

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

SECOND SERIES

No. 37

April 2010

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THE RESULTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ACTIVITIES

John 16: 12-13

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JMcK There is a great deal of scope in these scriptures that will arrest our attention, but I wondered if the Lord would use this occasion to awaken us freshly to the distinction that belongs to the time in which we live. What has impressed me is that the presence of the Spirit is key to the reaching of divine objectives. Now I hope that these scriptures will yield in that context. I would like if we could get a view of the Spirit's presence from the divine standpoint, not exactly as meeting need on our part, or as simply power to get through a scene that is marked by difficulty and pressure, but that we should get an impression of what His presence means from the divine viewpoint.

This verse in John 16 is key to our enquiry, "But when *he* is come". That relates to the period in which we live and it gives its own distinction to it. The other passages we have read form a framework to this enquiry. In Genesis chapter 2 we have the reference to the moisture that was in the earth in view of God forming man. It has often been said that Genesis 2 gives us the fulness of things, and I think the fulness of things in the divine programme must involve the presence of the Spirit. Then we get the reference to the rivers, the river that rose in Eden, the great power of life that came forth from that place of divine delight in view of results on the earth. The reference in Genesis 24 is familiar to us, "I will not eat until I have made known my business". I wonder how much we know of what the Spirit's business is. The grand conclusion of all is in Revelation 22, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come", the closeness of that link evidencing the great conclusion of God's ways in testimony in this present period, and the word, "Amen; come, Lord Jesus".

So there is great scope. We have read from Genesis, the beginning of the Bible, and we have read from Revelation at the end of it. We are not able for detail, any of us, but if we can get an impression of the opportunity that the present time affords to come into the main stream of what God is doing, that is the opportunity we have today. God is looking for persons who will be available to Him.

CKR So what you are bringing forward underlies the greatness of the revelation of God in Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That whole revelation has been to secure God's aim and God's objective in this dispensation, has it not?

JMcK That is right, so that the Spirit could not come had the Lord Jesus not first come.

NJH "The Spirit of truth" is not only how He is introduced, but it is characteristic of that Person in the dispensation.

JMcK Yes. Mr Raven said that that is in contrast to the letter of truth, vol 5 p297. The tendency is to hold things orthodoxly, understanding the elements of the truth and yet not being fully affected by them. What God is looking for is that persons should have their eyes opened to the significance of the presence time.

NJH The integrity and purity of the manhood of Christ has been continued by this Person. Is that right?

JMcK So that the background of what we are considering is the precious relationship between the Lord Jesus and those to whom He is speaking in John 16. I think we should begin with that, because there is something distinctive about it. There was an area of confidence. Think of how much the Lord entrusted to the disciples during the time He was with them, and the close affectionate link that developed between Him and those that He had secured through His grace. So in verse 12 He says, "I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now". I would like to get some help about that. "Ye cannot bear them now"; the implication is that there were certain limitations that related to those days when the Lord Jesus was here in flesh and blood. Those limitations have now been removed because Jesus, the Man who was speaking so confidently

and assuringly to His own at this point, is now in heaven. He is now in circumstances of glory right outside the sphere of adversity, but in John 16 that is still future.

WMP He had washed their feet, and spoken to them of the Father. Do you think that would be in comparison to the scripture that you have read?

JMcK Yes, I think the way He worked with these men is really wonderful. He showed great patience with them and He showed great confidence in them. John 15 is somewhat in my mind as I say that, because He says, "I have called you friends, for all things which I have heard of my Father I have made known to you", v 15. What a statement that is: "all things which I have heard of my Father I have made known to you". So they became the depository of this great wealth of what came from Christ. Mr Raven says in his ministry that the disciples received far more from Christ than they actually brought into testimony, vol 5 p325. They were richly furnished by their link with Jesus Himself.

RFW Could you say more as to the force of the expression, "ye cannot bear them now"?

JMcK Well, you can help us, but I think He is certainly conveying that He understood the pressure that was about to come on them, the sorrow of the fact that He would be taken from them, the reality of that. Then the word, "ye cannot bear them", also implies that they did not have the capacity that was needed to bear these things. What do you say?

RFW Yes, I was wondering about the matter of capacity. I am wondering if you would help us as to how we are formed in that capacity.

JMcK Well, I think it is a question of enlarged affections. It also involves divine power. The extended scale, if we can put it that way, of divine operations meant that subsequent to the time when the Lord Jesus was here on the earth there would come a period when another divine Person would be here, and the power of that would be felt by those in the scene of testimony.

CKR The fact that He is a divine Person would make us worshipful as we realise that a Man has gone into heaven, but God is here in the Spirit, and that is in view of achieving God's objectives in this glorious dispensation.

JMcK And He is here powerfully. John's epistle says that, "He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself". 1 John 5: 10. Now, that is a significant reference to what the Spirit is here in the days in which we live. I think we do not fully apprehend the distinction that belongs to these days. I feel the need of being awakened to the reality of it. The fact that the Spirit has now come means that we are on the way to the securing of the objectives that God had in His mind.

JCG In chapter 14 the Lord says that the Spirit "will bring to your remembrance all the things that I have said to you", v 26. That would bring out the importance of the Lord's ministry as a prime matter in view of the continuing through this dispensation, would it?

JMcK So that the Spirit maintains, and it is helpful to see that, the full light of what was revealed in Christ, "*he* ... will bring to your remembrance all the things that I have said to you". The testimony with which we are associated is at no disadvantage. In fact, it is more richly furnished from the divine standpoint than the period when the Lord Jesus Himself stood upon the earth.

DBR Does it bring out the absolute necessity of the leadership of the Spirit?

JMcK Yes. He says here, "he shall guide you into all the truth". Now, I think guidance "into" involves His presence, not only His power but His presence, and that is really what impresses me for this occasion. He is present to help us.

DBR "But when *he* is come" calls attention to the necessity of the Spirit's presence and His leadership. It is not merely 'guide you unto the truth', but "into" it, into the very area into which only He Himself can lead us, do you think?

JMcK I am sure that is right, so that the danger was that the disciples would be overpowered by the grief that marked the situation publicly. Mr Darby comments that they might have been selfishly grieved at their own desolation, Notes and Comments, vol 7 p279. Having companied with Jesus they might have been entirely absorbed by the outward side of their sorrow. But the Lord says, 'There is something greater', and that impresses me today, that there is something greater. The Lord would not leave them without resource. The rich furnishings and the power of that resource are what characterise these scriptures.

RG Do you think when the Lord says to them earlier, "he abides with you, and shall be in you" (John 14: 17) it is a suggestion that here is a divine Person that is going to be in the disciples, who is going to promote a subjective answer to Christ Himself while we remain here?

JMcK That is right. So that, to quote Mr Darby again, he says as to the presence of God by the Spirit 'they had that which was abiding in the power of its revelation', Notes and Comments, vol 7 p279. The Spirit's presence involves abiding power. The extended time of this dispensation is something that we should think about. The Lord Jesus was on the earth for just thirty-three and a half years, a brief period, a period of unique distinction, a period absolutely essential because in that period the great work of redemption of which we sung was effected. It was effected by Christ. But then, in God's ways, what was to follow that was a period, and we know something about it, when a divine Person would be here, and here in the abiding power of His own revelation.

NJH The presence of the Spirit must involve enlargement in the souls of the saints, is that right? You have expressions like "the inner man" in Ephesians, 3: 16. There is something involved that the Spirit has increasing room in the souls of the saints.

JMcK Yes, and for the development of what God had in His mind, it required that a divine Person should come, "when *he* is come". Other scriptures speak of Him as being sent, other scriptures speak

of Him as coming forth from with the Father. This scripture speaks of “when *he* is come”. Now, the power of that is something that I would like to lay hold of me. He is come with a purpose and He is come as fully furnished divinely to reach divine objectives. You see, what we have at the end of Genesis 2 is the man and the woman. Divine objectives come clearly into view, but what precedes that in a typical sense in that passage is the coming of the Spirit.

JDG “Whatsoever he shall hear he shall speak”. Where would the source of that hearing be?

JMcK I suppose the Father, but what do you have in mind?

JDG I thought it was what is taking place still in heaven where Christ and the Father are. Although He is here on earth, He still has access to hear what is proceeding there.

JMcK That is right, so that the freshness of it impresses you, does it not? “Whatsoever he shall hear he shall speak”. He has not come simply with an agenda, and He has certainly not come simply to overcome what is adverse. He has come in the light of what God's thoughts are and with supreme power to bring them to completion.

JDG That still continues, does it not?

JMcK It still continues. It is a great encouragement to me to see that that is so. It would be very easy to be overcome by the situation publicly in Christendom, would it not?

JCG You are raising a very sensitive matter. “He shall guide you into all the truth”; would that help in relation to our enquiries especially and also the prophetic word coming amongst us in the practical way of making way for one another and being sensitive to the lead the Spirit may give in all our meetings.

JMcK That is right. He would guide us into areas that are totally familiar to Him. On our side, of course, it calls for a spirit of subjection, but I think to see that He is here for this purpose would release us from what is of man and cause us to be more committed in our energies to what is of God. Do we live in relation to these things? You know, it is the greatest possible thing that a divine

Person should actually be here related immediately to the scene of testimony.

DBR Do you think it could be described as a key position that the Spirit is occupying, for the whole dispensation? Our faith needs to be in that.

JMcK Exactly, so that if we really were stirred by that I think the testimony of God would become a paramount thing with us. For many of us it is too incidental in our lives. If this seized us, we would realise the greatness of what God Himself was doing and would commit ourselves more wholeheartedly to it. His presence is key; therefore it was necessary that the Lord should go away.

DBR Well, we feel the breakdown but if we have the faith of this we will not be hindered by it. Would that be so?

JMcK Absolutely so. So that the Spirit has come, and the power and effectiveness of His service is something that we should be enlarged in our faith about.

CKR The service of the Spirit now is focussed on function. Is one evidence of that the opening up of the Scriptures, guiding you into all the truth, but the letter of the Scripture gets completely eclipsed by the Spirit energising the mind and affections and moral fibre of the believer so that God's objectives are clearly touched on and looked on, and we are blessed by it in the Scriptures?

JMcK Yes, I think so. So that the whole scope of the Scriptures should be in our minds. We have read from Genesis 2. Now, Genesis 1, to a large extent, goes over the same ground, the elements of what God does creatorially are all there; but when we come to chapter 2, as we have been taught, there is a fulness and a closeness of relationship between God and what He is doing that is not there previously. Now, we are in such a time, and if we take the moisture and the rivers as typical of the presence of this glorious Person, then we can see that God had in mind that the Spirit should come before the intrusion of evil. Chapter 3 brings the fall. Chapter 3 brings the whole matter of man's failure in responsibility fully into focus, but prior to that God had in mind that the Spirit should come.

What He had in mind is the furnishing of His own means to reach His own objectives.

CKR “Man became a living soul”; so the believer becomes a living soul in the grasping of all that could be said to be flowing out of the garden - the whole universal work of the truth.

JMcK That is right, so that there is a close link. It says, “and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”. There is a close relation here between God and His creatures that can only fully be realised in this time of the Spirit.

NMcK When the Lord was here on earth and operating by the Spirit and making the Father known, the full revelation of God was known there in Christ, was it not? The truth was there in Christ if God was to be known. Does the Spirit continue that, God being made known to the believer and He would open these things up as being the Spirit of truth?

JMcK That is right, so that the Spirit comes and connects us with that, does He not? The Spirit's coming must be connected with what went previously. He becomes a witness in the believer, as John's epistle also tells us, that the Son of God is come, “And we know that the Son of God has come”, 1 John 5: 20. There is divine certainty in the soul of the believer, the result of the Spirit here as a witness. He witnesses to the greatness of Christ. Mr Raven says that the Spirit could not witness to anybody short of a divine Person (vol 16 p15), and He witnesses to the greatness of Christ, so that what was here in Jesus is not lost. It is carried forward, the bringing to remembrance of all that was there previously. Nothing is lost.

NMcK So as to these rivers that flow out, the thought is that God should be fully made known in the whole creation, the whole universe really. The Spirit's operation has the revelation of God in mind that has come in in Christ.

JMcK That is right so that in the presence of opposition you remember this, that God is here Himself to carry what is precious to Himself through to a glorious conclusion. So, what if the world is against us, what if the church publicly is against us if we are in the

light of the fact that a divine Person is working towards His own objectives? Are we aware of that?

RG-y When the Lord was here it says of the Spirit, “And ye know him”. They had already seen Him in that sense in the Lord Himself, but then He points out, “when *he* is come”, that is the Spirit. Are you suggesting that there is a distinctive character alongside this present dispensation which echoes Christ, and that is of the character of the Spirit's work?

JMcK I thought that. Do you think that is just?

RG-y Yes, indeed. So the Lord had to say to some during His time here, “Ye know not of what spirit ye are” (Luke 9: 55), but then there is a character to this present dispensation which is distinctive.

JMcK So that if we think of the typical scripture, Elisha asks for a double portion of the spirit of Elijah, 2 Kings 2: 9. Now we are in the time of what is full in that sense. The work of Christ has been accomplished, His time on the earth has been completed, and now the time of the Spirit, to use that expression, is an opportunity from the divine standpoint for the moving forward to the realisation of what God Himself has in His mind. Now we have been brought into that dispensation. It should stimulate us.

DCB We often speak about divine pleasure in the thirty-three and a half years of the Lord's life here that you have spoken of, but what you are suggesting brings before us divine pleasure in this time and dispensation. You made reference to heaven's view of the Spirit's presence.

JMcK Well, I think it helps us to get that view. From the beginning God had in His mind that Christ would come, and His work on earth was completed. I would say, from the beginning also God had in mind that the Spirit would come, because what was in Jesus here is now maintained in the presence of a divine Person who is fully equal to every divine objective. What He has in mind in this time is the securing of the assembly.

JDG Could you help us further as to your thought as to the mist which “moistened the whole surface of the ground”?

JMcK Well, I cannot say much, you can help us, but it says interestingly that “Jehovah Elohim had not caused it to rain on the earth”. Now Mr Taylor points out that if there had been rain, the source of it would have been heaven, but over against that, what is stressed here is that the earth is sufficient in itself, vol 38 p148. There is a suggestion that the Spirit of God as on the earth is sufficient for what God had in His mind and the material made available under the divine hand is spoken of as being moistened.

JDG I thought that, in a scene where sin had not come in, the object was that the whole creation involving man really is workable for the formation of what delights God's heart.

JMcK So that the earth became pliable because of this moisture. I think it helps me anyway to see that God has in His mind that the Spirit was essential to the reaching of His own objectives.

RFW So Paul says, “But we have received ... the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which have been freely given to us of God”, 1 Cor 2: 12. The presence of the Spirit is never questioned in any of the epistles, is it?

JMcK That is right, and another verse that comes to mind is that “he has given to us of his Spirit”, 1 John 4: 13. That is a very intimate reference, is it not? It indicates that the things that affect God affect us too. “But a mist went up from the earth, and moistened the whole surface of the ground”. It is not a question of what came down, it is rather what was here, and God uses what was here to reach His own objectives as to the forming of man.

JSp How do you view the operations of the Spirit in new birth in relation to what you are saying?

JMcK Well, you can help us, but that would bring out His sovereignty, would it not? His glory is not in any sense reduced by the position into which He has come. Say what you have in mind.

JSp I am thinking of the preparation, moistening the surface of the ground. There is inward preparation for all that is coming from heaven. Would that all be involved in it, do you think?

JMcK I think so, so that the power of God is seen in it, the sovereignty of God is seen in it, and there is the freedom of that sovereignty to move in relation to what He has in mind. I think we think far too much about the meeting of opposition. God can do that. He is supreme anyway. He can dismiss the opposition. What is greater than that, and what relates to our present opportunity, is that God is reaching what pleases Him.

NJH It goes on to say that man was made of this ground. It is the divine objective. I was thinking of Gideon's experience as to the dew upon the fleece and then the dew upon the ground round about, Judg 6: 36-40. It was the same dew, was it not? It speaks of the same spirit that was in Christ. That is a glorious matter, is it not?

JMcK Well the breathing into them in John 20, I suppose, would relate to that; that is, it was anticipative. He says, "Receive the Holy Spirit", John 20: 22. Now we know that the Spirit did not actually come until Pentecost - John 7 makes that clear, "for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified", (v 39) - but the character of the thing and the demonstration of this closeness of link between God and His creature is shown.

RG Do you think that John 17 demonstrates that the moistening had taken place and formation had taken place, but in John 20 when He breathed into them and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit", then the living character of what He had in mind was coming into evidence?

JMcK I think so. So that that whole section in John's gospel is a fruitful field, is it not? The Lord is not addressing men generally. He is addressing those who already have a close link with Him and we are in an area of divine confidence. What a privilege to belong to such a place.

RG The character of the Man that spoke to them at that point was to be represented again in persons that were to remain here. Is that right?

JMcK Exactly right. So that these are the kind of persons that would extend the testimony of God. It gives you some confirmation of what others have said that the Spirit's dispensation is the greatest. Now we might hesitate about that because you might think that the time when Jesus was here must have been unequalled, and it was in a sense. A Man on the earth in whom sin was not, the fulfilment of all that the oblation sets forth, a Man for God's pleasure, 'the hand that struck the chord found all in tune', JND Synopsis vol 1 p118. It was matchless really, but there was something that was to come subsequently that in result was to be greater.

JCG Is it represented in the gold? The first river surrounded "the whole land of Havilah, where the gold is". That really is what the Spirit is producing of assembly character in the present time, is it?

JMcK These rivers are very interesting. There is the idea of what surrounds and then there is the idea of what goes forward. The teaching we have had, the brethren are familiar with it, is that the idea of surrounding is bringing to light what is of God at the beginning, it links with Acts 1; the gold coming to light, the result of the service of Christ. Then the going forward relates to Paul's ministry, the great energy that marked the apostle of the Gentiles, an area from which what was God's objective would come.

TDB Could you say more about the thought of breath, for Him to impart the living breath? The thought of power you have referred to quite a bit is linked with what you have been speaking of. I wondered about the thought of breath; that is what makes the testimony a living thing.

JMcK That is right. Well, what the Lord says in John 10 might relate to it. He says, "I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly", John 10: 10. I think life abundantly relates to the time of the Spirit, and it involves not simply life in Christ but life in the saints. The closeness of it, the intimacy of divine feelings in it in view of the reaching of the fulness of what God has in His mind, is what impresses me. You see, God could have acted in power at a distance. He is almighty, but it would not have reached the same

character of result as God drawing near in Christ and in the Spirit, breathing into the nostrils of the creature in whom He is operating. There is an intimacy of confiding affection developed in that that ultimately will be responsive to the God who has acted to bring it all about.

JAB Are these rivers then something along the lines of the verse after the one you read in John 16, “he shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you”, v 14? There is that which is flowing from heaven. These rivers came from the one source here and they represent what you have been saying, but we can experience this. We can experience it now in this meeting, can we not?

JMcK So that the abundance of it is what impresses you. It is figurative language because it is before sin came in and it suggests that divine power is equal to the reaching of its own ends before there is any diversion.

JAB So that we should be exercised to touch this and to bathe our souls in it, do you think? The plenitude of divine supply and life by the Spirit is always flowing from that source above and it is available to us here, as you said, despite the limitations, and we can touch it within our souls and be expanded in response to God, is that right?

JMcK I think so. That word you use, 'plenitude', is very suggestive. It is divine power. We are occupied so much with what is of man and conscious of our own incapacity, but we need to get the divine view and to see these rivers. A river rose in Eden; then it was divided and became four heads, a powerful, fruit-bearing influence. We are in the presence of it. Let us be awakened to these things and therefore more assured in the testimony in which we are. What is of man vaunts itself. It extends itself to view and seeks to divert the saints in relation to it, whereas what is of God has its own character and it has its own unique power and that is what will bring results.

DMC There is a reference in the Psalms which says, “Though ye have lain among the sheepfolds, ye shall be as wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with green gold”, Psalm 68: 13. Is that something of what we should expand into, the glory of what

the Spirit can bring, with the divine qualification behind it, do you think?

JMcK Yes, “lain among the sheepfolds”, I suppose, is to be feeling as to the public position, but then to have “wings of a dove” is to be able to rise above it. That helps us because divine power is unaffected by men's failure.

CKR The four rivers give us the whole scope of the way the truth is going to develop in the hands of the Spirit. Then in Genesis 24 we have a focussed result in an individual and assembly features are now developed in Rebecca.

JMcK Yes, and we have that interesting expression used by the servant, “my business”. What is the business of the Spirit?

NJH The rivers surrounded Philippi (Acts 16:13), did they not? The women were sitting by the river, but there was a force in power in the energy of what the Spirit was pursuing that came into their hearts. Is that right?

JMcK Yes, quite so, and the Spirit does not change His objectives according to the conditions that He meets. His objective remains. The beginning of Genesis 24 is the oath (v 9), is it not? It is a very solemn undertaking.

DBR Do you think “my business” would be governed by divine Persons, the counsels of God? There has never been any period when the Spirit has been diverted from that.

JMcK There could never be any diversion from it and never any lowering of the standards of what the result might be. So that the swearing of the oath, “Beware that thou bring not my son thither again” (v 6) is a solemn matter. The kind of result that God has in His mind was declared at the beginning.

WMP It is like the language of verse 9 is it not, he “swore unto him concerning that matter”?.

JMcK That is right.

WMP “That matter” has continued and will continue until the time of what you have read in Revelation 22.

JMcK That is right. Well, we should see that God has reached what He had in His mind.

RG What you have been setting on is seen in Antioch. There were those there and then it says, “And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me now Barnabas and Saul”; then it says, “They therefore, having been sent forth by the Holy Spirit ...” (Acts 13: 2,4), and there is the securing through the ministry of Paul and others at that time what would be pleasurable to the heart of Christ eternally, do you think?

JMcK So that the Spirit is here having His own prerogative. His glory is not diminished by the circumstances into which He has come but He is here powerfully on God's behalf. I would like to be more alert as to what God is doing. I think it would help us; it would free us in our affections and our lives would change. Perhaps we would get deliverance a little bit more from what is material if we saw that divine Persons have an objective, and the prerogative with the Spirit is to reach that in its fulness. Others have said that fulness relates to the present time.

DBR Have you some feeling, if that is the right word, of the urgency of the Spirit at the present moment? We are at the end of the dispensation; and “he said, I will not eat until I have made known my business”. There is a certain urgency. I wondered if we need to be a little more sensitive to the feelings of the Holy Spirit at the present time.

JMcK Yes. Well, the point later in the chapter is well known to us, that there should not be any delay. The suggestion was that there might be a certain limited delay, but I think the word 'urgency' is appropriate. There is not to be any delay in reaching what God has in His mind.

JDG She says, “I will go”, v 58. That was immediate. That “I will go” was looking forward to Revelation 22.

JMcK And that meant that she relinquished present connections for greater relationships. The whole principle of the assembly is that she is entirely for Christ.

JDG To enjoy union with Isaac, she had to go.

JMcK She had to go, and that should be just as definite as the Spirit's committal. So the result in Revelation 22 is very beautiful, often referred to, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come". It is the greatest title that the Spirit has, "the Spirit".

RG Mr Taylor said about this verse that this is the nearest that the assembly comes to deity, vol 64 p452. Is that not wonderful?

JMcK It is most attractive. The closeness of relationship was proved, you might say, over against a background of such difficulty, and yet God's objective reached in full measure. So the word is, "Amen" - or, "Even so", as the Authorised Version says - "come, Lord Jesus". The grand climax of the Spirit's working will be the availability of the assembly to Christ.

RG-y Do you think the way that we respond to the Holy Spirit after the Supper and after the time of union has a bearing on what you are saying now? I am simply enquiring as to the suitability, and I think it is right, that we should have some impression of the greatness of the Spirit's work and Person, and we speak of that in the light of union with Christ. Have you any thought as to that?

JMcK Well, I think the Lord's prompting enters into it, does it not? How precious, if we can speak that way, how precious the service of the Spirit is to Christ. If indeed this is His great objective that the assembly should be for Christ, how precious that must be to the heart of the Man whose affections will be fully answered to.

DBR You mentioned the thought of the fulness of the divine objective a few times. Do you think we really need to understand that the work of the Holy Spirit will be every bit as perfect as the work of Christ?

JMcK That is right. I think many of us would be satisfied with an outline of these things. God is not satisfied with that. These

disciples, you know, would have been satisfied to keep the Lord on the earth and to have extended that period of precious confidence that we have referred to, but it would not have suited Him because what He was looking for was a greater result. And that greater result was to come as a result of a divine Person having again moved into the scene of testimony and brought it about.

RG I would like to ask you if the bride here is, “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”, Gen 2: 23.

JMcK It must be. Why do you say that?

RG I was thinking about the perfection, “the Spirit and the bride”. The Spirit has operated, as you have been saying, but now there is that that the Lord can look at and He says, 'This is myself over again'. It is “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”, do you think?

JMcK Yes, so that His affections will be satisfied in result, but it involved that a divine Person must come. “But when *he* is come”, let us hold on to that impression, “when *he* is come”. It gives distinction to the present time and it should quicken our affections to be more available to the divine initiative that will reach what God has in mind.

Glasgow

28th November 2009

Key to Initials

T D Beveridge, Kirkcaldy; J A Brown, Grangemouth; D C Brown, Edinburgh; D M Crozier, Warrenpoint; R Gardiner, Kirkcaldy; J C Gray, Grangemouth; J D Gray, Edinburgh; R Gray, Grangemouth; N J Henry, Glasgow; J McKay, Witney; N McKay, Glasgow; W M Patterson, Glasgow; D B Robertson, Cumnock; C K Robinson, Glasgow; J Spinks, Grangemouth; R F White, Londonderry

DIVINE NECESSITIES

Alan McSeveney

John 3: 14-15; 6: 53; 4: 7-30

I want to preach tonight about divine necessities. I have to tell you, dear friend, that in the preaching we have not come to offer you a decision. We have come to tell you that you must bow the knee and confess Jesus as Lord. There is no alternative. It is a divine necessity that is placed upon man. Sooner or later each one of us, whether we accept Christ or reject Him, will have to bow the knee and confess He is Lord. Perhaps you are not as bad as some people are. Perhaps if you were to bring all of Linlithgow together, and weigh all their good deeds and bad deeds, you would be somewhere up at the top of the list. However, I have to tell you that while your good deeds might pass muster with men, they will not pass muster with God. It does not matter how distinguished you have been, how good a life you have lived, how many meetings you have attended or how much you know about the Bible, your good works will never justify you before a holy and righteous God. There are divine necessities. There is a certain way that God comes out in blessing to the sinner. There is only one way that He could come out in blessing to the sinner, and there is only one way that you can come before a holy and a righteous God. The only way to God is through His Son. We long that you may come to that for yourself.

In John 3, we learn that the Son of man must be lifted up upon the cross. What a thing that was. The scripture says that the Lord Jesus “emptied himself, taking a bondman’s form”, Phil 2: 7. It is not merely that He became a Man, but He became a Bondman. He came here to serve men; He came here to help men; He came here to bless men; He came here to heal men. This is the one who can truly bring in healing - the blessed Son of man. When you think of Him, you think of One who was and is perfect. When you look back at your own life, all you can see, if you are convicted by the Holy Spirit, is that you have not been what you ought to have been

towards God. How wonderful to think of God looking down and seeing the Son of man, and seeing absolute perfection. He saw a Man who thought differently, and lived differently. The scripture says, the Lord Jesus lived “on account of the Father”, John 6: 57. In our lives as away from God, we live on account of ourselves. You look back on your life and you say, 'I did that because it suited me', but the Lord Jesus did all things for the Father’s pleasure.

Think of the Son of man growing up “as a tender sapling”, Isa 53:2. He was capable of being affected by every condition of man. We become hardened to sin, but the Lord Jesus did not. He felt it. He was affected by it. I tell you, dear friend, He was affected by the suffering that He saw. When He saw a blind man, He felt it; when He saw a lame man, He felt it; when He saw the havoc that death had caused, He felt it keenly. As Son of man He was capable of being affected by these things. He came into this world on man’s behalf, to serve man, to help man, and He felt for man. He feels for you. He is the same Jesus.

I will speak about His death, burial, resurrection and glorification in a moment, but I want to tell you now that He is the same Jesus. If He had compassion upon men in their sins and infirmities when He was here, do you think He is going pass you by? Do you think He is not interested in you? Do you think He does not know your frame? Oh, dear friend, He knows you better than you know yourself. He is seeking you, for He is the One who “has come to seek and to save that which is lost”, Luke 19: 10. What a wonderful thing that is. Before I looked for Him, He was seeking me. Before I was interested in Him, He had a heart for me. He came into my life and He rescued me. He can do it for you, and if He does, you will never forget it. For the rest of your life you may have your ups and downs, but you could go back to that point when the Lord came into your life and rescued you. How could He rescue you? How could He save you? How could He bless you? How could He forgive you? He could only do so, by being lifted up upon the cross. It was not only that He must die, but He must die upon the cross. Do you ever think about the cross? Have you ever

contemplated what it meant for the Son of man to be lifted up upon the cross?

It did not matter if you were a Jew or a Roman, the Son of man would have blessed you just the same, and yet both of them had their own part in the crucifixion of Christ. The Romans crucified Him, but the Jews wanted God's Son to die such a death. Think of the Son of man here in His three and a half years of service to men. He would have done anything He possibly could for men in the way of blessing. You remember the parable of the good Samaritan that the Lord Jesus tells us Himself, Luke 10: 30-35. That is just an epitome of His whole life. That was what He was prepared to do for men. Others walked by on the other side, but the Son of man had the desire and the means to bring in healing. He would not only see that the wounds were bound up, but He would not leave that person by the side of the road. He would ensure that he was carried and cared for. The Lord finds sinners on their own without hope and without God in this world and bound for judgment. He saves them where they are, but He does not leave them there. He puts them in a place where they can enjoy life and happiness, and can be looked after. That is a full gospel but let us remember that it was a divine necessity for the Son of man to be lifted up. There was no other way to uphold the rights of God or bring in blessing for the sinner than for the Son of man to die that awful death upon the cross at Calvary.

When you think of all the Son of man's sufferings, it puts things into perspective. Think of what He suffered at the hands of men. There is much suffering in this world. I am quite sure you have known that in your own life or family, but I want to tell you no one has suffered like Jesus. Men are prepared to do the most awful things to other men and it is dreadful to contemplate it, but think of what they did to the Son of man. His "visage was so marred more than any man", Isa 52: 14. Think of the cruelty men inflicted on God's beloved Son. The scripture says, "The ploughers ploughed upon my back; they made long their furrows", Ps 129: 3. It was not just that they scourged Him, but they left His back like a ploughed field. See Him bearing His cross and then being crucified. There is no preacher

who can state fully all He went through but I can tell you it was *real* for the Son of man. He felt it, not only in His body, but in His spirit. He saw His creature man treat Him in such a way as they sought to drive God out of this world. Oh, how the Son of man suffered. Think of the way He was mocked. To be sneered at is a terrible thing, but how awful for the Son of man to be sneered at. Then God must, as it were, throw a veil over the scene for three hours of suffering for His beloved Son that are beyond the comprehension of any mere man. The Lord Jesus had been betrayed by Judas, and denied by Peter. He had been sneered at, but now He looks to God only to find that He had forsaken Him. The Lord Jesus was left alone. I do not know if you have ever felt alone, but I can tell you that no-one has been alone like Jesus. He was alone without one ray of light. He went into the distance, as the only One who could measure and remove it. He suffered at the hands of a holy and righteous God vicariously for sin. He asked the question, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?", Matt 27: 46. Who could answer that? The answer is found in the heart of every repenting sinner. The repenting sinner knows why the Son of man bore the judgment and wrath of God. Dear friend, the punishment that was due to me, was borne by Him. Believers in the Lord Jesus can say, that He "bore our sins in his body on the tree", 1 Pet 2: 24.

Once you are convicted about your sins, if you do not accept the Saviour and find mercy, you are tortured about the things that you have done. There is no release for you in your own strength. The only way out for guilty man is Christ. The only way out for *you* is Christ. I do not know what you have done. I do not know where you are coming from or going to, but I can tell you that the only person who can help you, bless you and save you is Christ. It must be Christ. There is no church that can save you. There is no creed that can save you. It is only Christ, and Christ alone. He is the One who came into the world to save sinners, and if you have not got Christ you have got nothing, absolutely nothing.

The Son of man was forsaken of God as lifted up. He laid down His life in death. When dead upon the cross, the soldier

pierced His side, and there came forth blood and water. He was truly dead. To him death was death. If you want to be forgiven tonight and cleansed from your sins, you must confess your sins, because it is only the blood of Jesus Christ that can cleanse you from your sins. If you have never confessed your sins and repented from them, your sins have never been forgiven. Perhaps you have been baptised, or are even breaking bread, but if you have never confessed your sins, and repented from them, as far as God is concerned, you are still dead in your sins.

My dear friend, the Son of man was prepared to go into the grave. What could I say about Him lying three days and three nights in the heart of the earth? Thank God, He did not stay there. He rose from amongst the dead and now is in heaven. He is an exalted and glorified Saviour with the glory of God shining in His face. I can tell you for a fact that God is towards you, and the One who gave His Son longs that you might have the greatest of blessing. He wants to save you. He wants to ensure that you do not go to hell, but He wants more than that. He wants you to enjoy eternal life. He wants to satisfy your heart. I raise the question with you - are you happy? Are you really satisfied? The only One who can satisfy your heart, is Christ, and Christ alone.

I have really covered chapter 6, but I will just refer to it briefly, because there is another divine necessity mentioned there. You will notice where we read in chapter 6 verse 53, the flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus is mentioned. You must eat His flesh and drink His blood, and if you do not, you have no life in yourselves. I just want to underline that again before we move on. This is an initial matter. This is conversion, involving repentance and faith in Christ and His work. If you do not have that, dear friend, you have nothing as far as God is concerned. Your good works will not pass muster with God. As far as He is concerned, they are only filthy rags, Isa 64: 6. If you have not trusted the Saviour and repented of your sins, you are still dead in your sins. We do not want anyone to leave this room thinking that they are all right when they are not all right. It does not matter how religious you are, or whether you go to church, chapel or

meeting room: it does not matter. Please accept that word. It does not matter with God; He is no respecter of persons. All men are on the same level. The whole world is guilty before God. All have sinned. Dear friend, do not go into eternity with the only thing you have to trust in being that you went to a certain meeting. That will not do for God. The only thing that will do for God is Christ and His work. May that be the only thing that will do for you.

I will finish now by referring to John 4. This is a very testing word, not only for poor sinners, but also for professing believers. I love to think of the Lord Jesus as the One who “must needs pass through Samaria”, v 4. He did not only need to go that way geographically. He went through Samaria to bless a sinner. He went that way for blessing and He would come this way tonight. We read in Ephesians that He comes preaching peace, Eph 2: 17. It is not only what He did in the past; it is what He is doing right now, and He Himself would appeal to you to surrender to Him. Would you surrender to Him? The Son of man who has been lifted up; would you listen to Him? Oh, my dear friend, He has come this way for blessing. The Samaritan woman may have been an unlikely candidate but God can bless such. God loves to save unlikely persons. He loves to break them down. He loves to change their minds. He can do it. He does do it. He did it for me and He can do it for you. The Lord Jesus came this way, for blessing. He says to the woman “give me to drink”, v 7. He engages her in a conversation about living water. What is that? It is the gift of the Holy Spirit. What is it all leading up to? It is leading up to the worship of God. Here is a divine necessity. Those who worship God “must worship Him in spirit and in truth”, v 24.

Sometimes the difference between one believer and another is the reception of the Holy Spirit. It is possible to be a believer and not have received the Holy Spirit (see Acts 19) and it is possible to be a believer and grieve and quench the Holy Spirit. If that is the case, God will not receive His due portion and you will still be thirsting for something else. What are you looking for in life? I ask you that tenderly. What is your object in life? If you get living water you will

never thirst forever. That is an absolute divine promise. Are you conscious of having the Holy Spirit and being able to worship God in spirit and in truth? The Father seeketh worshippers. He is not looking for one worshipper only. He is seeking worshippers in the plural. While there are occasions when we may possibly worship individually, normally we would worship with other believers. The Father seeketh worshippers. Receiving the Holy Spirit and making room for Him will make a tremendous difference in your life. If you are facing failure after failure, we are sympathetic with you as having known that in our own lives. How wonderful it is to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and become an overcomer and a worshipper.

Dear friend, do not turn your back on God. We beseech you to get right with Him now.

May He bless the word.

Linlithgow

27th September 2009

THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS

Jim D Gray

John 2: 16-22

Romans 6: 1-5

Ephesians 1: 16, 17, 19-23; 2: 1, 4-7

It will be evident that I have in mind these three references to the Lord's resurrection. In John 2 the setting is that "the passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem" (v 13); and He found conditions of trading in the temple, which He calls "a house of merchandise". He quotes from Psalm 69, "For the zeal of thy house hath devoured me, and the reproaches of them that reproach thee have fallen upon me", v 9. That is what He brings forward. If you read Psalm 69, you will find it is a sorrow Psalm. The Lord is feeling things, but it leads to a disclosure. They question Him, "What sign shewest thou to us?", but He had already declared Himself as the Son of God in saying, "make not my Father's house a house of merchandise". The Jews were opposed to Christ right from the outset of John's gospel. In answer to their question He says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up", referring to the temple of His body. Herod's temple was empty. There was a shrine but there was no divine dwelling there. I do not know what was within the shrine because the ark was lost and never came back after the captivity.

The divine presence was not in Herod's temple, but it was present in Christ's body, and the disciples took note of it. What convinced them as to the verity of it was His resurrection. This blessed Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, was God manifest in flesh and He had the power to raise Himself from among the dead. He says to Martha in chapter 11, "I am the resurrection and the life", v 25. Life, as we have often been taught, was inherent in Christ. It is intended to have a result in us, to grasp hold of the fact that Jesus has lain in death. That body lay in death and He had the power to raise His own body, and He did. "When therefore he was raised from among

the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.” That is a good result. That is not just Psalm 69, but I believe it is the whole of Scripture, so that they grasped hold of the truth of Christ having raised His own body. It does not speak in this scripture of any other results or what sprung from that death. That is another side of things. Here He raised His own body from among the dead and they “believed the scripture”. The whole of Scripture was quickened to them; it became living. “And the word which Jesus had spoken”, so that there is not only the Scripture, what is written, but there is present communication, “the word which Jesus had spoken”. So we, as believers having the Holy Spirit, have communication with that blessed Man who is now in glory, and we are helped to see the living character of the Scripture. It is borne testimony to by the fact that the One who said, “The zeal of thy house devours me”, and brought Himself forward as the Son of God, that blessed Man, was shown to be God Himself in the temple of His body. What a thing it is that the flesh of Christ veiled the Deity. Man cannot look on the Deity; it dwells in “unapproachable light” (1 Tim 6: 16), but here was the Deity present amongst men and, as the thorn bush burned, they were not consumed, Exodus 3: 2. But there were persons who remembered. It is good to be such persons who remember what the Lord Jesus says, and to grasp hold of the fact that Scripture is indicted by divine Persons. It is a living book to the believer; and then there is “the word which Jesus had spoken”, and that word is still available.

I would desire to be careful in what I say because it is a very precious subject and a very holy subject. Romans 6 brings out another side of the resurrection of Christ. Believers are being addressed. “By the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted righteous”, chap 5: 19. That is the apostle speaking to persons who have righteousness, righteousness not of their own, but righteousness as given of God on account of the work of Christ, “righteousness of God ... towards all, and upon all those

who believe”, Rom 3: 22. Paul begins this epistle as “God’s glad tidings ... concerning his Son ... marked out Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead”, chap 1: 1 - 4. His own resurrection was proof of that.

What I wanted to speak about was this precious matter: “as Christ has been raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father”. That is a beautiful reference to Christ’s preciousness to the Father. “*Thou* art my beloved Son, in thee I have found my delight” (Mark 1: 11) at the Jordan, at His baptism. Then the preciousness of Christ at the mount of transfiguration: “*This* is my beloved son: hear him”, Mark 9: 7. And then the Father was without Christ in manhood for three days and three nights. His spirit was with the Father, precious matter that is too. Here the Father is coming in relation to the resurrection of this blessed Man. Christ had glorified God on the earth. He glorified Him, filled out all that was desired of man, and He had gone into death; that precious work had been completed, and persons had been saved. But this scripture lets us into the secret. The Father’s desire was that that Man should live again, that He should have that blessed Man again, His Christ. It was not possible that He should see corruption, Ps 16: 10. The Father waited, in His patience, these three days and three nights to fill out the matter of scripture. “He was buried; and ... he was raised the third day, according to the scriptures, 1 Cor 15: 4. But He was “raised ... by the glory of the Father”. All that the Father represented in affection, everything that was expressed in the Father, demanded that Christ should be raised. He raised Him from among the dead. What delight He had in the selection of that blessed Man!

The previous scripture I read had the effect on persons after His resurrection. Here is another scripture: “raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father”, the Father’s delight. Paul shows us that God is going to have pleasure in others also following on Christ’s resurrection. Christ does not remain on the earth. Here it does not tell us that, but it is assured to us. Paul tells us that in the next scripture. It is Christ in resurrection in this epistle, but for us as

the believers it is Christ not only in resurrection, but also it is Christ in glory, Man in heaven.

O the sight in heaven is glorious!
Man in righteousness is there;
Once the victim, now victorious
(Hymn 212)

That is the light that shines for us. There is a Man in heaven, but there are believers on the earth, and we come into that as believers on the earth. We are believers on the earth. We are not raised with Christ in this section, not viewed that way. He is raised; He is glorified as a blessed Man in heaven; and the Spirit is given so that we have a link with that Man in heaven; but we are to “walk in newness of life”. That is the Christian walk. That is the walk of victory, supported by the Spirit, a link with a Man in heaven that we can take account of there, and “walk in newness of life”. What a joy to the Father, not only to have Christ “raised up from among the dead” by His glory, but to have saints here walking “in newness of life”, responsible persons. You and I are responsible persons in the flesh and blood condition and yet walking “in newness of life”, a new tread, a new way of life. It is really a new creature, but it is presented in this way from the responsible side: “we also should walk in newness of life. For if we are become identified with him in the likeness of his death, so also we shall be of his resurrection”. We are walking here in the light of a Man in heaven and there is a tread, a firmness. We could say, with our knowledge, that our eyes are on the goal. We are walking here with an objective from the Red Sea to the Jordan and anticipating going over it too. Heaven is before the saints. In the wilderness in Exodus, the people turned towards the wilderness and saw the glory, chap 16: 10. That is an attraction. Here we are in the wilderness. Christ is in glory, but we turn towards the wilderness and see the glory. The glory for us is there in a blessed Man in heaven. I say these words to encourage us to see how the glory of the Father so appreciated Christ that He raised Him and then He commends Him to us. He has that Man in

heaven, but He has men here below responsibly in the scene where Christ once was, walking as He walked.

In Ephesians 1 Paul's prayer is that we should understand something of "the might of his strength". "The surpassing greatness of his power" is God's power. It is "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory". It is that blessed Person. What a Personage He is! Consider "the surpassing greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of the might of his strength, in which he wrought in the Christ in raising him from among the dead". It is to have an effect on "us who believe" as we grasp hold of the fact that this power "which he wrought in the Christ" is towards us. It is a most expressive scripture to me that God worked according to "the might of his strength, in which he wrought in the Christ" bringing Christ out from among the dead. What a working there was! I cannot say much about it but I would like to leave the impression on our hearts that divine might was expressed there, "the might of his strength", as if there was a power there that would have, if it could have, prevented the resurrection of Christ, but Christ could not be holden of death, and divine energy was expended in raising Him from the dead: "in which he wrought in the Christ in raising him from among the dead".

And then He exalts Him. Here it tells us He is not to remain on the earth. He is to be exalted and He *is* exalted. "He set him down at his right hand in the heavenlies", the Father's delight is in having Christ at His right hand in the heavenlies. But what is most attractive here is that He is not going to be there alone. We are raised with Him. That is what the second chapter brings out: "and *you*, being dead in your offences and sins ... but God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love wherewith he loved us, (we too being dead in offences,)" - that is Jew and Greek he is speaking about - "has quickened us with the Christ". When God exercised His power in bringing Christ out from among the dead, we are viewed as coming out with Him. We are quickened with Him. It does not exactly say Christ was quickened, but the suggestion is there; but Christ is made to live, and there He is in the divine presence, but He is not alone.

God has in this setting brought us out from among the dead too, “dead in your offences and sins”, not an iota of response from us to God at all: “*you*, being dead in your offences and sins”. We are not viewed as being responsibly active; we are viewed as “being dead in ... offences and sins”; but God’s mercy came in. What a thing, dear brethren: “but God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love wherewith he loved us”. That is a remarkable thing. It comes to mind that it relates to a company that is chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, Eph 1: 4, but viewed here, in this setting, as “dead in your offences and sins”, but made to live and live in another manner: “has quickened us with the Christ” - made to live with Christ and - “raised us up together”. That is not resurrection; that is elevation: “and has made us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, that he might display in the coming ages the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus”. God is going to display that. We are not in heavenly places actually yet. We know something of it in spirit, but Christ is there, and we have been quickened with Him. We are made to live in the life of another Man by divine power, to take account of the fact that we are Christians, and have been made to live by God’s operations within us. It is the divine action, the divine power and divine will. It says there, “For ye are saved by grace, through faith; and this not of yourselves; it is God’s gift”. Faith is viewed here as God’s gift; grace has operated; love has taken the form of grace operating in us to bring us into association with Christ as alive from among the dead, but raised and seated in heavenly places. So here you get a view that our destiny is heaven, heavenly places. We touch something of it in the service of God. That is where we are going to be actually. We belong to a heavenly family. What a power, what a working! He raised Christ from among the dead “by the might of his strength”, but “the might of his strength” has operated in us as “dead in ... offences and sins” to make us live and live to God.

I trust these few thoughts might enlarge our hearts and give us an appreciation of these aspects of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Edinburgh

12th January 2010

THAT *HE* MIGHT HAVE THE FIRST PLACE IN ALL THINGS

Paul W Burton

Luke 10: 38-42

2 Samuel 6: 10, 11

John 12: 1-3

In Colossians 1: 18, we have the expression, “that *he*” - that is, the Lord Jesus - “might have the first place in all things”. The Lord Jesus has the perfect right to the first place in our lives. I would like to say a few words about Him having the first place. I think it is something that can sometimes be testing and difficult but He is the One who has bought us by suffering on the cross and shedding His blood for us. To be a Christian involves giving the Lord Jesus the first place. Christianity is not just something that we can add on to our lives as they are. Coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour must fundamentally change our lives, so that we no longer live to ourselves but we live to the One who died for us.

In Luke's gospel we have the example in Mary of one who was giving the Lord the first place. She was sitting at His feet, listening to His word. Giving the Lord the first place would be involved in how we start our day; to start it in prayer, and in sitting at the Lord's feet to hear His word. It would involve how we would end the day, and how we would live our lives through the day. So that, as we go about our lives here, we do all things to the Lord and for His glory. Even if we have the privilege of doing something for His service, it must never be at the expense of sitting at His feet and listening to His word. One of the most important things in our lives as believers is to spend time with the Lord listening to His word.

Now I want to speak of the Lord having His first place in our households. In the book of Samuel we read of the ark of Jehovah entering the house of Obed-Edom. The ark of Jehovah would speak to us of the Lord Jesus. The ark had previously spent twenty years in another house and the scripture does not say anything about

the effect that the ark had in that house over those twenty years. But it was in the house of Obed-Edom for three months and it says, "Jehovah blessed Obed-Edom and all his household". I think it would suggest that the ark - or for us the Lord Jesus - had the first place in that house. We spoke over the weekend about household baptism and I think the exercise of household baptism, and the blessing and gain of it, would involve giving the Lord Jesus the first place in our households. So that whatever that household has been is changed as the head of the house accepts the claims of the Lord Jesus, with the desire that it should be a Christian household. The whole household, including the children, would thus be held in relation to the claims of the Lord Jesus. And God would bless such a household.

In John chapter 12 we have an example of the Lord Jesus having the first place in a local company. In Bethany there were those who made Him a supper. They desired that the Lord might have the first, and most glorious, place, amongst them. So that every time we come together it would be with the desire that the Lord Jesus might have the first place amongst us, and that He might be glorified through any service rendered to Him. We will come into blessing as our objective is to give Him the first place. May the Lord have His first place with us, for His Name's sake.

Parvathapur

15th February 2010

“TO SUCCOUR WITH A WORD”

A Barrie Brown

Isaiah 50: 4

This is a prophetic reference to our Lord Jesus. The book of the prophet Isaiah is very wonderful. I would recommend that we all study the prophet Isaiah. In John's gospel it says of Isaiah that he saw the glory of the Lord Jesus and spoke of Him, John 12: 41. There are many references in this book to the Lord Jesus - Isaiah 53, in particular; but all through the scripture there are fine references to Him.

The simple impression that I had is particularly in relation to the middle of the verse, “that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary”. We all know what it is to be weary, and tired, and perhaps not feel very well. And then if we have rest, or food, we get strength and feel better again. That is what is natural, but how much more in what is spiritual if we receive an impression about our Lord Jesus - it succours us.

The word “succour” conveys the provision of resources, what is fresh. I would like to apply this scripture to how we may succour one another. And the way it is presented in this scripture is that we succour “with a word”. If we are to succour with a word, we need to *have* a word.

I would like to refer briefly to how we may have a word to succour another. Earlier today our brother spoke about how we start our days, and that is extremely important. This verse relates to the Lord Jesus but we can also apply it to ourselves. We can think of the Lord Jesus when He was on earth receiving each morning a word for the day from His Father. Just think of that for a moment, thinking of who He was, the blessed Son of God, but in His dependence as Man He would receive a word from His Father. In the four gospels it often speaks of the Lord Jesus rising early. Think of that blessed One waiting for a word from His Father for the day. What blessed, perfect communion there was between the Lord

Jesus and His Father. And in receipt of that word, think of the way the Lord Jesus would be able to succour those who were weary.

Think of the woman in John's gospel chapter 4 who was in a terrible state morally. She came into contact with the Lord Jesus; it says of Him, "he must needs pass through Samaria". Think of the succour that woman received from the Lord Jesus. As a result of coming into contact with Him she became a worshipper and was able to speak to others and say, "is not he the Christ?", v 29. So for each one of us, if indeed the Lord Jesus took a place in dependence, how much rather we should. And we have had at the weekend also that He left a model for us.

Our brother also referred to the matter of praying in the morning; how right that is. I recommend too to read the scriptures in the morning. You may only have time to read one or two verses but if you read the scriptures and ask the Holy Spirit to give you a word surely you will receive that. And as we receive the word, it would give us power in a scene where things are generally against the believer.

We might come into contact with another believer who is discouraged or weary, and as in receipt of the word we will be able to succour that one. I have known myself what it is to be weary, and perhaps not to want to think much about the things of God. When someone gives a word about the Lord Jesus you are encouraged, you are succoured. And perhaps someone that you have been able to speak to is able to succour or encourage someone else. That is one of the wonderful things about Christianity, that it spreads among believers. If I have an impression of the Lord Jesus and I share it with you I do not lose that impression; I retain it but you would gain it. If you were to speak to me about the Lord Jesus I would receive an impression, but you would not lose it.

One thing I would say - perhaps the word you received yesterday might not be the word that is needed today. That is why it says, "he wakeneth morning by morning" - it is a daily thing. The footnote to "word" is "a word in season". When things are in season

they are proper to the setting that is required of them. So I would encourage us all each morning, as much as we are able, to seek help from the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit to have a word for that day.

The references to “the tongue of the instructed” and “to hear as the instructed” are very interesting. The believer in the Lord Jesus is to grow in his knowledge of that One, to become instructed. Think of what is available in Him. Again, earlier, someone referred to the fact that the Lord Jesus “has been made to us wisdom”, 1 Cor 1: 30. And in the epistle of James it says, “But if any one of you lack wisdom let him ask of God”, chap 1: 5. So I would encourage each one of us, especially myself, to seek a word from the Lord Jesus - because how ready He is to give a word.

That One who has done so much for you and loves you so much wants your company, He wants your confidence. So I would just commend these things that we might be able to succour and to encourage one another.

May the Lord just bless the word to us.

Lakshmapur

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