murder him, his conclusion was, "ye do always resist the Holy Spirit", Acts 7: 51. What an indictment! What a setting out of divine ways in patient grace as God presented His best! God spoke anticipatively of His beloved Son, "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth!" Isa 42: 1. Think of God, if it is a right word to use, and I use it reverently, enthusing as He spoke of Christ anticipatively through the prophet and, consistent with the faithful

testimony of the Spirit of God, consistent also was its rejection, "ye do always resist the Holy Spirit ... Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain those who announced beforehand concerning the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have now become deliverers up and murderers!", Acts 7: 51,52.

Was there ever anyone so sinned against as the Holy Spirit of God? Even today we read of the insulting of the Spirit of grace (Heb 10: 29). In the believer the flesh lusts against Him. His presence here supremely in Christ, and they said He had a demon! Because of the grace of His coming as the sent One to indwell believers He is despised and the very scriptures that were written under His inspiration are twisted and distorted and contradicted. Was ever anyone more sinned against than the Holy Spirit of God? Well might we be exhorted in the word, not to quench the operation of His power. He is here in lowly grace and His power can be quenched. The operation of it can be stifled by the allowance of that in me that is abhorrent to God. And He can be grieved too. Nothing brings out more clearly in the scriptures His personality, if one might reverently speak of it in that way, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God", Eph 4: 30. What feelings He has as He takes up His abode in the believer, closely identified, as He is, with the condition we are in. It says of Him that He "makes intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered", Rom 8: 26. Think of feelings like that! James says, "the Spirit which has taken his abode in us", chap 4: 5. Is there evidence in you that He is in residence? I remember a brother drawing attention to the fact that when the Queen is in residence in her palace, the flag flies. When she goes off to another one, it comes down. Is there evidence that this Person of the Godhead has taken up His dwelling-place within? The Lord says, "He shall bear witness concerning me". That is His great mission. He says to these faithful ones who loved Him and were feeling His departure, "and ye too bear witness". How thankful we are for their witness! How thankful we are for the witness of the apostles, those who had fellowship with Christ in the days of His flesh. What a valuable witness was theirs! How privileged we are to have the account of it.

But that came to an end. The witness of the apostles was distinctive but it came to an end; "he shall bear witness concerning me" is continuing right up to this present moment and the challenge is whether we are available for the Spirit of God in the pursuance of His objective or whether we obstruct Him.

In the next passage the Lord says, "He shall glorify me". I think it refers to a circle here on the earth where Christ is honoured. He has been glorified in heaven. Peter announced that early on in the Acts, He gave his own testimony but then through his mouth came the testimony of the Spirit of God, "God has made him, this Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ", Acts 2: 36. There was the Spirit of God testifying to the exaltation of Christ in heaven, but He has in mind that He should be glorified in human hearts. He has in mind that there should be a circle here on the earth where He is "everything, and in all", Col 3: 11. We often sing that hymn,

"Jesus! Thou art enough

The mind and heart to fill" (Hymn 174).

Are you searched as you sing that hymn? Is He sufficient for you? The Spirit of God would make Him sufficient for you. "He shall glorify me" and all His activities in relation to guiding us into the truth, I think, have that in mind. What grace that it should say of this Divine Person that "he shall not speak from himself". We read in the Corinthians of the exercise of His prerogatives, that He divides "to each in particular according as he pleases", 1 Cor 12: 11, but He has taken this place of not speaking from Himself, but conveying the present mind of God. What a place He has taken! How ill it behoves any of us, therefore to speak from ourselves! How ill it behoves any of us in the local meeting to say what I think and what I want and what my opinion is when the Holy Spirit of God is there and He is there as not speaking from Himself but content to be a conveyor of the mind of God. "For he shall not speak from himself; but whatsoever he shall hear he shall speak". The suggestion is that there are living communications available from heaven that the Spirit of God is committed to passing on and the question would be whether we are ready to receive them.

Brethren will recall that at the beginning of the recovery, about 150 years ago, one of the things that troubled the brethren was clericalism. Many of the brethren in fellowship had come out of what we speak of as system and there were many persons that were familiar with the clerical system, the idea that we all sit in the room and only Mr So-and-So who knows something is allowed to speak. In fact, if you look into Mr Darby's writings at the time, you will see that conditions reached such a pass that if some simple brother gave out a hymn, many brethren would not even open their hymnbooks, even less so if he presumed to read the Scriptures.

It was thought that those things were the province of educated and intelligent men only and Mr Darby who was himself an educated and intelligent man was the foremost in condemning that. He wrote that article as to the sin against the Holy Ghost, the notion of a clergyman being that dispensationally. These things are history and are well-known but, of course, the reason why many brethren were fearful of letting go of clericalism was because they thought it would be a free-for-all. I think in the day in which we are, the day of small things, the danger arises from that, not so much from clericalism but the notion that we can all have our say and that my opinion is just as good as yours. That is a thing that we are in danger of falling into and I believe the principle of democracy amongst us militates as effectively against the operation of the Holy Spirit of God as clericalism ever did. I do think, dear brethren, that we help one another by reminding one another that there is a divine Person here and the word is, "Be careful in his presence" (Exod 23: 21) "for He shall not speak from himself". So if I jump in with what I want to say, the chances are that what He would minister in His infinite patience and grace may be lost and effectively His power and operation amongst us may be quenched.

"He will announce to you what is coming." What a wonderful service, not occupying us with the past but engaging us with the future, a future which is very imminent. I think when it says, "and he will announce to you what is coming" it really embraces what is eternal in character, what will shortly eclipse this time-scene in which

we are and that is what the Holy Spirit would engage us with, not with difficulties and administrative matters, but with what is coming. Of course, we need what is administrative. We are thankful for those who provide these occasions for us and the work that goes into it but all is in view of the Holy Spirit being free to fulfil His mission to engage us with what is coming.

So Paul says, "forgetting the things behind, and stretching out to the things before" (Phil 3: 13): there was a man who was committed in his life and service to the objectives to which the Holy Spirit was committed. Indeed, I think one of those that has helped us has said that there are times when he almost personifies the Holy Spirit of God and he speaks of "forgetting". There is much that occupies our time that can be profitably forgotten, but there are things ahead that are immense and glorious. How much do we have our view on what lies ahead and the imminence of our entry into it in finality? How that sets everything in perspective in our souls "He shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you." In the type "all the treasure of his master was under his hand", Gen 24: 10. What wealth He is entrusted with, come down from heaven at Pentecost, freighted with heavenly grace. In that type you see him travelling as the servant to Rebecca and he opens his treasures. They are his credentials that he is who he says he is. How much more so with the Spirit of truth, what that divine Person has brought to us. Do we estimate it sufficiently, the very wealth that we have in our hands, the written word of God inspired by Him: "all the treasure of his master as under his hand."

Now in Revelation you get the word, "Come here, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife". What an invitation to one who had seen the great harlot, seen Babylon destroyed, but the invitation is, "Come here, I will shew thee ... And he carried me away in the Spirit". Are we ready to be carried away like that, carried away to a great and high mountain? You say the point of that, as we are often told, is that He would get a good view, that he would see this great sight from an elevated position, but I think it indicates that in the beloved apostle there is a self-surrender and humility that he could

be carried away in the Spirit. What do you know of that, dear brother, dear sister, being carried away in the Spirit, lifted above the mundane that occupies us so necessarily for so much of our time, but lifted above it, carried away? Or are we becoming so tied down by earthly and temporal things? The apostle says "For all seek their own things, not the things of Jesus Christ" Phil 2: 21. What a sad statement for the apostle who had so ministered in the power of the Spirit to bring the things of Jesus Christ before the saints and he said, "For all seek their own things, not the things of Jesus Christ". They did not want to be carried away. But in John you get a man who was ready to be carried away, a man who had written about the breakdown of the church, who had written faithfully for Christ to the assemblies, but he is seeing the finished product of the activities of the Holy Spirit of God. "I will shew thee" - it is not a common sight. It is not on show for anybody to gawp at. This is a view that is given to those that desire to see it and I think the Spirit of God would promote that desire in our souls. It is part of the "things that are mine" that He would communicate to us: "I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." What a view! How much has been said and written about this passage, this city "coming down out of the heaven from God, having the glory of God", having its own radiance, heavenly in origin and in destiny and in character, God's abode, a dwellingplace suited for Him! Would you like a view of that or would you prefer a view of the brethren in their difficulties and their weaknesses and their shortcomings, and these things that we talk about? "And he carried me away". People say frivolously, He got a bit carried away, but, I believe, the scriptures indicate that that is Christian experience. Paul says in writing to the Corinthians, "For whether we are beside ourselves, it is to God; or are sober, it is for you", 2 Cor 5: 13. He knew what it was to be beside himself. I would like to know more of that. I could not say very much about that from experience, perhaps momentarily, but if we stop for a minute to think of what the psalmist says that, "Thy countenance is fulness of joy, Ps 16: 11, I think the believer should in his experience know something of ecstasy. This beloved man was "carried away" and Paul speaking of his own experience says he did not know whether he was in the body or out

of the body and the implication is that it did not matter, that the senses and faculties of the earthen vessel would not have availed. What he was listening to, what he was privileged to be privy to, those unspeakable things that were said which were not permitted for man to utter, but which he heard, his earthly vessel would not have helped. The curious would like to know whether he went up physically or whether he went up in his spirit or how he went up. It is amazing how trivial we can be. A sister was speaking to somebody who was not a believer about the coming of the Lord as being her hope and she replied, Well, how are you going to get up there? How the natural mind focuses on the trivia instead of the immensity of the prospect! Paul in writing that great resurrection chapter says, "But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what body do they come?" (1 Cor 15: 35). Someone will say that. Instead of embracing the immensity of the objective that there is a spiritual body, that the believer is going to be clothed with a body that is suited to eternal and final conditions, some one will want to know the mechanics of it, how does it all work. But the apostle says he was carried away in the Spirit. I covet that experience. Ezekiel was lifted up by a lock of his head (Ezek 8: 3). There was not a big business holding him down, pinning him to the earth. No! There were not lots of earthly connections and attractions. He could be lifted up by the Spirit by a lock of his head and I challenge my own soul, am I amenable to spiritual experience or am I, as the apostle had to say to the Corinthians, "yet carnal", 1 Cor 3: 3? He was not able to speak to them as to spiritual but as to fleshly because they were carnal. I think the Spirit of God would help us as we have the desire to be spiritual, to enter into the reality of spiritual experience for ourselves and to have a view of what is going to delight the heart of Christ eternally. How the local meeting would take on a different hue as it is seen through this passage, "the bride, the Lamb's wife".

The scriptures finish with this direct word from the Lord, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify these things to you ..." He is giving His personal authority to what is in this book, that it comes from Him: "I Jesus". He is speaking from beyond death. He is

speaking from the resurrection world to those of us that are here on the earth. How that should thrill our hearts, a word from a glorified Man in heaven. It has struck me recently as one of the most wonderful things that there are persons here on the earth that are in touch with a glorified Man in heaven. That is an amazing thing and here He is speaking from the glory, "I Jesus" and He presents Himself. There is nothing more intended to affect the affections of the saints than the presentation of Himself. There is nothing on Tuesday night that will more stimulate the saints than some simple impression of Christ and that is the spirit of prophecy, the testimony of Jesus. "I Jesus ... I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." The Spirit of God is speaking and the bride is speaking. They both say, "Come" and they say it together. The Spirit of God is saying, "Come". He is empowering that response and there is on the earth, those that long for Christ and form His bride, and they say it. The objective of the Spirit of God is their own and they say, "Come".

But then there are those that hear. All these categories of persons that are described in this verse might be in this room. I have no doubt that there is here what forms the bride or Christ and there might be those in this room who although positionally very near it are not really committed to it. "And let him that hears say, Come". Have you heard it? Have you heard that longing expressed in the hearts of the saints for Christ? "And let him that is athirst come". There is somebody with a need and the appeal is for them to come. You can see how the Spirit of God is maintaining right to the end of the dispensation the character of it, the evangelical appeal of it: "And let him that is athirst come". I do pray that we may be maintained in the spirit of evangelical appeal until the Lord comes. A brother said to me recently that evangelism is the refuge of those who have given up assembly truth. Can that be right? The more you think about it, it is nonsense. Can it really be asserted that what is evangelical is inconsistent with assembly truth? "And let him that is athirst come; he that will ..." What an appeal going out to all men, "he that will, let him take the water of life freely." May God preserve amongst us the

spirit of evangelical zeal, not only towards unbelievers but towards our brethren in Christ, many of whom are not available to us. The Spirit of God is urgent that the dispensation might be completed and he would inspire our hearts with that spirit of evangelical fervour. Thank God for the young men who preach in the open air in this city. I say, Thank God for them, persons that are prepared to go out and speak of the great things of God in a hostile atmosphere. I believe that is one of the ways that the Spirit of God restrains. It is another of His activities, restraining evil, and I think He does it through the testimony of the saints, including the open-air preaching. May it result in the formation in them of character and spiritual manhood and stamina for the testimony and may those of us who may not have the courage for that support them in our prayers and in our presence, if we can, and certainly in our sympathy and outgoing! It grieves me to hear the labours of such slighted. The open-air preaching requires courage; it requires spiritual mettle; and it will form, I have no doubt, in those that are committed to it, manhood and character which is needed in the testimony. Somebody once said that many of us have a wishbone where the backbone ought to be and one feels that one of the things that the Spirit of God would do is to energise us in the testimony. The apostle says, "For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice", 2 Tim 1: 7. If I have a spirit of cowardice, I have not got it from Him. The Spirit of God has come down to energise the testimony and the glad tidings are part of that. They are preached in His power, sent down from heaven. I say, was there ever any one so sinned against as the Holy Spirit of God?

One desires that these few words might be used to magnify that Person of the Godhead, that our response to Him might be the more affectionate, might be the more real!

LONDON

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