

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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THE LORD'S SUPPER AND JOHN'S GOSPEL

John 14: 15-20; 16: 12-16; 20: 19-22

1 Corinthians 11: 25, 26

DAB We have been looking at the way that the Lord's supper is presented in Matthew, Mark and Luke alongside the way it is presented in 1 Corinthians. My thought now is to bring in the writings of John to see what light he has to shed on this subject. John does not give us the inauguration of the Supper in the way the other gospels do, but the passages we have read in chapters 14 and 16 relate to the same occasion - we might just bear that in mind as there is also a contrast between John and the other three gospels. I would like to bring two points into this reading and to explain how I see them connecting together. I would like to inquire into the way that the Lord in this gospel speaks of His coming to His own; and also to inquire into the extent to which the Holy Spirit was charged with filling out and giving structure to what the Lord gave in the inaugural occasion.

Our brother helped us in an address yesterday about God's satisfaction, and he drew for that purpose on the inauguration of the burnt offering. That was helpful to my attempt to explain what I have in mind because he was able to draw in his word on the detail of the prescription that God gave. Why was God so prescriptive? It helps to bear in mind that His objective was that the resulting offering could be hallowed by His glory, Exod 29: 43. That is a lovely thought and maybe something we could apply to the Supper as well, that it is hallowed by God's glory. But the offerings would be carried on by a people who were still in the flesh, and God's glory is not hallowed by the good intentions and religious inclinations of the flesh. If therefore He is to be served by people in that condition, He has to say exactly what He wants, which He did. He is only going to do away with that arrangement if He has something better; and what He has better is the Person referred to in these passages as the Spirit of truth. The Spirit of truth is here. We read in John 16 how the Lord said that there were many things that the disciples could not bear then; they would have to wait for the coming of the Spirit of truth. But when the Spirit of truth came, He says, "he receives of mine and shall announce it to you". Now, the Lord's supper is among those things "of mine". I think everyone would agree with that. The Lord did not fill out the guidance that the disciples were given, as we saw yesterday in what He said on the occasion when the Supper was given. The way the Supper is held now was among the

things the Lord speaks of as “what is coming”; and the filling out of them, I believe, has been entrusted to the Spirit of truth. So although it is the Lord's supper, the manner in which it is held is, I believe, or should be, the Spirit's doing. If we had any conviction that that was not so, we would have to stop and change, I think, because it is the Lord's supper. The Person who knows how the Lord's supper is to operate so as to be hallowed by God's glory is the Spirit of truth.

I wondered, therefore, if we might inquire into these passages. It is interesting that the Lord happens to use that particular title of the Spirit in these two places. He has other names for the Spirit in this address but these two references to the Spirit of truth are interesting. We might therefore look at what service the Holy Spirit has rendered to the Lord in guiding His people in the way they take up the service that He left with them. That is one question; and the second question is to see how the Lord identifies Himself with His people taking the Supper by coming to them. We could say that the Holy Spirit's objective in ordering the occasion as He does is to prepare for the Lord to come into it. That is all spiritual, but that is not a problem; it is something that we need His help to understand.

I read this passage in John 14 where the Lord begins by talking about the Holy Spirit coming. He says He will send another Comforter “that he may be with you forever, the Spirit of truth”. He says that the world cannot receive Him: this is not the Spirit in public testimony here. And then He says, “I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you”; and He recalls later on in the chapter that He has said that. Now if we had gone on in this section, we would have come to a promise to the individual - “If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him”. That is personal and we are not talking about that this morning. But “I am coming to you” in verse 18 is collective, I believe. It is the promise the Lord has made to find an appointment where He can come from glory, not *for* His own, but *to* them. And that is the Lord's supper, as furnished for Him by the Holy Spirit.

That thought needs a lot of opening up, if brethren will say if it appeals to them.

KAK Is the begging to maintain the glory of God's thoughts and of the Lord Jesus?

DAB Yes, the Lord Jesus in that first reference is acknowledging the

Father's supremacy. It is interesting in these chapters that the Lord Jesus speaks in three different ways about the coming of the Spirit. He comes because He has asked the Father to send Him, v 16, 26. He has come because the Lord Himself has sent Him, chap 16: 7. But in chapter 16: 13, "when *he* is come", that is the Person of the Holy Spirit coming in the right of His own Person. And He is come to take up what is "of mine". Now we have often spoken about these things in a general way, but it only struck me yesterday that the Lord's supper is one of those things. When the Lord refers to "what is coming", He is not talking about forecasting what is still future, He is talking about what would belong to the day of the Spirit, as I understand it; and what lies at the heart of the activities of the Lord's people in the day of the Spirit is the Lord's supper. So if the Spirit of truth is engaged with filling out those things in the present day, then we might I think spend an hour speaking about the way that He has acted in relation to the Lord's supper.

WSC We spoke about remembrance yesterday. What part would you say the Spirit has in that? The Lord says in chapter 16 that "he shall receive of mine, and shall announce it to you". I am wondering if He certainly must have a part in that.

DAB Yes. We have acknowledged that it is difficult to know in which order to speak about these things. But we spoke about the remembrance being collective. And you spoke about "thinking the same thing". That is not a kind of evolutionary coincidence. That is what we have here, that "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you". That is the working of the one Spirit, not only uniting each individual to the Head above, but uniting the company with one another, and then with the Head above. Now, where is an opportunity to experience that? I think at the Supper. And the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, is working to create that unity which is beyond what human minds could achieve. However much I was on your wavelength, I could not do what the Holy Spirit has done. And that makes the Supper a very precious and uplifting spiritual occasion. And, going on to the point of remembrance, it delivers us from self-occupation. We are not even concerned with what a happy time we are having, or even, while the experience is in progress, with impressions - we can gather them afterwards. The Spirit of truth working in the company is really saying there is only one object around which He could create this kind of unity, and it is Christ.

DMW In view of that, would there be two comings anticipated in these

scriptures? The Lord's preparatory ministry was in view of the coming of the Holy Spirit and of the Comforter. And the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth bearing witness to the One who was absent would be in view of His coming into the circle of affections formed by the Spirit.

DAB One impression of many that I got from Mr A J Gardner was that he believed that God's objective in the gospel is that He might impart His Spirit to those who believed. Everything in God's plan hangs on the indwelling Spirit and the effect of that in the believer; and also the union that creates both among those in the Christian circle and between them and Christ above. You speak of the Lord's ministry as preparatory, but the Holy Spirit's service is a necessary part of the unfolding of what was in God's heart and God's purpose. And it is a necessary part in the accomplishment of God's glory, I think. That is what we see in the present time. He is referred to as the Spirit of glory, 1 Pet 4: 14. I thought this was a very attractive idea that the Lord was not able to impart the fulness of what was in His mind even in relation to the Supper because the disciples did not have the Spirit, they did not have the capacity to embrace more than the kernel of it. But that did not matter, because before they came to hold it, the Holy Spirit would indwell them, and He understands perfectly everything that was in the Lord's mind. He knew exactly what the Lord might have said if He had said more. And He has filled the thing out, not just procedurally - we might speak about that, but spiritually. The Lord could hardly say to the disciples on that first occasion that He was giving them something spiritual. He says in John's gospel that He could not at the moment, but He wanted to, and He knew how to. And that is where the blessed presence and service of the Spirit comes in.

DJK Is that borne out in John's epistle where he says, "it is the Spirit that bears witness, for the Spirit is the truth", 1 John 5: 6?

DAB Yes. I only noticed that these two references which I am now connecting are references to the Spirit of truth. The Lord is careful in the names He gives the Spirit. One thing about the Spirit is He has lots of names. The "Spirit of him that has raised up Jesus from among the dead" (Rom 8: 11), for example, is a title of the Holy Spirit. But in these two places He calls Him the Spirit of truth and that leads me to think they connect. And what we see in them is that the Holy Spirit is not just simply acting as a replacement for the Lord Jesus absent but the One who prepares conditions into which the Lord can fulfil a promise to come.

JKK Is that why Paul refers to Him as “the earnest of the inheritance”, Eph 1: 14?

DAB Yes, my father used to say that the Earnest is greater than the inheritance.

JKK Why do you say that?

DAB Because the Holy Spirit is a divine Person. And it is not simply that He gives you a foretaste. He gives you the assurance that it will all be yours when you are in the condition to receive it. So “the earnest of the Spirit” (2 Cor 1: 22) is a promise to everyone who has received the Spirit that they will have a body of glory. How do you know you will have a body of glory? You have received the Spirit. Now we are not yet in conditions in which we can experience the reality of that condition, but we can know the blessedness of it and the truth of it in the Spirit. We have here that the Lord Jesus says there are things He could not tell them then. Remember that in this same conversation as it is recorded elsewhere that the Lord is speaking to them about the Supper, and we noticed yesterday how little He said. So now we read this and He says, “I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now” (John 16: 12), which may explain why the teaching of the Supper and what was all in the Lord's mind is not dwelt on in those other three gospels. But then He does not stop there. He explains that this was just the present situation, but it was going to change. And a divine Person is going to come; and because He indwells you, and because through that the life of Christ is in you, it will then be possible to grasp the fulness of what this ordinance has in mind.

NJH And that day would be the day of the Spirit of truth, would it not? I was thinking the divine nature and activity is light, and the Spirit of truth will come and bring light as to the Supper and service of God, is that right?

DAB That is exactly right. We have a certain fascination with wanting to know what is coming in the future - we would like to know what the body of glory looks like. Paul says it is foolish. That is not what the Lord meant here - if that is our focus, I think we are missing what the Spirit of truth has because, as you say, “will announce TO you what is coming” refers to the day of the Spirit. And the Supper belongs to the day of the Spirit, does not it? Those two things go together. The huge mistake that Christendom has made is to redesign the Supper around more or less sincere human ideas, which have changed over time. But there is

no human idea in the way the Supper is constructed. The Lord Jesus gave us the kernel of it and left the development of it to another divine Person.

WSC There becomes a sphere of the Spirit. I am thinking of John himself. He says that he “became in the spirit on the Lord’s day”, Rev 1: 10.

DAB Very good. That is a good reference. He was isolated, but he grasped what has just been said. He was in that day, was he not? It was the Lord’s day, and the day of the Spirit.

GMC I do not know if I am taking you backwards, but we stepped over the reference, “If ye love me, keep my commandments”, v 15. I am wondering if that is the beginning, leading to “this do in remembrance of me”. And if we answer to that, then we begin to understand the rest of this. It is not the other way around. We do not start with knowledge and come to love, but we begin there. Would that be right?

DAB Yes. I mentioned at the outset the moral conditions that lie behind taking the Supper rightly. So we need to come to that when we have got through this part of the subject. Mr Darby says as to “this do” that the commandment is not to *do* it (Collected Writings vol 16 p14); the emphasis is on “this”. We spent a day yesterday talking about the significance of what I might call the outline of the Supper, and we are not at liberty to change that one bit; because that is “this”. The Lord did not leave any scope for our own ideas about how this remembrance is to be conducted: “**this** do”, and we speak of it as an ordinance. Mr Darby said if you call it a commandment you ‘destroy its whole nature’, Letters vol 3 p71. Because it is a love matter. But love would want to do what its object wanted. And the Object of our love does not want little cups and wafers and incense and priestcraft and all these things. He does not want them. And why would love think He did. One impression we certainly get from the way the Supper was inaugurated is that the Lord wanted something simple. If I go back to the very first thing I said yesterday, He wanted it to be accessible to all His people. If we read the book of the Acts, there were people who had been converted during the previous week who broke bread that Lord’s day; they were not asked to come to a meeting like this and try and understand it. It was a heart matter. And the Lord made that simple by just conveying in those two words what would satisfy His heart and what could be hallowed by His glory.

ZK I wondered if you could perhaps describe the difference, if there is one, between receiving the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit.

DAB We often speak about the gift of the Spirit, and we often hear injunctions that we should ask for the Spirit if we are not conscious of having Him. One ventures to say that is not exactly how it is put. In fact, I observe, interestingly, that Mr Taylor thought that asking for the Spirit was collective (see vol 15 p361), as we might pray at the beginning of this meeting for the Spirit's help in the time - "Ask and **ye** shall receive", the Lord says. That is an interesting side. The vital thing about the Spirit is that He has been *given*, but there are questions about how far any of us have *received* Him. If I can illustrate that from the Old Testament, there was a lady who thought that she should accommodate Elisha by building an annex on the side of her house, 2 Kings 4: 10. That is rather like what we do when the Spirit is given; but there was no life in that house until the prophet had the run of the whole place. Is that an illustration of receiving the Spirit? Now, if you do that fully, so that there is no other influence, you are full of the Spirit.

ZK I was thinking about Peter's preaching in Acts 2. Before they had begun, it says that they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And this is obviously after Jesus had breathed into them to receive the Spirit.

DAB Yes. There was no other influence at play. And even Peter's own natural ability was suppressed, so that all that was expressed was the Holy Spirit. And if I can just apply that to what we are saying about the Supper, I think it is helpful to arrive at the understanding that the Supper rightly held has no human input to its design. People have to be there, of course, but it is not for us to work out what the Lord wants. We leave that to the Spirit, I think.

CJB In that way, sometimes things might come up about how to hold the Supper rightly. We sometimes ask about that. But can you help us? If the Spirit has been sent and is available, then the Spirit is there for our help when something might arise or there might be some kind of question come up. I am thinking of even simple things like, if there was an abundance of brethren in one place, sometimes practically it may not work to have everyone break bread together. But over time, these things have been developed, if I can use that word, by the help of the Spirit, not by our own ways of looking at things. What would you say?

DAB Maybe we do not want to be diverted just now, but I would like to

speak before we finish about some of those practical things. I have not thought of the example you give, but it is actually a very interesting example. Would the Holy Spirit give guidance, for example, about the point at which the number present was impractical; is that something the Holy Spirit would give guidance about? I think He would. There is a historical record of a breaking of bread the brethren had in North London in 1870 and there were so many people present that they had four cups. Older generations told us about bottles strategically placed around the room to refill the cup. Well, it is nice to have so many brethren, but I think at some point the Holy Spirit showed that this was not a good idea. In fact, in days when more were available, Mr Gardiner used to say, if I can quote him again, that he thought the maximum size of a gathering was governed by the capacity of the cup. Well, that is an interesting way of putting what we are saying. The Lord spoke of one cup, and it is as if the Holy Spirit might show that, if that is what the Lord said, that is what we should do; and He has guided people who were sensitive to the Spirit to that outcome. It has taken time. What I think about some of the history is that, if any asks, why do we do this? - my first reaction is that it is a bit late to ask. But I do believe that spiritual men waited on the Spirit and over quite a gradual process they arrived at certain things they should drop and certain things they should adopt. And I am now enjoying the fruits of that. If I do not think the Holy Spirit was in that, I do not have the option of putting my ideas in. I would have to go back to the Holy Spirit and ask if something different was more of His mind. I find that, when any do not like the way things are organised, it is their ideas they want to put in. And that is not the point.

DHM I am wondering about how He says, “ye know him”, speaking of the Spirit, and then, “for he abides with you”. They had not received the Spirit yet, had they?

DAB No, they had not, that is interesting. But they should have been able to see His identification with the Lord Jesus, I think. Of course, as to the present time, the Lord Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit, the acquaintance with the Holy Spirit in a twofold way. He says, “ye know him, for he abides with you”, that is objective; and then “in you”. So we have the Holy Spirit in those two ways and right sensitivities would flow out of the Spirit in us. But it is important to take account of Him, as you say, objectively; that is He is here as a Person and, just as in the gospels the man with the pitcher of water was over the place where the

Supper was held, now the Holy Spirit, that Person, is over the way it is ordered. He is responsible, I might say, for the spiritual tone that is designed to provide a welcome for the Lord to fulfil His promise to come.

DNM I was just thinking about Mr Darby's note in connection with John's epistle is that He is managing our affairs, the Spirit here below, 1 John 2: 1. The Supper is here. I was thinking yesterday of the remembrance: would the fact that the Lord manages our affairs in heaven relate to the remembrance? And now we are speaking about practically working things out with the Spirit now, managing our affairs, is that something different?

DAB I see what you mean. I would say, in this connection, that the Holy Spirit is managing the Lord's affairs. We often say - because it is historically true - that anything that was entrusted to man's responsibility has failed. And that is true of any aspect of the public position you look at. But the Supper, in one sense, and I say this carefully, was not entrusted to man's responsibility. It was entrusted to the Holy Spirit. And nothing has failed in the Spirit in testimony. The Spirit has not failed one bit. The greatness and glory of what the Spirit has accomplished is staggering. He has been here for two thousand years. He has operated over the whole world in billions of people. And a coming day will show that they are all united to Christ. That is the scale of the Spirit's work. And the product of it will never fade. It is eternal. And it is to a Person capable of that kind of operation that the simple service of the Lord's supper has been entrusted. How thankful we should be.

SWS I was thinking as to your exercise, as to the way the part that the Spirit has in structuring the Supper, and the way the order of the Supper proceeds. The Spirit does not operate on the basis of mere human practicality. The Spirit operates, structures the occasion on the basis of principle, divine principle, spiritual principle. And I think the example just brought in is really helpful as to the cup. So that when the gathering became too large to maintain the principle of one cup and what is meant in that principle, then the Spirit led persons in wisdom to address that. But it is not just a matter of practicality, is it? There is a principle that was to be maintained and the Spirit helped the brethren understand that. Would you go along with that?

DAB Yes, and the Spirit can see things through. So let us take the

city of Jerusalem where within a week or so there were three thousand people in fellowship. How they held the Supper we are not told. But the Holy Spirit may have shown the need to have practical numbers for this. Then the mind of man says, does that mean we are creating separate assemblies in every subdivision in Jerusalem, which is what Open Brethren think? The Holy Spirit would not say so, so flowing out of that practical point comes all that is needed in the way of teaching about the unity of the assembly and the nature of a local assembly. All those things the Spirit is ready for; He is not caught out by such supplementary questions. There is a perfection about what He is doing; and I am attracted by that expression in the scripture in Exodus 29 we had yesterday, that it “shall be hallowed by my glory”. The Holy Spirit does not do a base thing, never. There is a glory and an opportunity and opening for the glory of God in everything He does. Having said that, I would say that, because he indwells us, the Holy Spirit is acutely sensitive to our measure and our capacity. I mentioned yesterday how Mr Raven got involved in conversations about when the Supper should start in the morning and whether we could go straight into having the emblems and so on. The Spirit was in that conversation. The Spirit understands that when we as mortals assemble for the Supper, we need something to settle our minds and draw us together. The Spirit is in that, is He not? We should be thankful for it.

RNH I was thinking - not to go ahead to chapter 16 - that He “shall guide you into all the truth”. Think of the patient service of the Spirit during the period of recovery. And all that has been developed.

DAB It is a very interesting study. And one thing I would like to talk about as an example is the way the brethren came to it over a period that the breaking of bread should be at the beginning of the meeting. I am not saying not to have a hymn first, but the breaking of bread should be at the beginning. I would like to talk about that for a minute because it did not all happen overnight; and it was not an instruction from some universal lead or from some management committee or synod that said we are going to move it. It did not even happen all at once. Individual brothers in the same meeting felt differently about it. The brethren in England apparently did it earlier than the brethren in America. But none of that was allowed to disturb the unity of the company because, as you say, the Holy Spirit was guiding. That is a very good thought, I think. And we can be thankful that that journey, as far as that particular question is concerned, reached a conclusion.

JKK Could you say just a little bit more in relation to the title, the Spirit of truth? Our brother spoke of the opening of truth itself. The Lord says, "I am ... the truth", John 14: 6. I wondered about the connection that you are drawing as to the Spirit of truth, it seems to link those things together?

DAB Well, I would like to put that question out, because I was rather exercised yesterday about what scriptures to read this morning and how to bring out what we are speaking about, whether indeed there is a connection between the service of the Spirit and the promise that the Lord Jesus makes to come. That was something I was rather led to these scriptures to explore. I noticed that they are two references to the Spirit of truth. And I would be glad if someone has some insight into why that should be. Why is that particular name used in these two places? Am I right that it joins them together, although there is a lot of teaching in between?

NJH I do not know if it would open that up, but you spoke of what was the sin against the Spirit, the denial of the Spirit seen in Christ, the Father seen in Christ. That is how real the whole matter of truth is. The truth is embodied in that blessed Man.

DAB Yes, that is right. So there is a connection with the passage in John 14 referred to, I am the truth, and the Spirit is the truth. Those are two ways of looking at the blessed, you might say, characteristics of God Himself.

JKK And in chapter 15, you get the Spirit of truth again who comes from with the Father. It seems to link with that as well. And nothing is lost in the passage.

DAB I have always thought of the expression, if I say so, as if for the present time (without setting aside the headship of Christ in any way), there is the idea of a fountain of the truth, there is a source of the truth in the Holy Spirit. And if the people of God need any guidance about any matter, or any understanding about the way God has revealed Himself and made His will and purpose known, the Holy Spirit is the Person to tell you.

MJK You maybe already touched on it, but would there be a connection between the thought of the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of truth? I am connecting that with "I am the way, and the truth, and the life".

DAB Yes. I appreciate that, to put it simply, the Lord Jesus could have found some way of leaving a much fuller form of guidance about how He would wish the Supper to be held. But He did not need to, because the Holy Spirit is so of one mind with Him that, without any prior consideration, the Holy Spirit will anticipate what the Lord Jesus is looking for absolutely perfectly.

MJK So, in John's gospel, it is where we find out that Judas was not there. And that could not have been otherwise under the power of the Spirit of God in relation to what John was bringing out. He is also seen as the Son of God in John's gospel. God knows all things.

DAB Yes. In John's gospel, the Lord does not actually have to tell Judas to go out. He says, "What thou doest, do quickly", John 13: 27. And it says "he went out", chap 13: 30. It was almost as if something alien was excluded from the situation, so that what followed could be given in a hallowed environment. And although the Spirit is, of course, in conflict with the flesh, when we are talking about the Supper and what is "of mine", we are talking about the Holy Spirit working in a hallowed environment.

MJK So there is power in that area.

DAB Absolutely, and power to exclude evil. Now in John 20, they are given an obligation to bear that in mind. The Lord may well show that this is all very precious but we have got to remember that this is a hallowed environment and accept, however unwelcome it may be, that discipline may have to be exercised for that sake.

NJH The Supper rightly held is in the sanctified company.

DAB Absolutely, yes. We may come on to the practical implications of that this afternoon, but I think it is helpful to see it from the Spirit's side. The Lord was so careful that that should be so that He did not leave it with them while the flesh and the mind of man might have worked on it. It is as if they were given it sealed until the Holy Spirit could be there to control the unfolding of it.

LPC I was thinking of what the scriptures say about the assembly. The assembly is "the pillar and base of the truth", 1 Tim 3: 15. It is the Spirit that guides the assembly in knowing what is the truth of God. In 1 Corinthians 2: 9, it speaks about things "which eye has not seen, and ear not heard", but God has revealed things to us by the Spirit. He searches all things, "even the depths of God", v 10. So the assembly is

the one, the pillar, the base of the truth, where the Spirit of truth guides us.

DAB It is like “a pillar in the temple of my God” (Rev 3: 12), and the same as the pillars outside Solomon's temple. Their function is ornamental, as I understand it. Such pillars do not hold the roof up exactly, but they are more like a column on which certain things can be displayed. So the overcomer in Revelation, for example, has his name written on a pillar. And what that conveys is that the Lord is pleased to set in the temple of His God a memorial of what that person has been in testimony. Now the assembly as the pillar and base of the truth means that everything the Spirit has wrought in the assembly can be taken account of in display. You say, we are in a broken day, that it is hardly possible to see it. But that is the divine view. It is another way of looking at the glory of the Spirit's work.

VMK I do not want to take away what has been said, but in both the portion that you read in chapter 14 and also in chapter 16, it mentions the Spirit of truth, and it also mentions that the Spirit of truth is a Comforter. I wonder if you could make a comment about being a Comforter in this scene.

DAB The idea of a comforter is what the Romans would have understood by a patron. A patron represents someone's affairs, and he has access to the source of favour that the person he sponsors might not have. So it is like having a friend in court. I remember a long time ago, in three-day meetings in London, two very dear brothers had a conversation about that question. One of them asked the question you just asked. And the other said, it is a bit like a solicitor, only he said that is rather a common word. And the brother who asked the question said, the solicitor has an absolute charge to use all he knows to secure the best result for you. That is what a solicitor does. He must use what he knows and the access he has to get the best outcome for you. Now, the Holy Spirit is working firstly to secure that best outcome for Jesus. But how wonderful that He is also securing the best outcome for us, because the fulfilment of the purpose of God is the acme of blessing for us.

RNH I have had a few thoughts in relation to bringing persons to the Supper. At the beginning of John, they asked the Lord, “where abidest thou? He says to them, Come and see”, John 1, 38, 39. I often think about the arrangement of Solomon's house where the queen of Sheba

came and observed certain things, the order of the service and so forth, such as deportment. In relation to what you were saying about a hallowed place, could you say something about that? I know it has been said that it is quite advantageous for someone to be brought to the Supper as well as bring them to the gospel?

DAB I would say that if God is working, I would encourage someone to come to the Supper. Mr Taylor is reported as saying that you see the brethren at their best. And of course, one thing you do see at the Supper that you would not see at the preaching, is much more diverse activity. We had someone come into the preaching the other day and she thought the preacher was a minister. But she could not have got that impression at the Supper because it was not in the hands of one person. She might have had a much clearer impression of both the Spirit and the Lord Jesus working. I recall an occasion when a lady came to the breaking of bread where I was, and she said to me she would not like to tell me how many places of worship she had been to. But, she said, this was the first place she had ever come to where the company spoke to the Lord as if He was present. We do it unselfconsciously. But that is the kind of impression you are thinking it would be good to impart.

DJK We were speaking a little bit as to the Spirit guiding us in verse 13: “he shall guide you into all the truth”, but I was wondering if there is a thought of us being willing to be guided? He does not say He will *drive* you into all the truth. I think that is important; it is all about sensitivity.

DAB And that is what this conversation is intended to promote, that we might be more sensitive. I may be ought to say that the Holy Spirit is not serving in this way to draw attention to Himself.

So can we now say a little bit about how all that the Holy Spirit has done, that we have been talking about, is to create a welcome for the Lord to fulfil His promise? He says “I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you”; and maybe we could just dwell on that just for a minute. What a blessed thing that is! And then I read John 20 because I think another aspect of the Spirit's service is not only to prepare the conditions, but to make the arrangements, to do the furnishing. So we have in the three gospels we have read yesterday the inauguration of the Supper with no indication of whether or when it should be held again. We go to 1 Corinthians 11, which is the guide for local assemblies, where I have simply read a verse for the word “often”.

What does that mean? Why do we have it every week? Not every believer does; some believers do not think it matters, sadly. The Holy Spirit has been behind that.

There is a very interesting comment of Mr Stoney's in relation to John 20 where he says that it is like the pattern of a coat; you cannot wear the pattern but it shows you how the coat was made, vol 1 p54. I think that is worth thinking about, because John 20 is not the Supper, but you can see the pieces of the pattern there. The disciples were separate, the doors were shut. They had assembled, as we were speaking of yesterday. It was the first day of the week. And the Holy Spirit was imparted; so that if this cycle was to continue then it would be in divine hands. That was the first day. The Lord also came on the eighth day, and the Holy Spirit came - to put it simply - on a Sunday, the fiftieth day. And by the time we get to Acts 20, they are assembling to break bread on the first day of the week. Now, how did that come about? We were speaking yesterday about the value of having the Supper frequently, and so on. And it is a value to the Lord that He has that appointment with His disciples every week. But look how it was done, how you might say the Holy Spirit picked up those cues that the Lord would come week by week. So He has led His people to be there week by week. Is that too simple? I am just exploring how these things have come about.

DJK I think it is very instructive what you are helping us with. I was thinking that Christ is the truth and the Spirit is the truth; it is not a different truth.

DAB No, it is not. And they work to serve each other, I think. Paul just says, "as often", as if people would know what he meant; and who told them? I think if we did not believe the Holy Spirit had told them we would be back on square one wondering what we should do; these are very practical things. We have referred to the practicalities of this, and the Holy Spirit is immensely practical, He is not ethereal in what He is doing, is He?

RNH Is there a pattern seen in the creation as well, the seven days? If this matter was finished, then it was good.

DAB Well, indeed, yes. The week does not come into the Jewish economy, really. They had months, did they not? But the assembly has weeks. It is different, it is not an extension of Judaism, is it? We would have the Supper once a month if it was. But the Holy Spirit has

come in with something different. As you say, it is an old thought of God's but it has this application now.

Now there is another point I would like to look into, because there are brethren here who have had experience with these things. I would like to ask those who are old enough to remember, before they came among us, how did it feel when you came to a meeting when the Supper was no longer at the end but at the beginning? How did that appeal to those of you who had that experience? What persuaded you that it was right?

DMW Well, I remember distinctly that Bruce Selman and myself were together in Villa Grove. And the first thought was from a reading, and the subject was the heavenly man - we were sitting off to the side, there was a little reluctance to sit in the circle. But after the reading and the Spirit of truth being active in the circle, we turned to one another without saying too much, and a tear was coming down the brother's cheek. And he said, I think we found a home. Well, then, of course, after two days, we assembled for the Supper. I remember that it was a living effect, and I relate that to quickening as the brethren gave thanks for the emblems and immediately addressed the Lord Jesus. A brother stood up and he gave a very brief simple word without an exposition or anything like that, relating to the union of Christ and the assembly and the bride and the bridegroom, just as we moved into that particular response, assembly-wise. What I am saying is there was a living effect that we were in the truth of the Lord's supper, and we did not know it until we experienced it. And so it only confirmed what the brother said to me, we found a home. We knew at that point that there was no turning back.

DAB Well, I hope the brethren found that as interesting as I did. I am really glad I asked you. That is what we meant by guiding. It was not as if you got a letter from somebody saying, this is the way we do it and you can only come if you conform, or anything like that. But the thing was presented to you, and the Holy Spirit touched your affections in relation to the way He would like you to experience it.

DMW Well that is the only way I would perhaps summarise it. We felt it. I mean, we sometimes disallow feelings, but these were real deep spiritual feelings. And whatever else happened, as far as my brother who is now with the Lord - as far as we were concerned, it did not make any difference whatever else happened. We were at that point committed.

DAB I talked about impressions, and the impression you would have come away with was that the Lord had had more from the way that was done than you had previously thought possible.

DMW Well exactly; and evidently it was no human intrusion. It was a spiritual experience that is almost inexplicable. It is something that carried us in many ups and downs and things we had to go through and work out ourselves; it seemed to carry us.

DAB Now, let me say this to the young people, I asked our brother to say that because you have known the Supper the other way all your lives and you have probably never thought about it. So you need to listen to what our brother said, how he came to it, and how those he was with came to it, that the Lord was attracted by the opportunity to be with His people on those different terms from what they previously experienced.

MJK It is interesting what you mentioned in relation to the Spirit of God leading because it was not exactly the first experience that I had that impressed me in relation to these things. Some would know the Morrish Bible dictionary, which speaks of the Lord's supper as 'introductory to the assembly's proper privilege'. The edition that we had had the words about it as 'introductory' struck out: having that pointed out was my first impression about it. The second was that there was a brother who came to the meeting that we were previously in, and he stood up and broke the bread immediately at the beginning of the meeting. After that meeting, a brother said to him, 'that was very, very nice, but do not try and repeat it'. Those were the first impressions that we had even before we came into fellowship. So it commended itself at that point. But you can see that the Spirit of God had touched us in relation to that prior to us coming even. It was an appeal, really, by the Spirit. It was quite an experience when our brother did that in a company that was not necessarily ready for something like that.

DAB I am finding all this very helpful because I was just exercised that we should speak about why the Lord has promised to come. He has promised to come, firstly, to gratify the kind of feelings that our brother has spoken about, and the kind of feelings that prompted that brother to do that. It is a feeling in a company, we want to put the Lord first. That draws Him; that attracts Him. And He comes, and that is what God says about the offering, He hallows that assembling with His glory. We may feel very simple and very inadequate for the greatness

of it, but it is a wonderful thing to feel you have been drawn into that.

DJK I will link on with what has been said, not to speak about one's own experiences, but what impressed me distinctly was the unifying effect of the Spirit, and how bringing Christ before the brethren drew them all together immediately.

DAB I think it is very touching. We have been dwelling on the great truth that the Lord is living. If you look in John 20: 17, the Lord said to Mary, "Go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend". Now, Mary must have gone all over Jerusalem finding these people I do not know if she managed to find Thomas but she found the others; and what was the effect of the word that Jesus was living? It was to gather them; there was no appointment made - it is not like going to Galilee. It says the disciples were within. And they closed the door on everything else. It was a hallowed environment. Could Jesus stay away? Could He?

SWS I just wanted to add to what is being said because I think that it ties into the exercise that you have had in this particular meeting, especially in relation to the Lord's desire to make Himself known. I was thinking about what the brethren have shared. I know for myself there was an exercise to remember the Lord, probably more on the line that I knew it was the right thing to do. Maybe I did not go beyond too much the thought of obligation. But I was at the three-day meetings in Plainfield. I cannot tell you anything that was said. I can tell you about the environment. And that touched my heart and had its effect, and it was very real. I could see that. It was at the Supper that I experienced the Lord's presence for the first time in my life. And from that moment on, there has never been any doubt whatsoever in relation to what it means to His heart, and as to the importance of the Supper. I only share that, and the brethren forgive me, because that is something that my heart longs for, for the young persons, to have that true experience of His presence.

DAB I hope brethren do not mind me being a little unconventional about this, but I trust what we have heard has left an impression on the spirits of the brethren more than talking about the teaching of it, that we are in the hands of the Comforter, who has ministered to the heart of Christ in the way He has brought us to hold this memorial. That is why we want our young people to commit themselves to it and to allow their lives to be governed by it. It is sufficiently important that two divine Persons have made this the priority of their work.

NJH Our brothers sharing their experiences raises the exercise of every heart that we might approach the Supper rightly, according to the Spirit of truth.

DAB Yes, indeed. I did not prime them to speak. I did not know what they would say if I asked them, but I am really glad I did.

WSC I was thinking about your comment, I think yesterday, where the Lord says, “*I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age*”; but then here He comes.

DAB I read somewhere that that reference in Matthew 28 is more individual and was a promise to support them when they went out. Mr Joe Evershed used to say the doors were shut but they had to open them because they were going out. And they were going out into a world they were afraid of, rightly. The Lord says, “*I am with you*”. And that is a promise He will never fail to keep. We read of it with Paul. He said he stood before Nero, and “the Lord stood **with me**”, 2 Tim 4: 17. There were two persons in the dock, to put it simply; both arraigned on the same charge, of announcing the purpose of God to poor sinners. Someone unfamiliar with the way we hold the Supper might ask what is this about the Lord coming in; is He not with us all the days? But why does He speak about coming to the disciples then? There must be something special. There must be something more than just being with us in our daily lives, must there not? He is promising to come to us in this hallowed environment.

KAK What about the aspect of the Comforter? I was thinking of what these different ones have experienced and what a comfort it is to me to know that I am in the good of what the Lord intended for the Supper.

DAB You prompt me to note that the Lord says, “another Comforter”. So the Lord was one, and the Holy Spirit was to be another, in perfect accord with each other. And the one serving the other and the Spirit using our hearts as the means of expressing His work for the gratification of Christ. I do not want to be arrogant, but we can be sure that if we follow the directions of the Spirit, what we arrive at will be what the Lord is seeking.

NJH All the days at the end of Matthew is in view of what is here, whereas John 20 is the great area of heavenly and spiritual privilege; and the Supper is a means to it.

DAB Indeed. And John 14 begins with that, does it not? He says,

“where I am ye also may be”. And John 17: 24, He comes back to that point. This discourse here is bracketed with that idea that we should be with Him where He is. But I have always thought that He cannot wait, can He? And without returning to the path He trod - He says He is not manifesting Himself to the world - there are people here He must come and see.

NJH It is said that Mr Stoney once rose and gave thanks for the emblems immediately they were together and, when he was questioned afterwards about it, he said that was the reason for assembling, it was to break bread.

DAB Indeed, yes; and if we understand what we have been saying, that we are gathering for an occasion of remembrance, how could you pent up that idea in your mind even while you dwelt on the grace you have been shown and all those other things, or even listen to a word of ministry? This is what the brethren contended with, that since the Reformation, Protestant churches put the sermon before the Supper. And people go to hear the sermon. There was apparently a time when there was ministry before the breaking of bread, and Mr Raven said it is very objectionable, vol 11 p16. So the brethren were helped to break bread first. Mr Raven was also asked about how the breaking of bread was followed by ministry (vol 10 p76), and he agreed that it would be happier to go on with worship. The Supper is there as prefatory to a service of praise, as we referred to the hymn yesterday. How gentle the Spirit has been in guiding through that so that we are held together. I also have to say that, although they did not have the full light of it, the Spirit gave strength to the martyrs to stand for this idea that they wanted to *remember* the Lord. It is wonderful to see the different aspects of the way the Spirit has worked.

RNH Could you say something more about “I am coming to you”? The Supper is distinct from other occasions, is it not? John says that Jesus came. There should be some point in our experience at the Supper where we identify the Lord. As John said later, “It is the Lord”, John 21: 7?

DAB Yes. As I said, it is collective. What the Lord has in mind is that what we have been speaking of should have had its effect. So that the company has assembled; in other words, the company becomes in a spiritual state of unity in the act of remembrance, and the sharing of the emblems gives practical force to that. And we find, as we were quoting,

that we are “thinking the same thing”. An assembly, rightly understood, is a company of people acting as if they were a single person. So that is all preparatory, and the Spirit is in that, because the Spirit is the power of unity in a company. And that point having been reached, the Lord Jesus desires to identify Himself with it. So He comes not to a miscellany of individuals whose minds may be all over the place. He comes where that focus has already been created.

DMW There is the Father's Spirit in that, strengthening in the inner man, Eph 3: 16. That is collective as well, is it not ?

DAB Yes, it is. It is very striking that we are strengthened by the Father's Spirit. It is not presented exactly so as to know the Father better; it says, “that ye may know ... know the love of the Christ”, v 19. That would bear on what you say, because the Supper is the place where the love of the Christ is especially before us, is it not? It is very touching to see, although it is *the Lord's* supper, a place for the Father and the Spirit in the furnishing of that occasion. How blessed it is that the Father should so serve that the love of Christ should find its answer, and find a vehicle through which it can be expressed. It shows a wonderful unity in the Godhead, and mutuality as well.

SWS I think what you say is so important as to the preparatory service of the Holy Spirit, and referring again to one's own experience that I shared, I think that that is why that was the first time that I had truly experienced His presence, because I was in an environment where the Spirit was free and was preparing the hearts of the saints to receive Him. There was a hymn, the giving thanks for the emblems; I had never been in an environment like that before. And it opened things up. I think it is so wonderful to consider the way that the Spirit moves so that the hearts are prepared to have truly that wonderful experience of His presence.

DAB Maybe I could add that our children are at that occasion; we would never leave the children at home if we were coming to the Supper; and they begin to learn, and I think enjoy, that environment. It is their introduction, not by formal education, into what is spiritual. We had one ask to break bread; we talked to her about the Spirit, and she did not really know very much about Him. But she did know that she was the beneficiary of service that was actually the Holy Spirit's. She talked about the way she gets through and so on, and how God helps her. I thought it is actually the service of the Spirit. A young person may

know His service, but we would like them to know Him. The way you will get to know Him, when you feel He has touched you or served you or spoken to you, is to thank Him. And that will build an acquaintance, a friendship, a relationship by which He can then guide you into things you do not now know. And He will also give you the strength to be true to the commitment that you want to make when you ask to break bread.

At three-day meetings in Indianapolis

25th November 2023

List of initials

C J Brien, Aberdeen ID; D A Burr, West Norwood; G M Chellberg, Wheaton; W S Chellberg, Wheaton; L P Chin, Wheaton; N J Henry, Glasgow; R N Hesterman, Beachville ONT; D J Klassen, Aberdeen ID; M J Klassen, Aberdeen ID; V M Klassen, Aberdeen ID; J K Knauss, Indianapolis; K A Knauss, Indianapolis; Z Knauss, Indianapolis; D H McFarlane, New York; D N Morrow, Toronto; S W Selman, Denton; D M Welch, Denton

THE LORD'S LOOK

Peter S Barlow

Mark 10: 21-22; 5: 25-34

Luke 19: 1-6; 22: 60-62

These passages present the thought that the Lord looked: the Lord looking. Here was a young man, he desired something: "what shall I do", the young man asked. It says, "Jesus looking upon him loved him". The wonderful message in the gospel is that the Lord is looking upon each and every one of us, and He loves us. He knows where we are in our hearts; there is nothing hidden from Him; He is looking upon you and me tonight and what I can assure you is that He loves you. The reason I know that is, as our hymn said,

The Lord who healed the leper
Is looking on thee now;
And, though Thy case discerning,
No frown is on His brow.
Not all Thy sin's dark story
Has turned away His love;
'Twas need like thine that brought Him
Down from His throne above. Hymn 363

The Lord Jesus has come down to meet every need we have. We speak of Him when He was here as a lowly Man walking on His journey. That journey was to lead to Jerusalem; to death, "and that the death of the cross", Phil 2: 8. None of these four examples that we have read happened by chance; they are all part of the glorious pathway of that wondrous Man as He was down here moving amongst men. He knew this young man was going to come up to Him; He knew exactly what this young man was going to say. The glory of the Lord - and the glory of the record the Holy Spirit gives us - is that Jesus, looking on Him, loved Him. He is looking on each and every one of us tonight. Is your heart given to Him?

This young man had a desire for something, but when the test came, and the One who loved him told him to give all that he had and "come, follow me"; that test at that time for this young man was too great. We do not know the history; the young man could have been Mark himself but one thing that is recorded is that the Lord loved him; and I know that the Lord did not cease to love him just because he

turned away. The same appeal has gone out over two thousand years, many people have heard it many times before, but maybe some who have heard it for the first time have been like this young man and gone away sad and grieved.

The wonderful thing about the great love of the Lord Jesus is that nothing could deflect Him from the path that He had to take for our salvation - whether you, me, or this young man. This encounter was not by chance; it was in the pathway of the Lord amongst men. Every step was in perfect obedience to the will of the One who had sent Him, for He was sent by His Father - sent into this world to establish a basis on which the gospel preaching can go forth tonight, and the heart of God can be made fully known, and that the love of God is towards all men. The opportunity of salvation remains for all living men. Some have turned away and rejected the gospel preaching, turned away from the glad tidings which are freely offered. Each one of us must answer to the gospel message for ourselves; the question is, have I? I cannot save anyone; no one else can save me: only the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who has loved me, and given Himself for me, can save me. As He looks upon us, He loves us. But this young man went away: I wonder what the feelings of the Lord were. I have some small sense of it: He felt the young man going away for He knew what He had to offer, what He had for this young man; it was far beyond all the riches that this young man had. I know this because the One most precious to God, the Lord Jesus Christ, came into the world to save sinners. What a cost it was: One who was most precious to God was given for me and for my salvation. He is available today for the salvation of every sinner.

That shows how much God's love is towards you. He has given His only begotten Son. We might consider the parable where the father says, "I will send my beloved son: perhaps when they see him they will respect him", Luke 20: 13. What did they do? They cast him out and they killed him, v 14. That parable was fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ. This world has no place for Jesus; this world has no place for the glorious Son of God; and yet still God appeals through the glad tidings, and, through the work of the evangelist, He appeals to all men to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus and His completed work; but this young man went away.

It is true of all of these examples that we have read that Jesus loved that person. This woman, who for twelve years had sought to find an answer to her condition, had a flux of blood. We could liken it to the

effects of sin upon a person without the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, their life is draining away. This world will entice you and say you can have a wonderful life, find everything you want, push yourself, make much of yourself, and that you have rights, although in the presence of God not one of us has any rights. Only Christ has a right and He has claimed us for Himself, and has given His all for us. This woman took twelve years to reach that point. She had expended all that she had on physicians, everything of this world to try and meet her condition. Satan will try to fill your heart with other things, but underlying it all is this terrible condition: through sin, life is draining away. It says that the condition did not get better, "but had rather got worse". It is so true, that sin only gets worse; it only gets darker. The enemy would use this to darken your mind and to suggest there is no hope. But there was something else working in this woman because she came to it that, "If I shall touch but his clothes I shall be healed".

I was interested in what is said of her: "having heard concerning Jesus". There is not one of us in this room that could say that we have not heard concerning Jesus. The question is what are you going to do about it? This woman sought Him out to touch Him, because she had the faith to believe she would be healed. They were in the crowd, and the Lord knew power had gone out from Him to heal this woman who touched Him. Was His power diminished by what went out to heal her? Not at all. His power always remains the same, it is inexhaustible, and it is available to all. He met the need of the woman and He wanted to have a living relationship with her. It was not sufficient for the heart of the Lord Jesus that He healed this woman, so what did He do? He looked round: "he looked round about to see her who had done this". Beloved, wherever you are, whatever your condition is, the Lord is looking at you now. He knows our every need, and He knows when there is faith in Him. He would love to have you come as this woman did, and confess before Him what He means to you. She "came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth". We are not told what she told Him. I think there was far more to tell than that she had had a flux of blood for twelve years; and it had gone when the Lord touched her. The Lord Jesus loves to have us talk to Him of Himself and the things He has done, and of what He and His love mean to us. She "fell down before him, and told him all the truth": what beautiful words. She was "frightened and trembling", truly a sinner in the presence of God. The One who was here was God; but she receives His wonderful words: "Daughter, thy faith has healed thee; go in peace, and be well of thy

scourge". What is that? Sins have been dealt with. The whole question, every one of my sins has been dealt with by Him in perfection before God. God is satisfied in Jesus and all that He has done.

We have spoken of the young man; we have spoken of this woman's suffering. Every step the Lord Jesus took was perfection in obedience to the Father's will, for the Father had sent Him that way for the sake of another needy person whose need the Lord Jesus has met. He can meet your need. Blessed is the God and Father with whom we have to do, who has only in mind what is for our blessing, and He has secured it in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What was due to us as sinners would forever keep us from the favour of God, it would bring us to the great white throne in judgment, but we can say it has been met entirely in the Lord Jesus Christ. He has removed it all, every sin, every scourge, has been met by the Lord Jesus Himself at the cross. Nothing else in this world could meet this woman's need, but *Jesus* did. What did men do in spite of this, and all the good things He did? They awarded the cross to the Lord of glory, the One who had the power to heal, who had the power to raise the dead. How foolish to think that nailing Him to the cross was the end. But that was the beginning in which God's heart could be made fully known to us in the gospel, because there on the cross the Lord Jesus met perfectly for God's glory every one of my sins; every sin, of every one that places their faith and trust in Him. And He has not only borne our sins, but He has met God's judgment of sin - sin has been removed for the glory of God. He has died, and He was buried. That means that the first and fallen order of man has gone forever. All those who are secured in the Lord Jesus Christ belong to an entirely different order. He is raised from amongst the dead and they are raised with *Him*. We speak of Him walking here, but He is no less able where He is in glory. We sing,

Sinner, see thy God beside thee

(Hymn 112).

He is there. He is ready for those who put their faith and trust in Him, who find the answer to all their need, perfectly met in all that He has done to the full satisfaction of His God and Father. He has washed away every sin in His precious blood, having given up His life to meet our need. All is gone from the sight of God for those that place their faith and trust in Him. It is available to *all*, not just to certain persons; we may only be a few in this room, but it is towards every one in East Finchley; the gospel is for them: it is available to them. There may be many other

places where the preacher is offering the same appeal. May there be none who rejects the opportunity of grace that is available now, today, at this moment, but may they enter into the joy of salvation. What peace this woman found. The Lord says, "Daughter, thy faith has healed thee; go in peace". What peace is given to the one who places their faith and trust in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then we read as to Zacchæus. God had sent the Lord Jesus that way, and Jesus came to where Zacchæus was. He will come to where you are in your soul tonight. He looked up in the sycamore tree and He saw Zacchæus. He said, "make haste and come down, for to-day I must remain in thy house". What blessing that is, that the Lord Jesus will come to where you are, and will look upon you. Make haste and place your faith and trust in Him. Is that the end; does He move on? No; Zacchæus comes down and the Lord remained in that house that day. We do not have recorded that the Lord Jesus left the house; scripture is very good in what it does not say. If the Lord comes and abides with you today, that is today and forever. That is the wonderful thing about having your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, He comes to where you are, meets you in all your need, and He will remain with you forever. You say, 'He is in glory'; yes, but there is another promise: He said that he would send another Comforter. The Lord is in glory, but the Holy Spirit is come to all those who believe, all those who ask, all those who are obedient. He will come and dwell in the believer. That is how I know the Lord Jesus is near, because His own Spirit has been given to indwell me. The blessed Holy Spirit keeps me near to the Lord Jesus. Once one has received the Lord Jesus as Saviour, it is not that they are saved today and lost tomorrow; that is impossible. The Lord's work is complete and the believer is saved forever; the Lord Jesus is always near.

The young man we read of came up to Him, the woman came and touched Him; Zacchæus thought to see who He was, and it was wonderful what he found out. He found the Saviour, the Lord of glory, that is who he found, "who he was", and that One abode with him, for it says, "for to-day I must remain in thy house". The Spirit also remains dwelling forever, once you received Him as a precious gift. That is eternal; what a wonderful gift: the Lord's own Spirit indwelling. Have you had your "to-day", beloved hearer? It will go on forever. What a blessing, what a glorious, real joy the gospel is. Zacchæus, "made haste and came down, and received him with joy". Have you received

the Lord Jesus as your Saviour with joy? Peace, joy and everything that satisfies your heart are things only the Lord Jesus can give; only the Lord Jesus can satisfy. Only He can fill your heart. Zacchæus proved it on that day. What a day it was for Zacchæus! What a day it is when one comes to know the Lord Jesus as their own personal Saviour and gives themselves to Him.

I did not want to dwell on Peter's failing in this last passage here, but I wanted to bring out that it only took a look of the Lord Jesus to bring Peter to himself. He went "without" and "wept bitterly". Was it a harsh look? Was it a hard look? Was it a shaking of the head and a sorrowful look? No, as the hymn says,

And, though thy case discerning,
No frown in on His brow.

I think it was a look of infinite love; that is what broke Peter. We know well in ourselves that when someone is harsh to us, it brings out what we are. I think what Peter saw is that he had let the Lord down, and what was shown to him was the infinite expression of love. What a look! That is the look that is upon you tonight, that infinite expression of love. That glorious One, who was being wickedly and cruelly treated by men, such was His love for Peter; as it was for those that surrounded Him that spat upon Him, that smote Him, that cursed Him, such was His love, tender compassionate love. How He felt the darkness that had descended upon man. How He felt what Peter was going through, and as Peter realised what he had done, there was this glorious expression of love. It is that love that looks on you tonight. Do not despise that glorious look, but make it your own, for His Name's sake.

East Finchley

9th December 2024

FOLLOWING

Substance of remarks on John 21: 20

Benjamin T Fawcett

I have thought to link this scripture in a few words with what has been before us: the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, His death and His place in resurrection - as showing in some measure how these things may be entered into. It is good for us to meditate on these things - on the yearning desire of His heart indicating that He would not be alone. We have considered the dark path, the depths He had to descend to so that distance between man and God might be completely and eternally removed for faith; but when we seek to enter on what resurrection involves, I admit it is a difficult subject, and will be so to every exercised heart. It contemplates a complete break with natural things around, because of one supreme Object filling our heart and shaping our pathway - the Lord Jesus Christ in glory. We get in the disciple described here the picture of one who would follow the Lord Jesus Christ in resurrection, and, as indicated this afternoon, we shall find this cannot be accomplished without the Holy Spirit. The young man in Mark 14: 51 followed the Lord only for a certain distance. It was an impossible journey for a man in his natural state. Again, in that supreme moment when the Lord was about to undergo the cross, when the suffering and shame lay before Him, the agonies of Gethsemane, and all that the cross involved in His being forsaken of God, let us remember that those who were closest to Him also forsook Him and fled - He was left alone to face the enemy.

Thus we see what man is unless there is a power outside to take possession of him and give strength for walk. When the Lord was with His own, they knew they could revert to Him; a divine Person was there to shelter and to shield; but when He was delivered to the enemy, they all forsook Him and fled. It would be the same today were it not that another divine Person has come down from the glory and is here present to sustain and encourage, to fill the poor, weak, failing heart with heavenly joy so that we can be lifted above the oppositions, the trials and persecutions of this world.

In our scripture we have the characteristics of the soul that will remain by the grace of God - without exalting man - until the Lord comes again. In the power of the Holy Ghost, He will have followers. We have seen what we are naturally and that we must face. It may be said by

some here - 'We are not advanced in these spiritual truths and we find it hard to get on', and so forth; but what was true of the follower of our blessed Lord then is possible for every one of us now. The scripture abundantly vindicates this assertion. Turning about, Peter "seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following"; Jesus fills the vision of the writer of this word, he has no desire to name himself, but he has one simple fact to emphasise, "the disciple whom Jesus loved". You may not have an accurate knowledge of scripture - I say this for encouragement, I do not want to imply that it is not well to have an accurate knowledge of scripture, it is, it is intensely important; again, you may say you have not capacity - memory fails; however this may be, every believer is privileged to know consciously that he is loved by the Lord Jesus. No height of learning, no great memory or ability is required to grasp that the One who died for me loves me. This is the characteristic of the disciple who was to follow the Lord to the end.

Another thought is beautifully brought before us in the words, "which also leaned on his breast at supper". There is no self-assertion; he knew a place where there was found a response and a solace for every longing in his breast and he could recline there. So may each believer here. John could then refer to the Lord for an answer to an important question when it was needful he should have light. No great ability was needful for this, but simply the consciousness that he was loved by, and was in the confidence, of the Lord.

Here, then, are the characteristics of a follower until the Lord comes. The one who responded to His love got light when he wanted it, and so the simple believer close to the heart of the Lord may be in the good now of what is set forth in this scripture.

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Note: the author was born in Northern Ireland in 1856, and was local latterly in Plainfield NJ, where he died in 1934.

A collection of 34 articles, entitled *Memorials of Ministry by James B Catterall*, originally published in the 1920s, before his untimely death at the age of 48.

A collection of over 100 articles, entitled *Fundamentals of Christianity and Other Articles by Dr Frank H Bodman*, originally published from 1882-1932.

These books are available to order online from **www.lulu.com**. They can be found in the bookstore by typing the book title, or the author's name, into the search box. Both these titles are also available from this website as e-books.

The reading in this issue was taken from *The Lord's Supper – Meetings in Indianapolis 2023* available through the same website.

If any have difficulty with ordering, the editors will be able to help at burr.andrewlinda@btinternet.com