

# **A WORD IN ITS SEASON**

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## THE ORDER OF THE SERVICE OF GOD

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**RFW** I would like to use this reading to enquire into how we proceed in the service of God, as we term it. I am conscious that there is a certain unique character about this gathering. We have, on the one hand, fairly large numbers of younger people who are interested in the truth and have enquiring minds and, on the other, we are privileged to have with us elderly and experienced brothers and sisters who have followed up the good teaching and have been thoroughly acquainted with the truth. I would therefore like it if we could go over why it is that we proceed in a certain way following the Lord's Supper. We will know, I am sure, that there is nothing prescribed as to the order in which matters proceed, but we do know that that which governs the Supper itself is, so to speak, prescribed - Paul uses that word in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 (v 17). So we have partaken of the Supper. The Lord says as to the bread, "this do in remembrance of me" and as to the cup, "this do ... in remembrance of me" (1 Cor 11: 24, 25) so there is an element of prescription in the partaking of the Lord's Supper which should govern the mind and affection of every believer. Every believer, therefore, should be exercised, rightly so, to answer to what the Lord says: "This do in remembrance of me". So in that way we show forth the death of the Lord, as that chapter speaks of it. Having done so, perhaps it might be thought we could close the meeting and go home. We have answered to the Lord's request. We have broken bread and partaken of the cup and we might say that that is all that is required. But that is not what happens. There is something that proceeds from that point forward and that is what I wanted to enquire about; not in any way, as the brethren will understand, to question what is done, but to reaffirm and establish why we proceed to speak to the Lord Jesus, why we speak to the Holy Spirit and why we speak to God the Father; and why that is the order in which we address these blessed divine Persons.

I read these scriptures to give us a basis for our conversation. There are many other scriptures, I am sure, which may also come in which would bear on our subject but, in speaking of it, I would

particularly like, if I could, to draw on the elder brethren because many of them know that the way in which these things have been established was not without great exercise and the spirit of enquiry. The service, as we know it, did not come about all at once, but gradually, it seems to me, the truth unfolded as to how things should proceed and I thought it would be good to use this occasion just to reaffirm these matters in our minds and affections.

**JDG** That is very interesting. We were speaking lately, some of us, about the fact that now when we come together we break bread immediately, but the brethren did not always do that.

**RFW** Quite so. Just say why that should be.

**JDG** Well, I think gradually over the years we have been helped to see, quite some time before my day mainly, that the important thing was that it was the Lord's Supper. We had gathered together to remember the Lord Jesus; so it would be right to proceed. The brethren came to it gradually.

**RFW** They did, yes. There was, I understand, the feeling that the partaking of the Lord's Supper was something that had to be worked up to. That idea is prevalent in many of the great religious bodies around us, that the partaking of the Lord's supper is something that needs to be worked up to and that only a select number, indeed, can at any time be capable of partaking of it.

**JDG** So we gather together as prepared vessels, do we not?

**RFW** We were speaking this morning in the home about the matter of the feast of unleavened bread and the passover which lead up to the Lord speaking of the bread and the cup in the gospels. That side underlies it, so that we keep the feast. We are those who are committed to what is true to the death of Christ, but then as we come together, what is before us? It is to remember Him in the way that is prescribed.

**RT** Another thing that had to be established in those days is that we do not remember a dead Christ; it is a living One we come to remember. I think that helps, that it is not the sin question that we come together about, but it is a living One, and as a living One, He will lead us into living circumstances.

**RFW** So that is the wonderful thing, that that blessed Person comes

to us as we gather to remember Him and partake of the emblems in that way. As a living Person, the Lord Jesus comes to us and do you think that that great truth is the underlying essential matter for what proceeds?

**WL** And as He comes to us, the service of God begins. It is not an appendage at the end of the meeting.

**RFW** It is not an appendage. It begins because He comes to us, as we truly believe, from where He is. He comes bringing all the joy and blessedness of the heavenly realm with Him. We would understand - I speak subject to help and correction - that He comes to us because the Holy Spirit is with us. Is that so? As we know, the Lord does not come corporeally. During the forty days, He did appear in a corporeal form, but now He comes to us because the Holy Spirit is here with us.

**WL** There is a recognition as He does come in of who He is, do you think?

**RFW** That is another matter that the brethren were helped to understand, is it not, that, as the Lord Jesus comes in amongst us, there is the immediate recognition of the greatness of His Person as the Son of God?

**DBR** We are made aware that we are the brethren of Christ, so beyond the prescription. Do you think we touch kindredship with Christ and I wondered if that was essential to enjoy before we proceed or as we proceed, we might say?

**RFW** So would you say everything then really depends on some apprehension of His coming in and that He is with us, and would you agree that it is right that we proceed on the basis that the Lord does come to us, that we truly believe that the Lord Jesus comes to us in the breaking of bread?

**DBR** I do. This word in Hebrews says "all of one". I understand that is not oneness as united to Christ; it is oneness of kind. So really all that can have part in the assembly is what is of Christ in the saints, do you think?

**RFW** Do you understand that what proceeds, then, depends on the apprehension of the distinctiveness of His Person and His glories as He manifests Himself? So there is this great matter that He has brethren, "he is not ashamed to call them brethren". Now you have used the word

kindredship, and many of us may not understand what it means. I wonder if you would just open that up.

**HP** Mr Taylor points to the fact that it is important that, as we come in, we do not first see the emblems; we first meet the brethren (NS vol 7 p 137). I wondered if that lays really the basis for this going on.

**RFW** Yes, we meet the brethren as those who have been faithful to the Lord during the week, and we assemble; so the expression “when ye come together in assembly” is used in 1 Corinthians 11 v 18, and “we being assembled to break bread” in Acts 20: (v 7). So assembling involves that there is affinity of affection and that we find, as it were, our place in relation to one another. Just say more about kindredship.

**DBR** Well, there is the side of the death of Christ that meets our liabilities, but there is the other side of the death of Christ that what is produced out of that is fruit like Himself. It is on that ground really that kindredship is established. As the Lord is known amongst us, the ground changes. We assemble in the wilderness, but then we move on to heavenly ground because we are like Christ, do you think? Therefore we would be with Him. Do you think that is right?

**RFW** So is it then that all that we are as associated with Christ has come out of His death? That is, we carry nothing over of what is of the flesh into that realm, but it is what we are as of Christ and out of the death of Christ. So, we might say, had Christ not died, we could not have any links with Him at all. We could not have any link with Him, certainly, in His risen life had He not died and taken away our sins that we might be associated with Him where He is, as out of death.

**RG** Is it the working out of, “Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit”, John 12: 24? It is of the same character, do you think?

**RFW** It is a very wonderful thing. The idea of kindredship comes in, does it not, when the bride was to be sought for Isaac? She had to be of his kindred. That is where I understand the thought is introduced. Is that the right reference I am making in Genesis? In Genesis 24 the servant is sent to take a wife. He says, “take not a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am dwelling; but thou shalt go to my land and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac”, v 3, 4. So we have introduced in type the idea of kindredship, that is, she was to be from the same family, the same basic derivation

and that, in its application to ourselves, involves what we are saying, that we are out of the death of Christ and thus kindred to Him.

**JM** Is that what is stressed here, “For both he that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one”? It is not that they are 'all one' but they are “all of one”. That really brings out the great thought of kindredship.

**RFW** So His own distinction is maintained always, is it not? “For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Now John Brown said in his address that we do not refer to the Lord as our brother. Just help us about that.

**JAB** Well, first of all we have to be aware that that thought is becoming increasingly prevalent in evangelical Christendom and indeed I have had one or two conversations with dear brethren about it. I think first of all we go by scripture and the Lord is not referred to as our brother anywhere in scripture, but secondly do you think, bearing in mind what Mr Mitchell has said about “all of one” but not 'all one', He always retains the uniqueness of who He is. To call Him our brother begins to verge on familiarity and would start to erode the distinctiveness of the blessed One to whom we are responding on Lord's day morning. Would that be right?

**RFW** I fully agree. The statement “make perfect the leader of their salvation” (Heb 2: 10) comes just before this; so He is distinctive in every relationship. As you say, as instructed by the word of God, that is not a term that we would apply to the Lord Jesus.

**JAB** It is very interesting that despite that being what I thought quite a recent thing, there is a reference in Mr Darby's volumes about just that matter and when I was able to identify that and show it to one or two, that helped greatly to establish what you are speaking about. (See Collected Writings vol 17 p 294.)

**RFW** It is helpful to see that these things are not new, but the truth is all in scripture and if we keep within the banks of scripture, as we have often been taught, we are kept right in our thoughts. So, whilst we rejoice in this thought of “all of one”, His distinctiveness remains.

**JM** Intimacy and nearness come out in a very beautiful way at the Supper and what immediately follows the Supper, but do you think that alongside that we should not forget who He is and therefore, as you say, as He manifests Himself to us, it is only right that there should be that sense of worship in our souls.

**RFW** That is something that we learned through teaching and we saw how right it was. The Lord may not stress that side but it is there and it is right that we should recognise it.

**JM** You would not carry it on, but I think that as the Lord manifests Himself to us the immediate thing in our spirits would be worship because of who He is and the greatness and glory that is His.

**RFW** Yes, indeed, so there are plenty of scriptures that would support that thought. We do not have a pattern to proceed on or a prescribed order but through spiritual enquiry and seeking light and guidance, we can see the rightness of responding worshipfully to that blessed Person.

**GAB** One of the first things the Lord says as coming out of death is “go to my brethren”, John 20: 17. Mary did not go to the Lord's natural brethren. She knew where to go because this was a completely different order of things on the other side of death.

**RFW** Those brethren were the disciples. She went to the disciples. She knew where to go. The disciples are the same persons from another standpoint, perhaps, so it is interesting to see that the saints can be looked at in different connections. We have here “my brethren” and then there is the expression “in the midst of the assembly”, which would bring up in our minds other thoughts, and then, as we know there is the great idea of sonship, so the saints can be looked at in these different relationships. All are true in their place and, I think we have been taught, are of equal value, the brethren of Christ, the assembly and the sons of God.

**CKR** Do you see the hymn that we sing to the Lord Jesus after the Supper as being a great influence and help because this is the testing bit often, to move out of what is local, out of the wilderness condition, into the realm where He now is? We are going to be occupied now with Him as He is on the other side of death and the centre of a heavenly company.

**RFW** Do you think it is very encouraging that we actually experience these things? I was thinking this morning that there was no way in which we could have ended the meeting after we had partaken of the bread and the cup because that blessed Person had come to us and He was active in love and in grace and He was looking, we may say, for a response. That blessed love that He showed in death was bringing out

a response from the hearts of His own and it is encouraging that, even in the small companies in which many of us find ourselves, we prove that this operates. The great exercise, it seems to me, is not to make it formal or ritualistic, but that there might be the real experience in life of the presence of that blessed Person and what that presence engenders in our souls.

**JAG** Derivation would attach to the brethren, but you could never attach that to Him. Do you think that we are conscious that we have affinity with Christ on this line of new creation?

**RFW** You will need to help us more so that we all understand what that means.

**JAG** “So if any one be in Christ, there is a new creation; the old things have passed away”, 2 Cor 5: 17. It is completely beyond all that is natural that belongs to flesh and blood.

**RFW** So that we have a link in life with a Man who is out of death and that is, as you say, beyond flesh and blood. So there is some quickening touch imparted to our souls as the Lord Jesus comes in. That would depend on the presence, no doubt, of the Holy Spirit, but then that quickening touch is a real thing, is it not? Our affections are quickened and we find, as you say, affinity with that blessed Man.

**JAG** We are conscious of wonderful liberty when He comes in, there is a change.

**JDG** So Jehovah says in 1 Samuel 16 when he comes in, “Arise, anoint him; for this is he”, v 12. That is spontaneity in answer to Christ coming in.

**RFW** Yes, and you often find that someone gives expression to something which causes that quickening touch to take place in our spirits. Someone, by the Spirit, gives expression to something in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord Jesus that causes our hearts to respond.

**JCG** We often quote Gideon. He says, “They were my brethren, the sons of my mother”, Jud 8: 19. Does this bear on this matter of what affinity we have in kindredship? I was thinking of the need for the reality of the experience and not merely the expression of it. It is a real matter that as we break bread and enter into the manifestation of the presence of the Lord. We realise what is proceeding, do you think?

**RFW** Something that is proceeding in life. I am conscious of the fact



that many of us, and certainly the older ones here, have broken bread hundreds and hundreds of times in our lives and this is not doctrinal truth in an abstract way that we are speaking of, but this is what has been experienced. So that we have in our measure proved the reality of these quickening touches and have known what it is to be absorbed with the glory and blessedness of that Man.

**RT** This passage we are looking at, “For both he that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one”, that is a love matter, is it not? He has sanctified Himself for us. That is His love, is it not? And His love drawn out to these sanctified ones so that that binds us up together in the way that He would move.

**RFW** That is very helpful, because we may just think of the doctrinal teaching as to sanctification and how it has been accomplished and so on, but it is very fine to see that this is love in operation. The brethren are particularly for the heart, the affections of Christ, are they not? He has His brethren now and they particularly, we might say, engage His affections, His love.

**RT** He says to the Father in John 17, “I sanctify myself for them”, v 19. He has retained manhood in view of having us with Him to enter those heavenly courts above.

**RFW** That is a very fine touch. We may sometimes just think of that as having in view “that they also may be sanctified by truth” (John 17: 19), but yet it is also in view of the Lord enjoying these wondrous relations with His brethren, enjoying what His love has secured.

**JS** When the Lord comes in, He is therefore anxious to move into the enjoyment of these relationships where love can be known.

**RFW** When the Lord comes in, we would understand He has the Father's praises, the praises of God, before Him, but yet on the way to that these blessed relationships with Himself are entered into and experienced. I thought - and I would say this subject to correction - it is the way that the Lord Jesus presents Himself to us that draws out the response of His brethren and the assembly to Him. His distinctiveness as “firstborn among many brethren” (Rom 8: 29) is apprehended, the glories that belong to Him in manhood alone, and then we have the wondrous realisation that we are “all of one” with Him. We have some sense of His joy in having His brethren, as has been remarked, the answer to His own affections.

**GBG** We often think of what is feminine for the heart of Christ. Is this what is masculine for the heart of Christ?

**RFW** I have sometimes been exercised about that, because the thought of brethren is masculine and then we speak of the marital side, which involves what is feminine. I find it sometimes difficult to make that change, but help us about it.

**GBG** I just think it is a wonderful thing that He is in the midst of His brethren and has this affinity, you might say, in a masculine way. We have an affinity with Him as His brethren. Rebecca, as soon as she saw Isaac, “sprang off the camel”, Gen 24: 64. She realised she was suitable for Isaac. Does this underlie that, this feeling of suitability?

**RFW** The conversations she had with the servant along the way no doubt prepared her for that state of suitability, so she saw “the man that is walking in the fields to meet us” (Gen. 24: 65) and “she sprang off the camel”. As our dear brother in Belfast told us, she saw the man whose work was done. He was walking in the fields; he had nothing left to do. The Lord Jesus comes in in that way. His work is done; He is free to spend time with His brethren and with His bride.

**QP** I just wonder if it helps with your enquiry as to why the service of God flows out of the Lord's Supper to refer to Luke 24: when the Lord Jesus comes in, He says, “Have ye anything here to eat?” v. 41. He is really seeking something for Himself, and in Genesis 24 there is that beautiful figure of the servant seeking something for himself and in John 4 there is the Father seeking. Do you think that would underlie the service of God?

**RFW** That is helpful. All these scriptures, I think, in their time have helped the brethren into an understanding of how to proceed in what the Lord Jesus is seeking. We should greatly value what has come to us in the way of instruction in this great matter because it is greatly to be cherished. The greatest privilege we have is to have part in that service, to provide something for the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ and in response to divine Persons. It seems to me to be an immense privilege and favour, do you think?

**DBR** Does that then lead us on to the great matter of union? We are “many brethren” (Rom. 8: 29), but the assembly is an entity and I wondered if union really brings us onto the true ground of the whole service of God? When you touch union, you are really on heavenly

ground. In Genesis 24 it is not only kindred, but it is “my land”, v. 4. That would be heaven for us, would it?

**RFW** That is helpful. As we know the word 'union' is not found in scripture, but the thought of it is there in “one flesh” and it is perhaps the most testing thing that we face, to know anything of the experience of union with Christ. I wondered if we see the glorious place Christ has in relation to the assembly it would help us to enter into the truth of union. Would you say that?

**DBR** Therefore we can speak of a heavenly Man and a heavenly bride. As I understand it, the great thought of the bride is exclusive to the assembly. We are touching something very specific and very glorious and completely according to the purpose of God, that Christ should have a bride wholly suitable to Himself.

**RFW** The reference to “the Christ also loved the assembly” in Ephesians 5 v 25 helps us to apprehend something of the greatness of the love of Christ for the assembly. So does the truth of union involve that we are brought to Christ where He is, as you say, the heavenly Man? That is, it is the enjoyment of relationship with Him that is outside of everything here but that belongs to the place where He is.

**JM** As we experience union with Him, we learn what is really in His own heart, do we not? I think if you are united to someone, you love what he loves, you think what he thinks. Does that not give us some understanding of what is in the Lord's mind as He proceeds in the service of God?

**RFW** So what is in His mind is that He would sing the Father's praises. He would desire to use the saints for this great matter, use the assembly for this great matter, as linked to Him, as bound up with Him.

**RT** Union is “of his flesh, and of his bones”, Eph 5: 30. In the type really she has no past history.

**RFW** You could tell us, now, just what that means, that the assembly has no past history.

**RT** Well, it is “of his flesh, and of his bones”. Brethren may have had past history and that was dealt with in the death of Christ, but when you come to the bride, she has no past history, she is “of his flesh, and of his bones”. She is like Him.

**RFW** So the type comes in there before the question of sin comes in

at all. The type in Genesis 2 has nothing to do with the question of sin because it has not entered in, but it shows the mind of God, that the assembly is linked with Christ quite apart from that question, quite apart from dealing with the question of sin. Now we know that we actually arrive at it practically through the moral way, as being redeemed, but the type would indicate that we should apprehend the thought of God that the assembly should be linked with Christ through His death quite apart from the question of dealing with the matter of sin. Is that what you understand?

**RT** Rebecca did not need to go through a course of instruction. What he found in Rebecca was somebody who was willing to go. She rose above all the hindrances that were there. She was ready to be conducted in the Spirit's grace to the heavenly Man.

**RFW** To find her part with Him. He was "comforted", it says, "after the death of his mother" (Gen 24: 67), so we must bring the side of affection and love into the matter of union as well, must we not?

**JMar** Could you help us in relation to singing in regard to the service of God? I think it is very affecting how it comes in here.

**RFW** "In the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises". It is a scripture we have often pondered over, but singing brings our spirits together in a way that nothing else does. We are all in it with our voices and in it with our spirits and there is a note of exaltation and transport. I think that word 'transport' has been used in relation to singing, so that something is produced in a united way that cannot be produced in any other way. It seems to me that that is what singing involves, but maybe you would say something about it.

**JMar** I was just thinking about that scripture, "For behold, the winter is past ... The time of singing is come", Song of Songs 2: 11, 12. It is a wonderful matter when the matter of singing comes in after His death. It was after His death He said "my brethren".

**RFW** Hebrews 2:12 is quoted, as we know, from that wonderful Psalm 22 that sets out the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was in His blessed mind at that time and expresses His infinite joy in having a company in which He can sing the Father's praises, that is, He can use the saints for this great purpose. What joy it gives His heart!

**JM** Could I enquire whether it is right to think, in the relations of Christ and the assembly after the Supper that He really tastes

something of what He will actually taste when He has the assembly for Himself entirely? The scripture says, "He shall drink of the brook in the way", Ps 110: 7. Is there not just a little touch for His own heart there of what He will actually enter into?

**RFW** We would trust it is so. As we know, the service of God, as we experience it, is in a provisional setting now. It is not the final thought now, but it is provisional in that we enter into it now in these conditions. We trust indeed that the Lord tastes something of the joy that will be His in its fulness when He has all the saints with Him.

**JM** That should really be in our minds as we proceed, should it not? You think of the more than two thousand years that He has waited for the assembly, but you think of the opportunity week by week just for Him to savour what is for His own heart in the relations that He has with the assembly.

**JDG** So you are not exactly taken up with His exploits. You are taken up with that Person, that Man and His love for you.

**RFW** Union, it seems to me, is the enjoyment of the Person in the place that he has brought us to, the enjoyment of His love and just being for Him. What a blessed thought that is!

**JAG** So the need of His own heart is met before the singing begins.

**RFW** That is fine, so we have various hymns that speak of the Lord being satisfied and that would enter into it, would it?

**JAG** I think it is most beautiful, because there was obviously a need and God says "I will make him a helpmate, his like", Gen 2: 18. That position is met and the marital position is met and then the Lord proceeds with the singing to the Father.

**RFW** I am glad you say that the Lord proceeds, because we speak about ourselves as proceeding and we know what we mean by that, but yet the service is under His blessed direction, is it not? Sometimes you almost get the impression that we have left the Lord behind at some point, but He is conducting this, He is over the whole great matter.

**RT** In the Song of Songs He speaks about how much He enjoys the bride and he says, "Come with me", chap 4: 8.

**RFW** That is fine. He is going to take her into places that He knows and loves and has full entrance to. Is it not very interesting - and I say

this for the benefit of our dear younger brethren - how the brethren are able to bring in scriptures that bear on this great matter because this is how our understanding of how to proceed in the service of God developed. The saints as looking at and comparing and evaluating the wonderful truth as contained in the scriptures got indications of how to proceed? Would that be so?

**JAB** Is that why what we are speaking of now matters very much? Perhaps when we are younger we think, well, that is the way the brethren do it, but other people do it in different ways. Sometimes they do it in very different ways. They have the morning meeting with musical instruments and that sort of thing. That can be quite attractive naturally. Do you think we have to understand how much the Lord values what has been answered to in the period of what we call the recovery of the truth? I am thinking of the references to Isaac being comforted, that the Lord Jesus really values what we are speaking about.

**RFW** I think we could not stress that enough. I think that for myself, and I am sure the brethren would go with it. I think we could not stress that enough that what has been come to in this way through much exercise and much enquiry and much waiting on the Lord is something that the Lord Jesus values very, very much.

**JAB** In the town where I live there is a meeting of dear believers, some of whom we know very well, who if you trace it back would have links with what had been in Mr Darby's day, but now in what they call their worship meeting, they appoint a chairman. Now, I do not say that to lower the tone of this occasion but to impress it on our spirits that what we are speaking about is very precious.

**RFW** It is, because what we are speaking of depends on the appreciation of the Lord Jesus coming in and how He proceeds then as having come in and how the Holy Spirit supports us in it, not, as you say, through any organised arrangements. We speak of the order of the service and so on, which is right in its place to have in our minds, but the vitality and the reality of it depends on the apprehension of the blessed Person who has come in and who is, as it were, conducting us.

**DCB** Is the Lord's place as Head important? I suppose in contrast to what John Brown has said, we are dependent on the Lord Jesus as the One who is Head to be under the influence that He would have, to follow, sometimes to dally, sometimes to move quickly. It is His service

and He is conducting it.

**RFW** It is His matter. We may wish to detain Him, to enjoy that blessed moment of intimacy with Himself, but He has in mind the Father's praise, has He not?

**WL** I was going to ask you that. We have a very real sense of what we are to Him as His brethren and His bride and, as David Brown says, in these circumstances we would prove His headship, but then He is also considering for God as a Man.

**RFW** He delights in that great thought that He has the assembly available to Him to praise, as a vessel of praise.

**RT** Have not both the Father and the Spirit been active in regard to securing the bride for Christ, so that the Son, the Man, may have somebody for His own heart, and that being enjoyed, would He not lead us in response to the Spirit and to the Father?

**RFW** Now, you can help us about response to the Spirit because, as we know, there was much enquiry as to that matter. I read the passage in Ephesians because, I understand, that passage was used to help us as to response to the Spirit. Is that so?

**RT** It used to be at various times in the meeting. Sometimes some thought it should be in relation to the cup, to begin with, and sometimes later, but I think it is important to see that the Father and the Son were active and from one point of view, union is a terminus. That word has to be rightly understood. It is a point reached. Nothing flows out of it exactly. The Lord has the assembly for Himself and you can see that He is using what He has in the assembly that the Spirit may have a portion and the Father in view of the labours that they have had for His heart being satisfied.

**RFW** That is very helpful. You mean that everything proceeds as we are held in affection to Him so that, as you say, union is a terminus in that way. That is, we do not get beyond being united to Christ or being one with Him. That is the assembly's portion and will be the assembly's portion eternally so that everything proceeds as we are held in our affections to Him.

**JM** I would like some help on it, but in these closing days I wonder whether the Lord has drawn attention to the relations between the Persons of the Godhead, the holy relations between one and another,

and He is bringing the assembly which is nearest to His own heart into that, and do you think that at the Supper, or what flows out of the Supper, there is movement to the Father? It is not just that it is time to go to the Father but you have a sense of what is in the heart of Christ and the holy relations that flow between Him and His Father and you move with Him in it.

**RFW** Yes, we feel His joy in His own relations with the Father.

**JM** Also, His relations with the Spirit. As we think of the service of the Spirit as having secured the assembly in substantiality for the heart of Christ, there is a response in the heart of Christ to that and He brings the assembly with Him into that.

**RFW** So what has been said as to the Spirit's service in relation to the securing of the bride and the Father's service in relation to the securing of the bride are of all importance to grasp because these are blessed, holy, real matters.

**WL** Say a word, please, as to the question of union with Christ and then association with Him.

**FW** I am sure you could say far more than I could on that subject.

**WL** Well, union with Him is for the meeting of His own affections, but then, we are not united to the Son of God: we are associated with Him at that point. It is very important to understand that.

**RFW** Just open up what you mean by association in that sense.

**WL** Well, being with Him in what He has in mind for the Father and enjoying the truth, not only of union with Him in the assembly, that is feminine, but enjoying the great thoughts of sonship.

**RFW** So it may be difficult to grasp this, but we have to understand these different relationships. We are the same persons but we are the brethren of Christ, which is a masculine thought, but we form part of the assembly, which is a feminine thought, the assembly is for the heart of Christ, and then we are sons of God, which is again a masculine thought. We are the same persons but we are viewed as in these different relationships.

**PM** Does the Lord Jesus in John's gospel bring out the personality of the Spirit in His distinctiveness? And does that help us that He is not just an influence or a power but He is a divine Person and is therefore



rightly the object of worship?

**RFW** That is very helpful. It is a very fine thing to grasp that the Holy Spirit is a distinctive divine Person. You wonder why, in a sense, it took so long for the brethren to come to that great matter, not that the Spirit was not recognised as a divine Person, but in addressing the Spirit and being free to address the Spirit in the recognition of His distinct personality. What do you say about that?

**PM** The Lord Jesus speaks about “when he is come”, John 16: 13. I wondered if, although in the type in Genesis 24 He is figured as a servant, yet Rebecca would have seen something of a glory in those movements, in the treasure that he had under his hand which she had never seen before and would lead her heart in response to him as he says, give me a sip.

**RFW** Very good, and that servant was fully in the mind of Abraham and fully shared his feelings and his sympathies, and he had all those treasures under his hand. I have often thought of that, that Rebecca’s access to those treasures was through her willingness to go with that man. She had no access to those treasures otherwise, but as she indicated her willingness, that spirit of willingness that was with her, then he is free and able to bring these things out and put them on her.

**RT** The change among the brethren came about because the Spirit had always been viewed subjectively. It was pointed out in the ministry that He is to be viewed objectively, and that is what promotes worship. He is a divine Person who not only has come to be with us, wonderful fact, but who is also an object of worship because of who He is and His part in the Deity.

**RFW** The understanding had been that the Spirit could not be viewed as distinct or separate from His operations in the saints in a sense, but to be seen objectively means He is seen, as you say, in His own distinctiveness and His own sovereign right to operate as a distinctive divine Person. Is that putting it correctly?

**RT** You could never limit divine Persons to the place that they have come into. They have moved in love and come into different positions but we can never limit them as to the greatness and deity of their Person. That is what promotes worship when we apprehend it.

**RFW** It is, and I think that the touch as to the Spirit that comes in is most stimulating when we have that blessed Person before us.

**JAG** He serves typically in Genesis 24 as the Father's Spirit and as the Spirit of Christ. He is called the Spirit of God's Son and various other titles or names or relationships that He fills out and serves to bring us into the consciousness of that, would you say?

**RFW** It is wonderful to contemplate those different titles or names and to see that each one brings out some distinctive glory of the Holy Spirit in the way that He is able to serve, but then His own distinctiveness comes out too, does it not? He is spoken of as the "the One and the Same Spirit" (1 Cor. 12: 11).

**JAG** As to the name, it is the Holy Spirit.

**RFW** You mean that is His distinctive name?

**DBR** He is also the Spirit of adoption. The wonder of that would have a great bearing on the enjoyment and functioning of sonship. I noticed an interesting touch in the ministry of Mr James Taylor recently. He said that that is how we will know the Spirit eternally, as the Spirit of adoption (NS vol 21 p 267). So it is "through him we have both access by one Spirit to the Father". Do you think the Spirit really makes us conscious of our fitness to be in association with Christ?

**RFW** It has often been said that a human parent may adopt a child but to give it the spirit of the family is beyond human ability, is it not? But the Spirit of adoption brings us into the realisation of the joy of the family as belonging there and never to be put out of it. It is our place; we belong there.

**DBR** Would that really promote the liberty of sonship as we are in the presence of the Father?

**RFW** Quite so.

**JAB** A young brother just last week at home asked me a question about this and some of the young people who are listening may be wondering the same. Why is it, in view of the greatness and glory of this divine Person that we are speaking about, do we normally just have one thanksgiving and one hymn?

**RFW** Well, what do you say about that?

**JM** Well, it is actually in keeping with the Spirit characteristically. You mentioned earlier that it had taken the brethren so long to come to the worship of the Spirit. There is another side to that and that is that the

Spirit characteristically waited and worked with the brethren that Christ might become the object of their affections and when that was established in a powerful way, then what was due to Himself came forward, and I think that is characteristic of Him in the service of God. He does not occupy the main place. It is the Lord's supper and He recognises that and He is content with the place He is given. I think it should draw out our affections to Him and our worship to Him.

**RFW** I think that is most interesting, because if you think of the way the truth developed, as to the Person of Christ, the sonship of Christ, the distinctiveness of His own relationships with the assembly, the distinctive place that the assembly has, and all that being established the Holy Spirit causes the truth as to His own Person to be made more prominent.

**JM** If you just think about that for a moment, and I say it very carefully because we must carry in our minds that He is God, equal with the Father and with the Son, but in the working out of the economy, He has taken a place in view of the Father and the Son being glorified, and I think that should draw out our hearts to Him.

**GAB** The servant in Genesis 24 only asked for a sip but Rebecca's response is, "Drink, my Lord!" v 18. Even if it is only one thanksgiving and one hymn, the fulness of response comes out from the assembly: "Drink, my Lord!"

**RFW** I think that scripture has been used in relation to the question that John Brown raises. "Let me, I pray thee, sip a little water out of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord! And she hasted and let down her pitcher on her hand, and gave him to drink." And then it says, "And when she had given him enough to drink ..." so that I think the Holy Spirit has indicated, if we could say reverently, that that is enough. We cannot say that there is any prescription for how many hymns or thanksgivings can be addressed to any divine Person, but what we are enquiring about is how what we proceed with has come about, how the truth of it has come to us and how we are assured that it is right.

**WL** We have been taught and have experienced that the Father is the objective. That is the point of this, the Lord Jesus and the Spirit acting so that we might have access to the Father. It has been pointed out in regard to what we are saying about hymns and thanksgivings that the Father should have the greatest place in the service. Would that be right?

**RFW** Yes, and that is a test to us, I feel, and I am only speaking practically because, as we know, quite a lot of the service is taken up with the giving of the thanks. Then response to the Lord Jesus and then we have the Holy Spirit referred to. Then the Father's portion may sometimes be lacking a little, and that is an exercise for us to seek to fill it out.

**WL** Yes, I think the exhortation in the good teaching that the Father should have the greatest place in the service is absolutely right.

**RFW** It is on the Lord's heart according to this scripture, "will I sing thy praises".

**GCMcK** We spoke earlier of how, when the Lord Jesus comes in, there ought to be a note of worship initially as He comes in in His glory. Do you think as we have this wonderful liberty to approach the Father, there should be something reverential, a note of worship, as well as liberty?

**RFW** I wondered, and again we are enquiring, if that is what should immediately engage us as we come into His presence. We are impressed by the greatness of that Person. Would that be so?

**GCMcK** We rejoice in the liberty we have, the nearness we are brought into and the knowledge of the Father's love, but I think as we consciously come into His presence there would be a note of worship. How great He is!

**JDG** We are really speaking about "the ascent by which he went up to the house of Jehovah" (1 Kings 10: 5) in Solomon's day. It is the house of Jehovah that is the objective, the Father's abode.

**RFW** We just had a touch this morning about this scripture in John 20 and the way the Lord uses the word "my". He says, "my brethren" and then He says, "my Father and your Father, and ... my God and your God". So we are in the presence of the Lord Jesus in this great matter. He is with us, He is conducting us and He is supporting us, but there is an infinitude of meaning in the use by the Lord Jesus of the word "my".

**JM** You could never use the expression 'our God' as including Christ because there is what is unique to Himself, and His knowledge of God is infinite. Ours is not. It is finite and we have just to accept that.

**RFW** "My Father" implies His infinite knowledge of the Father and all that the Father is. He would have us alongside of Him but there is a

reverential feeling for the Lord Jesus even as associated with Him, as Mr Lamont has been saying.

**RG** Have we not been taught that when the Lord in John 17 says, "And I have made known to them thy name, and will make it known" (v.26), He is looking forward to this expression now, "my Father and your Father ... my God and your God." The "will make it known" is something that is understood because the Spirit is now with us.

**RFW** So it is an immense favour that His Father is our Father - what an immense thought! And we can speak to Him in that way as "our Father". I do not know if there is any other person in recorded scripture who speaks to the Father as "my Father". Paul uses the expression "my God".

**NJH** I am asking for help, but why is the "to", "[to] my God" put in brackets by Mr Darby? Could we get help on that? "to my Father and your Father, and ... my God and your God." I am asking the question.

**RFW** What is your own thought as to it?

**NJH** I wonder if it is to elevate the Father in our minds while it is a more extended thought in God. I am just wondering if the Father's position is intended to be more in our minds, but I am asking the question.

**RFW** The Father comes first evidently here, so it would seem that the "to" could be left out. But if it can read, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and ... my God and your God", then the thoughts of Father and God are, you might say, forever linked. The thought of the Father is not to be separated in our minds from the thought of God. As you say, in this ascending line, the Father becomes prominent, because we are in His presence in liberty as having the Spirit of adoption and in the relationship of sons. These are wonderful words to use. It is the reality of the experience of them that would exercise me.

**JAG** Do we need to think a bit, perhaps, about the Father representing God in that sense?

**RFW** I wondered if that was in it. Please say more.

**JAG** I felt perhaps we need to touch on that in the service because we speak to the Father and then we go onto God as manifest in the three Persons.

**RFW** Quite so, so the Father, as you say, has never left that place and, in a sense, we never get higher than that. Is that so? We speak to God as made known to us in the Trinity which is perhaps wider but not higher than the thought of Father.

**DBR** Say a word about the families named of the Father (Eph 3: 15).

**RFW** I am sure you can say something.

**DBR** Well, there is a distinctive family and thank God we belong to that and that will remain in eternity as I understand it. "The assembly of the firstborn" (Heb 12: 23) will remain distinct even in eternity. I just thought, as we are enjoying the presence of the Father and the glory of who He is and the glory of the Father's operations, we would have a sense that there is a whole area that stands in some measure in family relations to the Father. They are named of Him. I would value your help in it.

**RFW** I am glad of what you say as to the distinctive nature of the family of the firstborn to which we belong. Am I right in taking from what you say that that distinctive position will remain? We have the final thought of God and men presented in Revelation but there will still be that which is distinctive to the assembly family. Do you understand that that is the truth?

**DBR** I do, and that magnifies the favour that you spoke of yesterday that we have been brought into, that we belong to that distinctive family, but nevertheless I think Mr Coates uses the term that every family is bound under the headship of Christ (Outline of Song of Songs p 142). Every family is named of the Father so there will be some glorious thought of praise from every family in the light in which they know Him.

**RFW** So that praise, in a sense, is anticipated now in the saints. The only praising family now is the assembly. Is that so? As we speak of the Father, and we have it in some of our hymns, 'Father of every fam'ly' (441), for example, we are expressing our joy in the fact that He has all these families who will be responsive to Him and that He has reached His great thought, that is to have responsive, affectionate praise and worship from men in family relation to Himself.

**RG** So 'Father of every fam'ly' must mean that every family will have some feature of sonship according to their measure, but never in any sense equal to the family in which we have part.

**RFW** I am thankful for the re-statement of these great matters because I think it is important for us to understand them. We may not fully grasp the greatness of them, but I think it is good to have these truths stated and to hold them in our minds and affections and to wait on the Lord to give us more understanding and feeling in them.

**JMar** Mary did not only deliver this wonderful message but she said, I have “seen the Lord” - wonderful experience for a person like Mary of Magdala! She had missed Him. She was broken-hearted, but here she is saying I have “seen the Lord”.

**RFW** That is very fine, so that in a sense underlies all we are speaking of, some experience of the presence of the Lord Jesus with us, all through this great matter.

Key to Initials:-

**GAB** - G Alan Brown, Edinburgh; **DCB** - David C Brown, Edinburgh; **JAB** - John A Brown, Grangemouth; **JAG** - James Alec Gardiner, Aberdeen; **RG** - Robert Gardiner, Kirkcaldy; **GBG** - G Bruce Grant, Dundee; **JDG** - Jim D Gray, Edinburgh; **JCG** - John C Gray, Grangemouth; **NJH** - Norman J Henry, Glasgow; **WL** - Willy Lamont, Cumnock; **JMar** - Jim Marshall, Edinburgh; **PM** - Paul Martin, Colchester; **JM** - John Mitchell, Chester; **GcMcK** - Gordon C McKay, Glasgow; **HP** - Horst Pfeiffer, Bad Endbach; **QP** - Quentin Poore, Swanage; **DBR** - David B Robertson, Cumnock; **CKR** - C Kenneth Robinson, Glasgow; **JS** - John Strachan, Dundee; **RT** - Robert Taylor, Kirkcaldy; **RFW** - Robert F White, Londonderry

Edinburgh

22 October 2006

## **GOD'S INTEREST**

Alex Henry

Luke 4:38-39; 5:1-8;

John 4:4-24;

Luke 10:30-35

I want to speak about divine interest in you. Maybe you have not thought very much about how divine Persons are interested in you. Maybe you have not thought too much about how much they have mapped your pathway thus far, taken account of your pathway, in many cases hedged you in, and have brought you to this occasion. And divine Persons are very concerned as to what kind of results they are going to get from you.

The Lord Jesus is very interested in you. Think of the expenditure there has been so far because Scripture says that, "We being still sinners, Christ has died for us" (Rom.5:8). The work has all been completed, it is all finished, and the presentation of the glad tidings is what God delights in today. He delights in the presentation of the glad tidings because Jesus has done the work. He has completed it, and He has completed it to God's infinite satisfaction and delight, and that is what God is finding His pleasure in today. He is finding His delight in what Christ has done, and the presentation of the glad tidings is so that you might come to appreciate it too. Think of the value of coming in and understanding something of God's appreciation of Jesus. You can do that, and God would present Him today in the glad tidings so that you might be attracted to Him. You can go through the Scriptures and you can see where persons altered their course because God was speaking to them. You think of Moses in the wilderness and he saw a bush burning, which I do not think was an uncommon sight, but there was something that took his eye because the bush was not being consumed. So he drew aside, and God was able to speak to him.

Now God may be speaking to you in this preaching. He has maybe spoken many times in the preaching to you, but tonight He is speaking afresh. Perhaps something has come in to your life of late, and God is very interested in it. And there is one thing I want to say the Lord Jesus



wants you to put your trust in Him, because He is able to do far more for you than you can do for yourself. He wants you to trust Him. Now you have got to have your initial trust, and you need faith for that, you need faith to believe, you need faith to put your trust in Him to be able to understand, to be able to see that Christ carried out the great work of redemption at Calvary's cross, and that He laid a basis in it for your blessing. How great it is! But you think of how He wants your trust, He wants you to put your trust in Him. He wants you to be able to turn to Him at any time.

Do you pray? There was a woman here who prayed. Do you turn to Jesus and ask Him to help you? It is a very simple thing. It is not just a Monday night matter, because for each one of us our pathway is different, and your exercises are different from my exercises. But the Lord Jesus knows them all, and He is ready to help you. It is right down to the smallest detail, the detail of your life. You think of the Lord Jesus looking at you tonight to see if there is going to be a response from your heart for Him. He died to save you. You think of that work. You think of Him coming into this scene to die, the only One of whom it could be said of that He came to die. We come here and we come here to live, we want to live. But He came to die. That was the specific purpose: to give up His life and lay a basis for salvation in the shedding of His precious blood.

And think of what He had to go through. He had to be rejected. Man had to say, "Away with this man!" (Luke 23: 18). "We will not have Him to reign over us" (Luke 19:14". You might say it was the best of men, the religious world, and yet they said, 'Away with Him'. They did not want Him. It speaks about the stone which the builders rejected, as if they tried to fit Him into their system and He would not fit. They rejected Him, and that would be the very same today. The world is the same today, it would reject Him. He had to go to Calvary's cross and He had to suffer under the hand of man. Think of the humiliation and the ignominy of man accorded to Him. They spat at Him, buffeted Him. Think of what He suffered. He had to say beforehand, of course, "But this is your hour and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53), and you think of the way it was unleashed.

Then it came to these three hours of darkness when the Lord Jesus had to be the sin-bearer, and He had to suffer as to sin and sins, and He had to die there. Everything that stood out against us He had to take on. He "gave Himself a ransom for all". (1 Tim 2:6) Think of the wonder of that,

the greatness of it, the spread of it: a ransom for all. Yet it is only those that come under the shelter of the blood that get the benefit of it.

Well, the gospel, dear friends, goes out in all its attractiveness so that you might understand that He died there for you. I can say, 'He died for me'. I can say, 'He suffered for me, for my sins'. God has given you a conscience so that you might feel your condition before Him. You think of a sin-hating God, a holy God, yet moving from His own side. The Lord Jesus came into manhood so as to be able to draw near to man and accomplish the great work of redemption and so that He might bring you back to Him. Think of His interest in you; think of the cost it has been to divine Persons to set this gospel preaching on in Aberdeen tonight. That is what it comes down to, that there has been terrific cost on God's side, and now God is appealing to your heart that you might open your heart and receive Christ tonight. Has everyone here received the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour? You have to do that yourself. There are many things that your parents can do, there are many things that your friends can do for you, but when it comes to your salvation you have to exercise faith yourself.

God is interested in you and He would encourage you. You might say that He would hedge you in; He would put everything in the way so as to make it easy for you to open your heart and let Christ in. So you have been baptised; everyone here no doubt has been baptised. It may be that it was not your responsibility that you are baptised yourself. It is a baptised house, your parents have done it you have been brought on to Christian ground. But then you have to answer to it too because the eunuch could say, "Behold water; what hinders my being baptised?" (Acts 8:36). He said in effect, 'The Lord Jesus suffered on Calvary's cross and He died, and He shed His precious blood and He went into the grave and He went out by death, and I want to be out of sight too'. That is what baptism means, he wants to go out of sight. The first man had been dealt with on the cross. God is not viewing man today in the flesh, but He is looking at man in all the preciousness of what the Lord Jesus has done. How wonderful to think of it, in reconciliation. Think of the whole world in reconciliation. Think of God not imputing trespasses! Think of Him looking over your history and He is not imputing anything to you.

You know, the books are closed just now. There is going to be a day when the books are going to be opened and every detail of a person's life is going to be in these books. But they are not open today: God is

not imputing trespasses. He is still recording trespasses, but He is not imputing them. What glad tidings! He is inviting you to accept Christ today, and in the blood of Jesus all your sins can be washed away. How glorious! How wonderful! How about your sins? Scripture says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). I can look at everyone here and I can know that you are a sinner, and the exercise is as to whether you are a saved sinner. Has everyone come under the shelter of the blood of Jesus? Do you know what it is to have your conscience cleared? You may have a bad conscience. You may be suffering in your conscience. You may know that your history is not what it should be. The Lord Jesus can cleanse you from every sin and every stain. The glory of the work of Christ can remove everything. What glad tidings! So the Lord Jesus is looking into your heart today, and He is looking into it that you might decide for Him.

We read about Peter first of all. The Lord Jesus came into Peter's house and his mother-in-law was in a fever, and the Lord Jesus healed her. It did not seem to have any effect on Peter. Maybe you have been under many preachings and they have not had much effect on you at all. Then the next time Peter is under the word of Christ he is on the boat - it draws out and He is speaking to the people. You think of the wonder of that, the grace of the Lord Jesus, that He was really after Peter. The Lord Jesus was after one person He was after Simon Peter, and he went from his house; then he went down to the sea, and it says that Christ spoke the word of God, and it still did not have any effect on him. Then He says to Peter, "Draw out ... and let down your nets for a haul" (v 4). Think of the grace of the Lord Jesus that He would go on patiently, speaking to you, speaking to you in your history, speaking to you in your life, maybe your time at school or something. Something comes in, and you feel the Lord Jesus is speaking to you, and here He is, He is speaking to Peter. It does not seem to have any effect but then He says, "Draw out now", and Peter says, 'Look I have been trying all night and I have got nothing'. But do you know what he came to? He says, "But at thy word ..." (v 5). Now when the word of God comes, just accept it, accept the word of God tonight. The Lord Jesus would press that on you, just to accept His word tonight. You will get blessing because Peter went out and here he found that the Lord Jesus was not only wonderful at helping his mother-in-law with the fever, and speaking, but He was able to bring all these fish into the net. And it says, "But Simon Peter, seeing it, fell at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord" (v 8).

Now that is what the Lord Jesus is expecting, not for you to go out of this room but for you to fall at His feet. You think of how attractive the Lord Jesus is. He would draw you to Him. You might feel how wretched and how wicked you have been, but the Lord Jesus would attract you to Him as the One who is able to save you from all your sins. That is the glory of the glad tidings: here is Peter, He got Peter. No doubt many of you here have been brought up in Christian households, and the Lord Jesus is looking for you. Think of how the Lord speaks. He got his mother-in-law, then later it says the partners were brought into it too, those that were in the business with him, He got them too. Think of how the Lord is working. He is working one by one, because it says in scripture that many came to Him, those that were needing to be healed, and He touched each one of them. You have to do it individually. It is a glorious gospel, but you have to say to Him individually.

Now I also want to say about the need of trust because you do need to trust Him. He is the only One that will never let you down. Now remember that, remember that from this preaching, that the Lord Jesus is the only One that will never let you down. Your friends may let you down; the brethren may let you down. I am not being critical in saying that because there is only one Man that will never let you down, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why you need to trust Him. You need to be able to come to Him in any difficulty and prove His help and His power in what He is able to do.

Now the woman in John 4, He drew her out but she had to do something. The person in Luke 10 did not do anything; he was in a half dead state. The Lord Jesus did everything for him, but He speaks to this woman to draw her out. How the Lord would draw near to you, and He would ask you questions. You think of Luke 24, the two going to Emmaus, and He drew alongside them and He questioned them. They spoke of all that has happened in Jerusalem, and He said, "What things?" (v 19) Think of how the Lord in His patience would draw near to you and ask questions to draw you out to see where you stand so that He might fill your heart, and you might get some fresh impression of the glory of His greatness, the One who has gone through death, the One who has accomplished redemption, and the One who is now seated on the Father's throne. Think of it! Think of the greatness and glory of the One who can be your Saviour today. He has not only gone through death but He has come out alive, and He has ascended, and He is glorified, and it is from heaven that the gospel comes.

So this person was asking Him questions. First of all she did not understand why He even spoke to her. There are many like that today. You think of the other Simon in Luke's gospel, where the woman came behind Jesus weeping and Simon said, "This person if he were a prophet would have known who and what the woman is who touches him ..." (Luke 7:39). The Lord Jesus is very near to you; He is very approachable and He is ready to bless you. This woman did not understand but the Lord drew her out because He had great things in mind. She must have been reasonably intelligent because she said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem ...", but the Lord had more than that because He was eclipsing everything. It did not relate to Samaria and it did not relate to Jerusalem at all because He says, "God is a spirit; and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth". "For also the Father seeks such as his worshippers." There is a whole new avenue now opened up to you. Think of this water that the Lord would give you! "Whosoever drinks of the water which I shall give him shall never thirst for ever, but the water which I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water". Have you got that water? It speaks of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, and that is what is needed because we are here for a time to be spent for Christ.

You think of the thief on the cross. He did not really have any time, but you think of his testimony, "But this man has done nothing amiss" (Luke 23:41). What a testimony! Well, what kind of testimony do we have? In the gospel there is the gift of the Holy Spirit. He would give you power in your testimony so that you might be here for Christ. There is no intention of you being saved and just left to go on your own. The gospel comes that you might have part in God's service. That is what the Lord Jesus was speaking of here, "They who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth". We have to have part in that, part in the worship, what is the outflow of the heart to God in thankfulness. You think of God wanting you to have part in His service. What dignity! How great that is. You might say, 'Who am I?' Think of the interest that the Lord has in you. You might not think you are much. You need to be here for Christ and you need to test the Lord and prove Him in the exercises you go through. You need to prove Him.

Think of Gideon in the Old Testament, in Judges 6. It says he was told what to do and he was not sure. He says, 'Look, I am going to put a piece of fleece down, and if the dew is on the fleece and it is dry all

round then I will know', and God did that. Then he said, 'Do not be angry - do it the other way round, may the fleece be dry and the dew on everything else'. You think of how patient God is, and He would draw you out so that you might prove Him, prove Him in your life. There is a need for that at the present time. Exercise faith and prove God in your life, so that your life is not just a blank, but something definite comes into your life, so that you might be here for Him. What does that involve? It involves that you keep yourself, that you go through this scene for Him, and that you know that you are brought into this inn. You are brought into this great area where you can enjoy the divine presence. That is what God has in mind.

The woman in John 4 went into the city, and she became a preacher herself. She did not even think about it. She did not need to think about it because she was so full of her impression of Christ. She says, "Come, see a man who told me all things I had ever done". Think of how in a flash, she saw how Christ knew everything about her; and that is what matters. Christ knows everything about you, and He still loves you, and He still wants you. You might say, 'What a history I have had!' But then the Lord Jesus would say, 'I know, I know'.

Think of the greatness and glory of being attached to a system, a glorious system, where the Lord knows all about you, and He is here to support you and strengthen you. There is a need of committal. I wonder if everyone here has committed himself wholeheartedly to Christ. Think of the matter as to the breaking of bread. That was the one thing that the Lord asked, 'Remember me'. Think of the Lord asking for you to remember Him. Think of the preciousness of that, that in this very scene in which He was cast out, in which He was rejected, He says, 'Would you remember me?'. It is only temporary, it is only going to be for a short time because the Lord Jesus is coming again and that service will no longer be required. But at the present time of His absence, He is no longer here, and He says, 'While I am away, you remember me'. Well, it is a privilege for us, a glorious privilege and we need to take it up. I do not know if I need to say very much more.

In Luke 10, here is this certain man, it does not say his name, but it says he was journeying, and he descended from Jerusalem to Jericho. He was leaving Jerusalem. He may have been disillusioned. Maybe he had just given everything up. He had known brighter days but he says, 'I am away off to Jericho'. The little he had, the robbers took it all away, and they left him in a half dead state. I wonder if there is anyone

backsliding, anyone thinking of going away. The good Samaritan is always available. He is ready. It says he came up to him, as if the Samaritan went even lower, and He came up to him and bound up his wounds, and put him on his own beast and took him to the inn. It does not say that the man has even asked for it. Maybe you have got into such a state you do not know what to do next. The Lord Jesus would draw near to you and He would say, 'I can do everything for you'. Well, may it be so for His Name's sake!

Aberdeen Idaho

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