

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

SECOND SERIES

No. 3

June 2007

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THE SOURCE OF LIFE

John 1: 1-5; 9, 10, 8: 56 - 9: 7 Acts 3: 14, 15

DMW It has been much before us in the past week to consider the subject of life. I thought it would be the Lord's mind to continue that enquiry in our conversations together, relying on the Holy Spirit to give liberty. In these scriptures I wondered whether we might try to get to the source. 'The Word' was a title well known by His disciples, and He was the great "I am"; as in chapter 8, "Before Abraham was, I am". Then Acts 3 has a reference to Himself as the originator or leader (see footnote) "the originator of life ye slew". We cannot go wrong if we get to the source and see something of how this all works out according to divine ordering, in answer to God's heart desiring that man should be brought into life and experience it. In these verses read, especially in John 9, there are evidences of life. I thought we should start where we get the sense that God's mind and heart is to come into expression in a Man, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men". The incarnation is wonderful. I cannot speak too much about it, so much inscrutable is related to it, but it is as though everything awaited this moment when life could be fully expressed according to God. It is like turning on a light switch as to what life was to be, the beauty, glory and attractiveness of it.

WMcC So God had life in mind from the beginning - "Man became a living soul" (Gen 2: 7). The perfection of it waited until Christ came in.

DMW So breath was necessary for life in its essential character for man, the breath of God. God breathed into his nostrils and he became a living soul. Physical human life began to be in a fully developed man, Adam. He was formed out of the dust, and yet it was to project something further in result, awaiting the incarnation of Christ when life in its full character, and according to God, could finally be seen. Innocent life was there for a time, we do not know exactly how long, but Adam fell, and man has been in that state of things ever since, morally dead to God. But God had life in mind.

HTF I wondered about the significance of you reading from John. We understand it was the last book of the Bible to be written but it actually goes back further than any, even Genesis. Is that significant in view of the source of life?

DMW I thought that. You get an idea, as great as God is, and He cannot be penetrated in His absoluteness, that we must trace the source back to Himself. I thought these three expressions, "In the

beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God”, then the distinguishing of this eternal, divine Person, “and the Word was God” help as considering the source. Of course, ‘The Word’ has in mind what was to be expressed here in manhood. But as you say, as far back as we could think, this Person is identified as God, and the source of life is reached there.

JW Could you say something as to the connection between life and light in these sections in John?

DMW They are interchangeable in the way it is presented. God is light. In a fuller way as to His nature, the link between what is absolute and relative is love, and if things are to be expressed, they are to be expressed according to God's character. I think they are interchangeable, and light has to do with the knowledge of God and the way that it comes to us. It comes to us in a Man living before God and according to God.

JW It is quite clear that the life that was expressed, and what was in the Lord Himself, was light for men, “the light of men”. If we are to come into life it must be as first of all apprehending the light, must it?

DMW Yes, and it was life according to the way that life was to be before God. Now, of course, in the opening verses of John it is God coming out to man, and even in the declaration of God it is not man pretending to look in and determine what the relations were before the incarnation. It is not that at all, it is God coming out to man, coming within man's range, but doing so in this blessed Person, the One who is to express everything in the heart and mind of God, and is to express life, life before God, yet as light of men and in a Man here. However, we should distinguish this blessed One in every aspect as we consider Him. Life was intrinsic to Him. We cannot put ourselves on the same level as the Creator. It is intrinsic to Him, not to us. But, nevertheless, the beauty of it and the attraction of it in all that it meant to God, and God coming out to man, was to show man who He was, “the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him”, John 1: 18. The “him” is God; but also a relationship is seen, so that He who has “dwelt among us” (v 14), has come within our range intelligibly in revelation, where the Father can be known through the Son.

RWMcC God has come into the light. Reference is also made that He said “He would dwell in the thick darkness”, 1 Kings 8: 12. Is what is here that He has come into the light in the sense that men, ourselves, can apprehend this Person?

DMW If we are to understand anything as regards God's heart it must be through God Himself making Himself known in a way that is understandable and intelligible to us. There is what we cannot look into because we are creatures. Yet, God would make Himself known, make His heart known in view of salvation and blessing for man, to take man up for Himself in the descriptive relationship seen in this first chapter as an only-begotten with a Father. It is something we can understand, a relationship well known by men.

AMcS When God breathed into Adam's nostrils (Gen 2: 7) he became a responsible being, but when the last Adam breathed into the disciples (John 20: 22) they were brought into line with God's purpose. Was that really the life that God had in mind for man, do you think?

DMW It was indeed, and that is the point in this exercise. So, the last Adam as a quickening spirit (1 Cor 15: 45) again shows the deity of Christ, but as a quickening spirit making us, in a way, available to be with God according to His own mind and pleasure; to be in life with Him according to His heart. So in John 20 when the Lord breathed into them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit", we get an indication that, while life was intrinsic to Him, it would be possible with us because of the Spirit.

AMcS It is the revelation of God. Man has been removed in the cross of Christ, but God has been expressed and men are brought into line with that through the reception of the Holy Spirit.

DMW We see that side and also, the full revelation; our minds can understand there are three divine Persons operating in a system of life. A relationship of One in manhood as Son with the Father; and the Holy Spirit, of course, expressing the very essence of God Himself and His feelings, and yet His power. We can see that what has been expressed so perfectly in the manhood of Christ is to be before God, according to God and for His pleasure, and made possible for us to be even in sonship, because of the Spirit.

DEB The statement that "the darkness apprehended it not" obtained from the first verse or two of the book of Genesis? It obtains still in the year 2006. You need the light to distinguish from the darkness.

DMW That is fine. You can see from the very opening of the scriptures how everything was pointing forward, light was distinguished from darkness and in John 9, the Lord said He was the light of the world (v 5). For man to be brought into what is favourable to God, light must shine into a man's heart as he comes under the operation of divine working; the works of God are to be manifested. It says in Proverbs that man's

spirit is the lamp of Jehovah (Prov 20: 27). God is a spirit which is in contrast to what is material. Man was made spirit, soul and body. There is a feature within every one which not only has some consciousness of God, because of receiving a conscience at the fall, but which can never get away from the aspect already mentioned as being responsible to God morally, yet in a fallen state not caring anything about God. Regardless of the fall, man still has a spirit. So that there is a feature in every man upon which God can work, although there is no moral foundation there without a work of God in new birth.

WMcC So that man would become a luminary.

DMW There is something of that thought in John 9, I think. Without being over simplistic or irreverent, it is like finally the light is turned on. There were flashes of light, there was physical life, especially seen in innocence before God, but then man fell into a state of moral death with no life Godward (they hid themselves from God). Then, of course, Abraham is called out and so on. Without being too conclusive there were flashes of light and therefore flashes of life, but I am not sure you can speak of life according to God before Christ came into the world. Christ in manhood is the first time it all shone out; a perfect luminary, as you say. The Lord is the light of the world and the man in John 9 is to shine out too in his measure.

RWMcC It says, "in the image of God created he them" (Gen 1: 27): what does that mean then in terms of man in contrast to the Lord coming in? You could not exactly say that it was the image of God, could you?

DMW Image is representation (which indicates a responsible link with God) but only One is the image of the invisible God. In that sense no man can see God (although Christ is the perfect visible representation of the invisible God). No man has seen God at any time, nor can see. There is that area which we cannot penetrate nor pretend to penetrate, but man has been taken up by God as an order of being because of His own purpose and delight. Therefore, Christ became Man, not an angel. There were aspects of things in the Old Testament where we have angels used, and even in the New Testament we have to acknowledge that, but God delights in taking up man as an order of being for Himself. One divine Person has come into manhood, and God has come within our range to express what is in His heart and mind. But then, as coming within our range, He sets out to show what a man is to be in relation with God. He sets everything forward in Himself, "He that has seen me has seen the Father", John 14: 9. So the revelation comes to light in this

blessed Person. He is the revelation of God.

JW As to the life that was in Christ - on the one hand He was making God known, all that God is toward men, but on the other hand He was setting out what man is toward God.

DMW That is my understanding of the truth. God coming within our range is more tied to the declaration of God, and whoever saw it, or took account of it, it was there anyway. But, I understand the revelation of God has to do with the Father, and the Lord Jesus bringing us to the Father. I think, in manhood life is seen according to God and what a man is to be for God and in relationship with God as Father. The Father is to be known. In Luke's gospel I do not think you get the Lord Jesus doing things by the Spirit until after His baptism, chap 3: 21, 22. I think that means that there was perfection in His Manhood. (We always keep in mind that the conception was by the Holy Spirit). Not that any divine Person could ever be separated from the Other, although they are distinguished, but the Spirit personally came upon the Lord at His baptism, complacently and of His own volition, not sent exactly, but come to affirm what had preceded in those first thirty years, while the Father spoke as well - "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight", Matt 3: 17. Also, the Spirit would be available to the Lord Jesus in His temptations of the devil and available for the Lord's public service as a dependent Man amongst men.

JW We have to look at things first of all objectively in Christ, do we not, before we really bring ourselves into it, do you think?

DMW We learn everything from Christ. We learn what life is from Christ, and then we can be brought into it as we identify ourselves with the Spirit as life.

AMcS Life is presented two ways in scripture, first in the way of power and secondly in the way of enjoyment of relationship. Does that fit with what you are bringing before us?

DMW It does and life also is presented morally, which may relate to your reference to power. That is, the two and a half tribes who remained on this side of the Jordan, with the other tribes, actually acquired divine territory, Deut 3: 13 - 16. So that, in our responsible lives, what underlies is our moral link with God, and walking in newness of life is the outcome as responsible men here. Therefore, as we read in Acts, righteousness characterises every area of our responsibility - in our household, in our workplace, wherever it is it is on this side of the Jordan, but, as you say, life in its highest aspect is relationships enjoyed. Whereas we may

count on God through the wilderness journey individually and know in faith that He will never leave nor forsake us, One is on high as our High Priest, sympathetic as to the journey. There is a purpose behind that, not only of acquiring divine territory on this side of the Jordan so that we are set up and justified as responsible persons, but that we might move out of the wilderness into God's eternal sphere, into the inheritance where we can be responsive and free to enjoy the relationships of love which God has purposed for man. He has taken up man as an order of being for that, and there is a return to Himself, as His heart is satisfied.

DEB Could you open up a bit more what you have in mind in the use of the word 'relationship'?

DMW I think it is something we can understand. For example, a son goes out of the house - there is something of his father seen in him, and he represents that house in a righteous way. If things are normal and love is exuded in that household, and the father and the mother have their proper place, not only with one another but with the family, then he returns to that house because that is the area where love pervades and relationships are well known. God in His wisdom has set that on as sort of an index to what He purposes for Himself. So it is practical and real. It is not something theoretical or theological. When we come to divine Persons, reverence rests upon our spirits but it does not dampen our spirits, it sets us free because, "If therefore the Son shall set you free, ye shall be really free", John 8: 36. God has taken up man for Himself, for known responsive relationships, intelligent and affectionate. I think those perhaps are the two characteristics of life that should be found in everyday relationships between husband and wife, children and their father, and so on - intelligence and affection, which would be features of life before God I think.

HTF You mentioned about the source or origin of life - I was thinking of the way that has become particularly an object of Satan's vitriol, an object of his attack. In the *Origin of Species*, what has man done with that? It is installed and still enshrined in this world's thinking. But I wondered in what you are saying as to relationships, if Satan himself fell out of that ordered relationship (Ezek 28:15) and really the source of what is opposed is that?

DMW This is where I think we can distinguish between light and darkness outside ourselves and within ourselves. It is a sad world in which we live. Mr Robertson, in our visit with him on Monday, recalled a reading when someone asked Mr James Taylor what was the chief characteristic of the Son of God. Apparently there was a pause and

then there was this response: 'His sympathy with suffering humanity'. All is enshrouded in darkness here with broken homes and love not truly known by children, where children are abused, where Satan blinds even the unsuspecting; all this is because of sin, which was in the universe before it was in man - "and darkness was on the face of the deep", Gen 1: 2. That condition was because of what you said, Satan falling out of an ordered relationship. There is a foe who sets himself against God, and the light of God and all that God would desire, but he cannot be victorious. He cannot have the victory over love, and where life is known in intelligence and affection there is victory, and these devilish things do not penetrate. They do not penetrate because the Spirit in Romans 8, as I understand it, shows us His mind (v 6); it is the mind of the Spirit, not the mind of the flesh that we take up. We are to see what the Spirit can do for us. He can give us the spiritual mind and we can discern these things in our sphere of responsibility too. But all that is in view of what is to be for God in life.

DBB With Adam, God was looking for some response but it failed very quickly, but with this Man it never failed.

DMW Sometimes in the gospel, we use that verse, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3: 23), but this Man came short of nothing. God never forgot the day when, in the Garden of Eden, He could not walk with Adam any longer. Of course we can only take these things as they are because Adam was a figure of Him that was to come, and there would be no failure in the antitype; life in its fulness and its perfectness and its attractiveness, all expressed in this blessed Person. Wonderful thing to see!

RWMcC The hymn writer says:

All that His love designed,
Secured by Thee! (Hymn 268)

It is what we see in man found here.

DMW To think God's great desire is that we come into this, therefore the necessity of the Holy Spirit. There are various ways in which God works out things in our histories and so forth, so that we are not going on with only some form of doctrine, but we have a living link with divine Persons, relationships, and have links with the brethren of Christ too - living links.

JW Does the life expressed in Christ expose us, but also attract us to Himself?

DMW It is good that it does expose us. As we say, in God's ways and workings, ultimately we have to come to that conviction, "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, good does not dwell", Rom 7: 18. The principle of lawlessness is not just found outside of me, it is found in me. It is the principle of my own will - that is lawlessness. Even if I think I am doing what is good and right, in many cases it is may be my own will in activity, instead of being subject to get into the flow of life, and to know the Spirit, because He has a mind, and He knows perfectly what the will of God is. Also, He is the power needed to live. The flesh has no power for life according to God and "the mind of the flesh is death", Rom 8: 7.

JW If we are to come into life the meaning of the brazen serpent and the springing well (Num 21) is essential, is it?

DMW Some of us may have known the initial burst of joy when we were converted. We may not have known much else, but there was something there like a relief that we never ever before felt, and it was wonderful. In time we understood more clearly that it had been a joy of known forgiveness, a certain liberty in knowing it. Things do not come to us at one time. As time goes on, we have experience of trying to do good and finding that we are not able to, because we find a principle within us working against it. As we get to God about that, we begin to see in the brazen serpent and the springing well the divine intention, an entirely new state. This is beyond the feeling of relief from guilt, and not an improvement of a previous state, which we may have tried for years, but a new state. I think Mr Darby said it was seven years thereabout for him to come to this. As he said, some thought there had been an accident when he was thrown by a horse, but for him it was time ordered of God; apparently, by his account, it was useful to be set aside to help him get beyond attempts to serve in his own strength (Letters vol 3 p 297). He tried very hard and spent himself as a clergyman but then he found the snare was trying to dress this up. He knew, just like the rest of us, and had to find out that an entirely new state is required. Then we come into liberty, we realise there is something in us that is capable of springing up. After the truth of the brazen serpent in John 3, the Lord offered the gift to that dear woman in John 4. It was on the principle of asking; He proposed it to her. (There is no new state without the Spirit, and that required that Christ should be made sin to remove man in the flesh, in that state before God which is obnoxious to Him. God goes back to the origin in the brazen serpent, and there is a new order).

CB It is important to take God speaking to me, rather than taking my mind and thoughts into God's presence?

DMW That is what we are getting at. I am not denying that God brings us into exercise, moral exercise, certain things that disrupt our spirits because we do not seem to be in line with God's thoughts; and, we seek to be priestly about that, carry it, take it to ourselves. We want to commit ourselves, but I think rather than always thinking about being willing or exercising my will in a matter, it may be more of simply keeping company with the Spirit; to be subject to One who knows better than anyone else how to manage these things, and who can bring to bear divine speaking without the intrusion of my own thoughts. It might be that He would use you as a vessel, but only a subject vessel is useful.

RWMcC The Lord says typically that "He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed", and He desired to "know how to succour by a word him that is weary" Isa 50: 4. That is the dependent Manhood.

DMW Yes, and we see the mind of that blessed Man in Philippians 2, we often refer to it. How blessed it is that the Holy Spirit would bring that often before us, whether it be in our preachings or in our conversations, or just in our meditations; going down is to be the direction of our minds. You see it all perfect there, lowliness and humility, not seeking a reputation. It is so opposite to what man seeks in the world. We see the patience and gentleness of the Christ, and His perfect dependence and obedience, "he learned obedience from the things which He suffered", (Heb 5: 8) because in deity it was His right to command. He spoke, and there was a result, but He came into a condition, not to learn to obey, but learning what obedience was and perfectly filling that out. "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; but not as I will but as *thou wilt*", Matt 26: 39. That blessed obedient Man had to go that way that God may be glorified in the place where sin was. He grew up in such opposition and in the midst of what was obnoxious in character to God, yet here was One going that way, "the originator of life ye slew" Acts 3: 15. Beloved brethren, there is no way that we can have part with Christ in flesh and blood condition; there is no life in that way. We must go the divine way; God has a new departure upon which to bless man now, not only through the death of Christ, but on the principle of resurrection.

RWMcC We sang:

Free to look up to heaven,
Since our blessed Head arose. (Hymn 56)

DMW You get that here, "whom God raised from among the dead, whereof we are witnesses", Acts 3: 15. "I am the resurrection and the

life", John 11: 25.

JW I was thinking about the Lord's obedience and perfection. It is One who in Himself is God; He was the only One who could really fill out manhood in perfection.

DMW He is the only One. Nothing surprised God. God, as patient as He is, considerate and desirous to have man before Him on His own terms, and according to His own pleasure, bearing the characteristics that God desires tested man, whether under the law or otherwise; you name it, man was tested - not to prove anything to God. So God comes in with the new covenant. In the old covenant there was man's part and God's part, but the new covenant is forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that we can come into God's thoughts and into the enjoyment of life, which must surely include dependence and obedience as we are left here. The principle of obedience which was prominent in the Old Testament is carried right through. Everything is accumulated in Christianity in view of the fulness of life coming into expression. Even the law itself was holy, just and good, Rom 7: 12. It showed that man was to express some requirements that God had on man, although man in the flesh was wholly unequal to it. Now, the Christian who has the Spirit can fulfil the righteous requirement of the law and go much further than that as having the Spirit as life; power for life is in the Spirit, not in the flesh.

AMcS One expression of life at the present time according to God is meekness. The Christian at the present, like the man in John 9, or like Peter in Acts 3 is able to cope with opposition and reply in the spirit of meekness, do you think?

DMW I do. Again, where do we learn these things? We feed on Christ as the object of life, and He is our life, the meek and lowly Jesus. The meekness means that He did not bring His will into the matter; He was wholly set for the will of God and the will of His Father. As we have said, "morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed", Isa 50: 4. It is not to bring our own thoughts, some of us may have tried that, but it comes to nothing and God may have to expose us as doing that. But, meekness is not a feature which can be found anywhere except in Christ and in those who have the Spirit, as after that order. A new kind of man in that order comes to light, personally perfect in Himself, and characteristically in the saints. How attractive that is. Mr Taylor spoke of being lovable, making ourselves lovable (vol 13: 454). It is not *The Imitation of Christ* (as well intentioned as the writer of that book may have been); it is relating to His Spirit and

feeding on Christ, the meek and lowly Man.

CB Does love come from that?

DMW Love does come from that. We cannot say anything about the relations of divine Persons before time, but we do know that love was there, it must be there. There were relations between divine Persons but what they were we do not know, nor do we know the names. God comes within man's range, man is not capable of going within God's range. God is love and relationships are based on love. Relationships are known in love.

DEB I was wondering if you were making the use of the word a little more inclusive. We think of being sons of God, brethren of Christ, and in relation to union and the bride. These are all relationships, but I sense you are going beyond that into other things.

DMW There is no question that sonship brings out the dignity of relationship (and is the highest expression of relationship for the pleasure of God). With respect, reverence and love toward Him, it is in the dignity of sonship that the fulness of that love is known and enjoyed. I would say that in union Christ and the bride are seen as one flesh, there is no deviation whatsoever. That is from the divine side, and unity underlies that from our side. When we rise to that level and respond to Christ as Man for the satisfaction of His own heart there is something that is there already in the way of oneness for those who are entering into it, at least that is the way I understand it. So, one flesh is the great idea in the relationship of a man and a woman, again not to degrade this but just to think about it. A man and a woman are intimate together and there are things which are enjoyed in many different places, but the intimacy is between the man and the woman, the relationship of love, it is a responsive love, a mutual, reciprocal love. As to the brethren of Christ we are all of one kind. The brethren of Christ have all been made partakers of the divine nature. The outgoing of feelings is also there because the Spirit is there, and whenever there is suffering or whenever something is known as to trial and test, it is not to pronounce according to the law in regard to judgment and government exactly, but to enter into that, carry that, but this is another side of the truth. (Priestly discernment would result in appropriate judgment should it be necessary).

JW The man in John 9 came into intimacy with the Lord, in John 8 the Lord is alone. It is a feature of life to go against the current of the world and be alone, and in John 9 the man was against the current of the world and alone, but at the end of John 9 the Lord and the man are

intimate together.

DMW That is good. It is in view of the flock as you get in John 10. A feature of life is being able to see the Man that is before you.

WMcC I was wondering whether underlying all relationships with God would be the impression of "we are also his offspring", Acts 17: 28?

DMW Creatorially that would be so. Paul took up that aspect of things in Acts 17. It really affected the apostle in Athens. What he saw there was this shrine to the unknown God, and what he loved to do was to declare that God to them. He takes the truth right down to them creatorially and sets it before them. Again, every man has a spirit which is the lamp of Jehovah, so there is a feature in every man to which God has access I think. As we know, light comes in first and the apostle sets the light of God creatorially before them in view of their blessing.

DBB They listened to him then until the matter of the resurrection (v 31). Would that be a manifestation of life?

DMW It certainly would be. Linking on with the truth of resurrection would be the manifestation of life; it would certainly be life attempting to show itself for life is not seen in the grave. The resurrection is a great thing, the death of Christ was necessary morally, and may we be deepened in all that it meant to God, "He who, yea, has not spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him grant us all things?", Rom 8: 32. There is the side of things which the Lord had in His heart as to joy, "in view of the joy lying before him", (Heb. 12: 2), which reaches to resurrection, and really, I think, to ascension for us. (Others could not reach the full thought of God which is in Christianity. We have it through faith now; and it will one day be actual for us.) But all families named of the Father, even those who have gone before (or are to come after) are going to be blessed on the principle of resurrection; life, not death, is in His mind.

RWMcC "God is not God of the dead, but of the living", Matt. 22: 32.

DMW That is right. If you have death you have burial. The Lord tasted death for everything (Heb 2: 9) and He was buried. But He is distinctive in being raised from the dead; and as a divine Person He could raise Himself from the dead. He "has been raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father" (Rom 6: 4), which seems to suggest the Father would have the Lord Jesus in Manhood as He had Him before, but in a different condition in view of others coming into that well known relationship, based not only on the Lord's death but His

resurrection. So Christianity has its basis beyond resurrection because we are made to sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus by faith now and actually in the future.

JB1 In view of His own inheritance amongst the saints.

DMW He is the living God. The Lord said, “because I live ye also shall live”, John 14: 19. The inheritance is to be enjoyed and the inheritance has to do with the will of God, and with life according to God; also, I think, with the land God has provided for life. I think it is right to say the inheritance could not be fully known until the death of Christ. Death came in, and the will of God was fully made known with Christ out of death; He has His inheritance in the saints, on the other side of death. We are co-heirs with Christ. I am trying not to mix things, but we need to enter into these things intelligently and responsibly, and to see that the saints are His inheritance as after the Man who is out of death.

TI I was wondering about the importance of Abraham where you started to read in John 8; the Jews found that very difficult to accept.

DMW An earthly religion prided itself on its connections through genealogy, but then the idea is that we be convicted of all that has to be removed; there is nothing for God in it because man is not equal for what God desires. We see that verse refers to Isaac (the heavenly Man typically), “for in Isaac shall a seed be called to thee”, Gen. 21: 12. There is a suggestion not only of death but resurrection; and then love, as underlying it, is mentioned for the first time in Genesis 22: 1.

JW We have been speaking of the life seen in the Lord here, the life of Jesus, and it was perfect under the eye of God, but what God had as His purpose is a new condition of things altogether, life out of death.

DMW Exactly, so when we speak of a moral path here, we feed on the manna; in it we see how the Lord Jesus brought grace to a suffering humanity. There were characteristics of Himself morally, and we have mentioned some of them, but He is the same Man morally now in a new condition, in an order of things, and in a land to which He is indigenious. We bring nothing into that. We bring nothing there, but are introduced to it in life out of death.

JW The children of Israel when they went into the land had to go through the Jordan, the ark went in and the people went through, and it is what has come out of death. The stones taken out of the Jordan would represent that, Josh 3 - 4.

DMW Therefore the death of Christ was not only Him bearing

judgment on behalf of men, absolutely necessary morally, but also to bring in blessing through His death. That is the Jordan aspect of things, “I lay down my life that I may take it again”, John 10: 17. In view of Him taking it again, we would come into it with Him, and to know the Father as He knows the Father, “I am the good shepherd; and I know those that are mine, and am known of those that are mine, as the Father knows me and I know the Father”, John 10: 14, 15. That is a wonderful thing. No defect. The death of Christ in that respect is for blessing in view of the Holy Spirit being sent so that we could enter into life by having the Spirit.

AMcS So in Colossians (2: 12, 13), we are not only risen with Him we are quickened together with Him, which involves that we vitally enter into the enjoyment of new relationships?

DMW So we are made alive to things that are beyond this scene. Colossians puts us in that way as moving in to where we can enjoy the inheritance, we are not bringing anything, everything is already there. As example, one goes into his father's house, he expects everything to be there and it is, and so it is for ourselves spiritually. Now, we eat His flesh and drink His blood in view of going in that is John's rendering of this (chap 6: 54), life for evermore. He lived on account of the Father, we live on account of Him(v 57). He is there, a Man in life in a new condition, laying down one condition because we could not have part with Him. He stood alone in flesh and blood condition in that way, but morally and by faith with the Spirit as power for it, we get the gain of it now. But the great thing is life on the other side of death, moving by faith into the heavenlies, the Ephesian presentation of it, where you get the inheritance and some spiritual experience of the land and where you are responsive. Paul bowed his knees to the Father, “of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named ... to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man”. That is a collective thought, to be held there with Christ dwelling, through faith, in our hearts so that we can encompass the breadth and length and the depth and height; and to know the love of the Christ, etc., Eph 3: 14-19. That is experience in the land, I believe.

JW We have to be in a condition for our heavenly portion.

DMW There is a new state for it. The resource is there, everything is provided in the land.

MP I was looking at the expression in John's epistle, “he has given to us of his Spirit”, 1 John 4: 13. We cannot even begin to understand the heart of God without that.

DMW The question whether the truth is all out, came up recently. I thought it was, objectively, but that does not mean we do not have exercises regarding what the Holy Spirit might do inwardly in giving us greater understanding, searching the depths of God, giving us to be in liberty and enjoyment perhaps in a greater way. Great things are possible with the Holy Spirit.

HTF There is an interesting note to the scripture you read in Acts, as to the 'origin' or 'originator', that the word is harsh in connection with life. The word is only used of our Lord. I was thinking of what we are saying as to how this might manifest itself and how we make way for it. An impression I have had for some time is about the importance of tenderness. I wondered about what you are saying as to the Holy Spirit. It is a tender matter, we are making way, and if He is grieved then He recedes. The matter you are speaking of, the essence of it is there if we make way for it.

DMW The word 'grieve' means that someone's tender feelings are hurt. Think of the sensitiveness of the Holy Spirit; and as we are identified with the Holy Spirit for life, we will come into it in a greater way. Not that life can be improved exactly, but we can come into it in a greater way so that we do not grieve Him. We are to think about His feelings. We see Him hovering over the state of things in the beginning of the Bible, showing that when the Holy Spirit is thought of it means here is One who feels everything even according to the essence of God. I think He conveys feelings, and we are formed in consideration and feelings too as life is expressed.

DBB Simeon and Anna in Luke 2?

DMW Simeon was very near this dispensation. Think about what proceeded in the Minor Prophets. In Haggai, "The word that I covenanted with you" all those years, "and my Spirit, remain among you", Hag 2: 5. Where is the evidence of that? We find it right there in Luke. There was a man in nearness to the Spirit, not exactly in the same position as ourselves but very near to it. He was able to recognise immediately what was proceeding. What happened? He brought the Lord in, he embraced the Lord.

DBB I find it very testing because we have the Spirit and we do not have the same discernment sometimes.

DMW That is because we are not taking account of Him as in charge of the testimony, having jealous feelings about it, sensitive tender feelings as being with the Spirit in the testimony. The test is whether or

not we can take things on and see them through to conclusion by being in communion with the Spirit. We are not to get out of our orbit as man got out of orbit through the fall, we stay within our orbit under the control of the Spirit to know what His mind is, inwardly I mean, so that the result is spirituality. ("The spiritual discerns all things", 1 Cor 2: 15.)

MP I am interested that you refer again to the matter of the Spirit of God hovering over the face of the water (see Gen 1: 2). You might say that was before God began to operate in relation to the present creation. It is interesting that the Spirit of God was there in that sensitive way seeking to link on with anything that there was for God.

DMW I think in that scripture the Spirit helps us to understand He is beginning to operate feelingly in view of some effect that would be for God and for man, because the idea is to provide an atmosphere where man could exist. There was an empty and waste situation which God did not create and, while God has not chosen to tell us much about it, the Spirit of God comes before us in the scripture in view of man being brought on the scene, but he has to have an area, a suitable environment, he is going to be given lungs, he has to be able to breathe. The Spirit of God enters into these things. It is not necessarily what anyone can see, but I think the effect is to be known and the feelings are to be known. The word Spirit means 'wind' or 'breath'. The Lord mentions it in relation to new birth, life not exactly arrived at there yet, but new birth needed for the laying of a moral foundation upon which God can work; the Spirit dealing with a man's spirit in view of bringing a man into life.

MP The Lord says, "He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you", John 16: 14.

DMW "He shall glorify me", that is what He desires to do.

RWMcC Is "let the dry land appear" (Gen 1: 9), the area of God's operations? I am always impressed with the desire of divine Persons to move into this realm of things, this dispensation where God is made known.

DMW That is wonderful. What precedes that is, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together to one place". Think of Calvary in connection with that. What you are saying would be possible as He proceeded in the creation and provided certain things in view of man coming on the scene, but time shows that for man to be morally suitable, Calvary would be necessary.

RWMcC The scripture in Isaiah has been referred to, “not as waste did he create it” goes on to say, “he formed it to be inhabited” (Isa 45: 18), it shows what the feelings of God were in relation to it.

DMW In His consideration of man as an order of being for Himself, He would have to take up what occurred. Rebellion is antecedent, led by Satan himself; that principle, rebellion, would come out in man. But, God was never satisfied with merely having angels as created beings. He had something related to purpose in mind and that would be with man in view for life according to Himself.

Grimsby
9 June 2006

LIFE THAT IS ATTRACTIVE TO HEAVEN

Isaiah 53: 1-3; 11: 1, 2, 6-9 Revelation 1: 17, 18; 3: 8-11
Jude 17-21

DMW The desire is that something should be left on our spirits as to the kind of life that is so attractive to heaven, so distinguished by the character of the Man who walked in that life, the One who laid down that life, life in perfection, drawing nothing at all from the world, growing up of itself. In Isaiah 11 I thought we could see what possibilities there were for us in feeding on that life, the same life morally on the other side of death that was seen here, the same blessed Person who brought into the world the word of God, personally qualified to express the mind and heart of God, a life that was for God, a life now on the other side of death, a Man glorified. I wondered as to the “shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots” leading on to projecting eternal life on the earth in the coming day, so that we might see the wonderful possibilities that exist in our gatherings, where nature in its typical character is not to be seen. Our gathering together provides a wonderful area of peace, a wonderful area of persons who know this One whose life was taken from the earth; they know the One who has declared, “Fear not: I am the first and the last, and the living one ... behold, I am living to the ages of ages, and have the keys of death and of hades”. We see in Philadelphia a wonderful character of what we might think of as carried over from Isaiah 11, where persons are

breathing the atmosphere of love, a living organism, persons in continuance here because of the attraction of that Man and that kind of life and who love one another, keeping certain things in evidence of that life, overcoming to make way for a wonderful experience of what can be for the Lord Jesus and for the delight of heaven. It is the assembly in remnant conditions, in remnant character and then, as apostasy increases publicly, the life continues, a life that is fruitful. "Behold, I make them of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews", certain pretensions but opposed to what is really life and with profession only; empty profession, yet claiming much over against Philadelphia where life in the service of God can be expressed. These are they who set themselves apart and instead of the disallowance of what is natural, things are taken up on that natural basis. There is no life there according to God's mind collectively. Philadelphia is different.

So, in Jude there are spots in the love feasts. We understand in remnant conditions there is a little power in the midst of the increasing outward profession and apostasy; yet we get encouragement beloved ones, "praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life". The desire is that something might truly rest upon our spirits as to this blessed precious life, which was taken from the earth but is to continue in the saints.

HTF Would you say something as to the opened door in Revelation 3?

DMW If you have an open door you should be able to look and see something through it. In John 10, He is the door, and the sheep who, without defect, go in and out and find pasture and have the enjoyment of life abundantly (vv 7, 9). We are allowed to look in where the operation of love comes out in life among the brethren, and this makes way for the great matter that God desires for His own heart; persons love one another and are set for these things, and they keep certain things in view of His own blessed service.

HTF He has done it in view of our entering in to the enjoyment of what is before us?

DMW Yes, He has. It is the wonder of it all that He is, "the first and the last, and the living one", but there are those brought to light in between because of what He has done to make way for the fruitfulness of life to continue. He has done it. He is, "everything, and in all", Col 3:11.

JW Would the first scripture that you have read show that naturally we have had no appreciation of this life? We really have to change our

man do we?

DMW He had “no form nor lordliness”, there is no one like Him. Man would look to put up another man, one who would come in his own name (John 5:41); they will do that. There is nothing to attract on the basis of judging naturally. In Isaiah 11 you get that kind of judgment removed; but the attraction is moral, the beauties of Christ, the order of Man set on in His Person is meant to be carried through, although He is always unique. If we do not change our man we cannot be along side of Him in life at all; it is life of another order and kind, beyond what is natural to us.

JW Is this what is going to hold us and preserve us from the apostasy that is coming in?

DMW It is part of current exercise that we have to face things as they are, not as they were. If you desire a lot, then with horror and with sorrow you see iniquity developed, the iniquity of the Amorites becoming full. We must face that and not be carried away by any of it, any aspect of it, any influence that would come from that area of things, or anything from any quarter that does not speak to us and to our affections of another kind of Man.

WMcC Did Samuel have to go through this exercise, the selection of David, 1 Sam 16: 6-10?

DMW Yes, one by one, certain persons, whose names have meaning in that particular section, came before Samuel, one who would be attractive as a man would be attractive, for example, another one this and another that, but none of them worthy of selection or anointing. It is suggestive that only a man after God's heart was worthy, one who could be exalted in the midst of his brethren because of who he is.

PH This glorious Man will hold us: “For ye were going astray as sheep but have now returned to the **shepherd** and **overseer** of your souls”, 1 Peter 2: 25?

DMW Even Peter's adjustment when the Lord spoke to him at the end of John's gospel, “Follow thou me” (John 21:22), confirms your thought. John got the gain of it for himself. When Peter fell at Jesus' knees and said, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord” (Luke 5:8), the Lord would not depart. Peter realised what the Person was before him and must have had some impression that the Lord was going to set him up in service: “henceforth thou shalt be catching men”, v 10. Peter would learn service would be impossible without following the Lord in it as under the Lord's shepherd service.

AM Is the tender sapling what God saw in the life of Jesus and that comes before what man saw?

DMW Yes. Man in a condition of unbelief, fallen humanity, cannot recognise things or see things as they really are. If we are to see things as they really are we must see them from heaven's view. What do you think as to the tender sapling?

AM It is a test as to what we can say. It seems to me that in outward smallness and a condition that was despised around there was One who had in Himself the ability to grow up before God pleasing to Him.

DMW There is no one like Him, no one before Him, no one after Him:

Unique in Thy humanity:
Eternally divine. (Hymn 199).

The Man of God's choice, divine pleasure in a Man, the attracting object for our hearts.

DBB Not deriving anything from down here.

DMW Nothing. What do we derive? If we derive anything morally from down here we are out of our orbit. He is the ruling object for my heart. He is the Head and Centre of God's universe of bliss, where life is in expression.

DNS I was thinking of the oblation, it brings out the holy perfection of the life of Jesus and there is no measurement of the flour in the offerings, Lev 2: 1. We cannot measure the value of the life of Jesus, what it meant to God.

DMW And even at the age of twelve (we speak carefully because there was really no development morally with Him, it cannot be that way), He was about His Father's business (Luke 2: 49), in the perfect intrinsic character of a Man for God. Is it any wonder that at His baptism the Holy Spirit does not have to be sent, He comes (Luke 3: 22). He marks out and affirms the perfection of the oblation that was there in those first thirty years, in One soon to offer Himself without spot or blemish. That would be the priests' food, and it is food for God.

KM It says in Acts 8, "for his life is taken from the earth" (v 33). It does not exactly say that in Isaiah 53 but it leads on to the eunuch saying, "what hinders my being baptised?" (v 36). It means that he was prepared to go out of sight in relation to this world and its concerns.

DMW Very good. The truth is one whole, all leads to Him, who He is, how He has moved, what He has done. Baptism is an important matter

with us. The eunuch said, 'if there is someone like this I must go out of sight', baptised unto the death of Christ. Removal is the idea, because there is something that has to be continued and, while we take account of that objectively and it is in view of something, yet it is necessary for us to come to the same conclusion that the eunuch did.

RWMcC He says, "what hinders my being baptised?" It is as we have our eye on Christ in this order of manhood that anything that might hinder, which is myself, will go out of sight.

DMW We need to be deepened in these things. Household baptism is not merely because that is what the brethren do. It may be that if our intelligence is lacking this certainly would be the thing to do anyway, but what is in view is not the world, what is in view is even little ones coming into things normally in a Christian household where they would be attracted to Christ. They would see beauty in Him, they would see something of attraction even in the brethren. We need to lay hold of these things. Mr Renton reminded us that we often refer to self judgment, but what about the judgment of self? Are we getting back to our baptism or retaining ourselves for the world?

PM When the Lord Jesus came out of the waters of baptism Luke presents Him as the praying Man, "Jesus having been baptised and praying", Luke 3: 21. There was nothing in Him that needed removing but does He become the model for us and opening up on our view the intimacy of communion - even in such a movement - that He had with His Father.

DMW That is helpful to see. In Matthew's rendering of the Lord's baptism it was to fulfil all righteousness (3:15), and as you have suggested He was seen praying. He was a perfect Man. Think of the loveliness of Christ, perfect in dependence, the glory of a Man, perfect in obedience, in communion with His Father for what lay ahead in service in going through those tests in the power of the Spirit. Wonderful, attracting life for our souls.

PM I wondered if the tender sapling suggests the One who was praying. He was here in dependence upon His God, upon the Father. I believe Mr Darby said that, "The hand that struck the chord found all in tune" (Synopsis Vol 1: 110). Every feature that He looked for in a man was there in this Man and there was nothing that He did not look for.

DMW He found everything in Christ. Think of His patience as a Man, think of the glory of His walk, that in itself was attractive to John the Baptist. The One who was set here for the will of God, so pleasurable to God, the Lamb of God, the holy One of God, harmless, moving as a

lamb (John 1: 29, 36). Great enough to take away the sin of the world, but accepting the position of suffering because He was not known or appreciated and not desired, accepting rejection because the will of God involved His death.

AKT It says “a root out of dry ground”.

DMW There was nothing here.

AKT It was dry down here, He would receive from heaven.

DMW He is a kind of Man that was never known and seen. He comes to light in the place where God's people had gone off into idolatry, where Man had been tested. This Man would be tested, tested in coming through in perfection. “In Him sin is not”, 1 John 3: 5. “Who did no sin”, 1 Peter 2: 22. Perfect, dependent, subject, obedient Man, never a man like that.

JB Does the root mean secret communion?

DMW We are not let in on too much in those first thirty years. He was constant in His thoughts and movements, in His desires that God's will be carried through. No deviation at all, no divergence, even recalling in the garden, “if it be possible, let this cup pass from me”, Matt 26: 39. What it must have meant to a blessed holy Man! There never was a holy Man before seen here, no one like that, holy humanity: what it was when He was made sin! He would have to be made what we are, to finish sacrificially the lawless man.

RWMcC Would it be right to say that God could test that Man?

DMW I think so. Certainly God shows that the tests were very real and that He overcame all. There was no testing like the Lord Jesus underwent. The devil pressed upon Him, “departed from Him for a time” (Luke 4: 13) and returned. Why? Because here was a Man finally that did not deviate from the path of obedience and dependence and love to His God and Father, the devil would try in some way to make Him deviate. Whether it be setting something forward that would emanate from the Egypt world, or the Babylonish world, where the devil has sway, he would try everything, and there was no penetration because of who this Man was and because of the kind of Man He was, Luke 4: 1-13.

DEB Can you tell us why chapter 11 comes before chapter 53? Chapter 11 is a presentation of who the Lord was as wholly successful, but chapter 53 presents Him as rejected.

DMW I am not sure I can say much as to the ordering. Everything leads up to the display of a life that would bring in everything for God including what we are reading about in Isaiah 11, projecting even ahead to the millennial state where eternal life will be enjoyed on earth; showing the possibilities, but leading up to distinguishing one blessed Man who could bring it all about. For us who have never seen the Lord Jesus corporeally, personally, we learn the truth as from Christ and the fulness of it in Him; we start with Him, and end with Him. Everything in the previous dispensations, if we can characterise time that way, pointed forward. Life could not be known until Christ comes on the scene, in a way that God intended for man to live before Him. Yet, with such a life there would be a scope to it, there would be continuance of it characteristically in persons, and in our day the possibilities are here. We could have read Psalm 133, we could have read 1 Corinthians 12, we could have read other scriptures, but this scripture came to mind. Everything that would never appreciate Christ is nullified and in its place are persons in the enjoyment of eternal life not on the basis of what is natural, but on the basis of our link with the heavenly Man.

HTF In both of these chapters in Isaiah there is a reference to root and roots. The Lord Jesus in the parable of the sower refers to having no root. There is apparent life springing up but there is no root, and it does not bring anything to fruit, Mark 4; 17. I wondered whether what you are saying is that what is derived from Him has a root.

DMW "They have no root in themselves", nothing was there of Christ. Elsewhere, the tree had to be cut down, "the axe is applied to the root of the tree", Luke 3: 9. Man has made himself a great tree in the world in separation from God, and even when the ministry of the Lord Jesus was confined to that area, where there had been a remnant returned, you see only his disciples affected. There were some that responded but man naturally and religiously is like the dry ground. "The wind blows where it will", (John 3: 8); the idea is that things come to light in fruitfulness so that a life is there. There can be no life unless it is derived from the Lord Jesus, who grew up here of Himself so to speak, "a root out of dry ground". There cannot be any life pleasurable to God unless it is after His order.

HTF The tender sapling, even in natural things, is the epitome of life, springing up but from a root.

DMW Some of these things we can think of intelligently as to the way the Spirit of God would present them to us, just as you have suggested. Thus we are expanded in our appreciation of God's own work in His operations and understand how He is bringing to light persons like

Christ. His own operations are engaged in that, a divine system is operative to bring that about because of the consideration for man, His desire for man to be in life, but life after Christ, and for His own heart. Wonderful thing! We may not be able to put that together if we try to link it all with being born anew (John 3: 3), which is initial, when something is established morally in a soul and when a person begins to crave God. While that might be life potentially, it is not exactly life expressed yet according to God. Even though we speak of new birth it is really a new source coming in. Life can only be seen in Christ in its perfection, that is what we draw from and feed on. We see too that He is the object of life. All my motives have changed now, I am attracted to another Man and another kind of Man, a Man I have never seen corporeally, but He is to be seen in the saints who have the Holy Spirit, the same kind of life.

AKT Are you thinking that a tender sapling sets forth life in Jesus?

DMW I thought that. We are moving carefully, we want something to rest on our spirits, something deep of this blessed Person, and the blessedness of His life.

AKT The life would be green would it not; the leaves would be green? A tender sapling is very beautiful and it is before God.

DMW So as our brother has suggested, oft times the natural or the physical is an index to what is spiritual. Where? We take care in that because our minds have to be under the control of the Holy Spirit lest we introduce our own thoughts and we would guard the impeccability of the life of Jesus. It is there in all its glory, beauty and attractiveness; a tender sapling, a root out of dry ground.

PH Is the root in mind in John 15 v 4, “unless ye abide in me”? This is the root; we are the branches, do you think?

DMW The thing to see is that there is a testimony in that life. The branches abide in the vine, that is the true vine (John 15: 1), one life. There is the drawing of this sap so that there is testimony. The world may not understand that or recognise it because our “life is hid with the Christ in God” (Col 3: 3), and when it is manifested it will all be clear as to what we are; but in the circle of affection where life is to be enjoyed and no intrusion of what is natural is allowed, that life comes out because we are abiding in the vine. So there is testimony before God. I understand Israel was a vine (Is 5:), and certain things were committed to them for testimony, but what we are talking about here is vital. It is nothing ecclesiastical, it is vital and it is characterised by what is vigorous I think. What comes to light is the vigour of life drawing from the vine as having the Spirit who is life. That is what we want, we do not

want to set one another up naturally; we have done so much of that, we would like to be ourselves naturally, but no, we want the life of Christ only, and admiration for that. That is a test as to how we get over into the life of Christ. Certainly, it cannot be without the Spirit. Are we feeding on Him, are we drawing from Him?

PM Verse 8 raises the question, “who shall declare his generation?” Does that bring out the distinctiveness of Christ in the midst of those that are His own? They are His generation.

DMW Quite so. Who could declare it? He is distinct.

PM I thought that was perhaps an answer to the question about Isaiah 11. He begins with the glory and majesty of this Person, but he says if there is to be a generation I will show you the kind of Man that gives character to it.

DMW He “saw the Lord ... high and lifted up”, Isa 6: 1. You can never get to the end of this blessed Person, every thought and every direction of thought.

JB Yet “the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah” is over against the folly and darkness of the apostasy?

DMW That is what we need. We need to be held in life that way. We sang at the outset as to His headship, that is where wisdom is. Wisdom is in the Head. He was the wisdom and power of God here (1 Cor 1: 24), we know that. But He has been exalted. He is Head in Colossians in His personal right, chap 1: 18. That glory belongs to Him, “the Son of [the Father's] love”, chap 1: 13. He is made Head in Ephesians, 1: 23. The glory of headship attaches to One who has the spirit of wisdom and understanding perfectly, the spirit of counsel and might. It says in the next verse, “he shall not judge after the sight of eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears” (v 3). That would be natural judgment. We are to judge spiritual judgment.

JW Would you say something in relation to as to the fear of Jehovah marking the Lord?

DMW It is difficult sometimes to put in words. “The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov 9: 10), everything is personified in Him. It brings to mind that He was set only for the will of God and He respected that as a man. In one sense He knew that there was nothing else that was right. I say that reverently and carefully. He was the righteous One, but the fear of Jehovah, the will of God, filled His heart, “Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, thy

will", Heb 10: 7. Think of the feelings of the blessed Man:. "By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all" (Heb 10: 10). He came to take away the first, He was great enough to do that, and establish the second (v 9). Job had to learn that, some sense of it anyway.

HTF Is there some link in the verse in Isaiah 11 with the seven spirits of God - "he hath them"? There is a complete thought in this verse, the seven aspects and the fear of Jehovah is one of them.

DMW That is good. So that you get the presentation of the Lord Jesus "girt about at the breasts", and walking "in the midst the seven golden lamps". He holds the stars (Rev 2:10) and He has them, Rev 1:16. I would just say humbly the recovery is because of the Lord's love. It is because of the Lord's love and what He has that He has brought us even to know one another in fellowship. That is the Lord's love. We are to be very careful. If I am a lion by nature, I do not display that character, and I may very well be that by nature. There is one attracting object, one life and one kind of life really.

We see in Revelation a beautiful picture of what the Lord knows, His perfect valuation and estimation of the assembly. He has the whole assembly in His heart, the assembly of God which God "has purchased with the blood of His own" (Acts 20: 28), perfect valuation. Here it comes to light in the recovery, persons keeping the word of His patience. Tomorrow we are going to break bread, if the Lord will. The Lord's Supper and the coming of the Lord Jesus were parallel features of the recovery at the outset, but at the end of the dispensation, in which we find our lot, the sonship of Christ, preceded by eternal life in the company are clarified for our enjoyment of blessed relationships. The blessed Man here, who came into the bosom of the Father in manhood, and declared God (John 1: 18), He is "the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father unless by me", John 14: 6. The sonship of Christ, personal recognition of the Holy Spirit, the setting on of the order of service Godward, the Supper and the coming of Christ as the hope of the church, all accumulate to us at the end for our enjoyment in life before God.

JW I was wondering whether this scripture in Revelation 1 is necessary for us in view of current conditions to understand the Lord's judicial attitude, yet at the same time to be exercised to be in accord with Him so that He can say to us, "Fear not".

DMW I think that is the truth. He does not speak of Himself as head nor is He blessing the assemblies exactly, but He has judicial garb on

which is a test to us. How far are we allowing the conditions of life to perpetuate as in Isaiah 11? All these things in one sense embarrass us. The church buildings are going to be here when the Lord comes, profession of God is going to continue, but thank God He has wrought, and the Lord Jesus has wrought in recovery, because of His love for the assembly and a desire that blessing be available at the end in a full way. While all this affects His heart, He still says to Laodicea, “if any one hear my voice”, Rev 3: 20.

JW The Lord's laying His right hand on John would show that if we are to continue in these conditions and be serviceable to the Lord it is in the power of life.

DMW That was the impression in linking these scriptures together. Life, and you cannot think of life without love. Mr Darby says there is no truly loving except in the truth (2 John 1 - footnote). Beloved, let us not be carried away with our own thinking. There is one life before us and reverence would become us as we take up these things. Words do matter. There should be words like those spoken by the Lord Jesus in John 6 - “the words that I have spoken to you are ... life”, v 63. Introducing notions in our own minds spoils life. It might be said there is no love if you do not allow something new, but it is because of love that I would not, because I understand the judicial character of the Lord Jesus; always observing, always near, looking to find that desired by His own heart, something that He desires to come to light in a living body of persons known as His assembly.

PM Is His death in this section presented in a distinctive way? It is not exactly that He died for our sins here, He became dead. I wondered if that had a bearing on the scene of the testimony, that “He became dead” in view of the securing of what could be associated with Himself in an order of life and in the removal of all that was morally dead before God.

DMW That is helpful. We can see that His death meant blessing in view of our being identified with Him in life. You cannot think of the assembly being separated from Christ any more than you can think of divine Persons being separated; although they are distinguished, they are united. We cannot think of the assembly being separated from the heart of Christ. What does the assembly mean to us? Is it a sphere of life where we can breathe the atmosphere of love, where a way is made for the blessed Holy Spirit in persons, so that there can be a response to God for His own pleasure? It takes the assembly for that. Is it to be available to Christ at the end? Yes, it is. We want to have whole thoughts, even in remnant conditions. We are not saying that we are

the assembly but maintaining in our hearts the same corresponding valuation of what Christ's valuation is for the assembly seen in Philadelphia.

RJF The wording here is interesting, it is not 'behold I became dead', but, "behold, I am living". Attention is drawn to the "I am living".

DMW In John 14 the Lord Jesus spoke of another Comforter. He was speaking of the Spirit who was with them, and would be in them, and He declares that "because I live, ye also shall live", v 19. He is a blessed living Man out of death, "the resurrection and the life", John 11: 25. Resurrection and life go together. He was great enough to ascend, as He could tell Mary, and yet how wonderful, "I ascend to my Father and your Father"(John 20: 17), now in resurrection, where everything is new for us and a new principle of resurrection for God. He could not say before His death and resurrection, "my Father and *your* Father... my God and *your* God". But out of death, raised and ascended, there is a company here associated with Him intelligently as He brings us into life and that is in relationship with the Father, and manhood for God.

PM Is that the force of the fact that He is living here to the "ages of ages". The assembly will live in His life eternally will she not?

DMW Yes. He has the keys of death and hades. It is His right to have everything. He has the assembly to live in His life eternally. Is it not a wonder, as we sang at the outset, of the place that He has in our heart, so unique? The blessed Head. Wisdom is mentioned in that hymn as well; wisdom, power and love. That is our blessed Head. He holds everything.

RWMcC At the beginning of Genesis God says, "I will make him a helpmate, his like" (Gen 2: 18), but then it says, "Jehovah Elohim built the rib that he had taken from Man into a woman; and brought her to Man" (v 22). Is it a great thought that He brings her to him?

DMW He is a real Man. He desires to be intimate with His bride. He is confident in her as His wife here in His absence, but she is one flesh with Him as His bride. See what a great test is put on us responsibly, whether or not we think the same thing, whether or not we are joined in soul, whether or not we are one, in unity. What should be evident at the time of union is a company already united, no deviation from Him in Manhood, so that she can be for His heart and He for hers.

PH This falling at His feet as dead would bring in worship, would it? "Worship at His footstool. He is holy!", Psa 99: 5

DMW John may have been a bit unsure. What an experience he had,

the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Lord would always set us at ease. It is true what you say, and we should never forget who it is we are speaking of or to. Not only "God manifest in flesh" (1 Tim 3: 16) but "God over all, blessed for ever, Rom 9: 5. That is this Person and, while we cannot divide the thoughts, we still distinguish them. So when a brother was speaking about one flesh in Genesis, it is not a question of worship there, it is a question of the response of love; a man and a woman together, one flesh. He is certainly due worship but not at union. I think in His putting His hand upon John He would put Him at ease. Not to be familiar with Him, not to use familiar terms with Him, but to be at ease and worshipful, and remain in the state needed for John to get the fullness of what the Lord Jesus was going to say to him.

TH Could you help us some more about the idea of fear that you are touching on "fear not": in a previous scripture you were speaking of the beginning of wisdom, the separation from evil and the fear of God. Is this not a different kind of fear? "Perfect love casts out fear, 1 John 4: 18. It is perfect love we are speaking of in this situation when He put His hand on John like this.

DMW I was trying to distinguish that a bit, it is perfect love that has cast out fear. John writes of life abundantly, "I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly", John 10: 10. That is unfettered life. What you are saying is helpful because as we approach Him as a divine Person we bow our hearts in worshipful reverence, we extol His blessed Name. We are not familiar towards Him at all. He is a Man, but He is more than a Man; but He *is* a Man, and as a Man He has something for His heart. That is where the idea of one flesh comes in, what was of Himself, that is what the assembly is in its bridal feature as in union with Him.

AMcS Before we come to the bridal aspect of the assembly at the end of this book we have the Lord presented as the Son over God's house in chapters 2 and 3. Is that important?

DMW It is. He is over God's house in that way and manner. We must always remember that we are in mixed conditions and at any moment at any time in the house of God I might behave in such a way that would preclude my enjoyment of life as it is intended to be enjoyed before God in His house. As you are saying, and as we spoke of earlier, what should be found already when we reach union is this oneness, our being united, and saying the same thing is important I think. We are thinking the same thing, we are joined in soul, but that depends on the exercise I have in being near to the Spirit and the brethren, so that there are moral conditions for oneness, and for readiness spiritually to

ascend, I would say.

WMcC Is there something of the character of “the Spirit and the bride say, Come” (Rev 22: 17) as we are approaching that time of the bridal side at the Supper and at the worship of God?

DMW I think so. It is going to be quite a day when we can be in the reality of that cry, and the answer comes. It is going to be quite a day when the Man of God's choice is manifested. There will be nothing to hinder us, no lion-like character at all attaching to us. Our hearts will be so engaged with Himself that there will be no room for anything else as the period of Isaiah 11 is ushered in on the earth.

JW Do we have to accept an obligation as to what you have been saying as to unity? We may be content to go on with a divided outlook on things, but it is an exercise to us that we should take on that obligation and be exercised about it?

DMW Both Philippians and Corinthians put the obligation on us. How can there be a manifestation of the Spirit, for example in 1 Corinthians 12, unless we are joined to the Lord by one Spirit, unless we are in the gain of the Spirit's baptism, where there is “one body and one Spirit”, Eph 4: 4. It is put on us responsibly, not to bring in something in our minds which would lead to bringing some notion into the company. The Spirit too is sensitive. So just like in our actual baptism, which we are to get back to and see what has to be removed in the area of things we enter upon in Christianity, baptism of the Spirit is in view of something. We have to think about the baptism of the Spirit, which occurred once, as to how I am lined up with those in the body. It is put on us to endeavour to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace.

WMcC So we need the principle of the yoke fellow.

DMW That is good. Christianity is to be practised. There was difficulty amongst two sisters in Philippi, but the antidote is life amongst the saints, “and let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus”, Phil 2: 5. The lowly Jesus is the answer.

PM Does fellowship then precede the Supper, the Supper being the expression of it; but fellowship must precede that?

DMW Quite, and I think the first aspect of fellowship that we would do well to come to is the fellowship of His death. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea in John 19 (v 38,39) were ready for fellowship, because they identified themselves with the death of Christ. They were not ready before that. Then we have the joy and happiness of mingling with

the brethren in love, all thinking the same thing now, all headed the same direction, all exercised that the renewed mind be in activity and not the mind of the flesh. All are exercised to make way for the Spirit to prove what He can do, being aware that He is sensitive in these matters and how we handle things. I repeat what Mr Renton said, 'We may speak a lot about self judgment but what about the judgment of self?' All that enters into it, I am sure, if we are to be rightly in fellowship.

TH You were speaking earlier about union and oneness, you are now speaking about unity. The experience of union is connected with unity. Could you help us some more about this. If we have difficulty in being united in a locality, can you help us in how we enter into a sense of union?

DMW From the divine side and viewed abstractly it is there, but Christianity is not a matter of simple abstractions or what is theoretical. Life is to be lived and experienced and life responsibly in the testimony is an important matter. I do not know that in my own mind I distinguish too much between being united and oneness, but what should flow out of that are conditions suitable for the enjoyment of union - one flesh - during the service of God.

Grimsby
10 June 2006

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