

# PURIFICATION AND LIFE

*Notes of Meetings at Exeter, August 1958  
and Toronto, October 1957*

G. R. COWELL

STOW HILL BIBLE AND TRACT DEPOT  
2 UPPER TEDDINGTON RD., HAMPTON WICK  
KINGSTON-ON-THAMES

*Made and printed in Great Britain  
at the Villafield Press, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow,  
July, 1959*

OBTAINABLE AT  
BIBLE AND TRACT DEPOTS:

N. IRELAND:	Belfast	- 14 North Street Arcade
U.S.A.:	New York	- 62 Cooper Square
AUSTRALIA:	Adelaide	- 243 Young Street, North Unley
	Sydney	- 14 Royal Arcade, George Street
	Victoria	- 6 Kent Street, Hawthorn, E.2
NEW ZEALAND:	Auckland	- 416 Karangahape Road, Newton, C.2
	Wellington	- 36 Lower Cuba Street
B.W.I.:	Jamaica	- 20 King Street, Kingston
	Barbados	- Chapman Street, Bridgetown
SOUTH AFRICA:	Cape Town	- c/o Napiers, 3 Green Market Square

# CONTENTS

## PURIFICATION AND LIFE

### READINGS AT EXETER IN AUGUST, 1958

(1)	John 1 : 1-37, 49-51	-	-	-	-	1
(2)	John 2 : 1-25	-	-	-	-	22
(3)	John 3 : 1-30	-	-	-	-	44
(4)	John 4 : 1-30, 39, 49-54	-	-	-	-	68
(5)	John 8 : 54-59; 9 : 1-17, 24-41; 10 : 1-3					
	27-30	-	-	-	-	92
(6)	John 21 : 1-25	-	-	-	-	112

## GOD AS PRESENTED IN THE GOSPELS

### ADDRESS AT EXETER

Matthew 1 : 21-23; Mark 1 : 1; Luke 1 : 32;	
John 1 : 1; Psalm 150 : 1, 6	- - - 134

## GREATNESS

### READINGS AT TORONTO, CANADA, IN OCTOBER, 1957

(1)	Hebrews 1 : 1-14; 2 : 9, 10	-	-	148
(2)	Hebrews 4 : 14; 5 : 5-10; 7 : 1-10,			
	14-47, 22-28; 8 : 1-2	-	-	164
(3)	Hebrews 8 : 3 and 6; 9 : 11-14, 21-24;			
	10 : 1-18	-	-	186
(4)	Hebrews 10 : 19-25; Col. 1 : 19-23	-		208
(5)	Hebrews 12 : 28-29; 13 : 10-17; 2 :			
	11-13	-	-	232

## LIVES REGULATED BY THE WILL OF GOD

### ADDRESS AT TORONTO

Hebrews 10 : 5-7; Romans 12 : 1-2;	2
Timothy 2 : 3-6, 15, 21, 24-26	- - - 257





## PURIFICATION AND LIFE (I)

JOHN 1: 1-37, 49-51

G.R.C. It is in mind to look at some chapters in John's gospel in connection with purification and life. We know that this gospel was probably the last book of scripture to be written, when much had come in from which the saints needed purifying. It is also written specially for these last days, when we are surrounded by corruption, and therefore by moral death, even in the sphere of Christian profession where life should be. So that the Holy Spirit presents the Lord and His ministry in this gospel with a view to purification. That is one of the great ends in view. As in all matters he touches, John has what is inward primarily in his mind. It is a question of inward purification. Outward purification must flow, if it is to be acceptable, from inward purification. Paul, of course, would have both in mind, but he stresses outward purification; in 2 Corinthians 6 : 17 he quotes the injunction "Wherefore come out from the midst of them, and be separated, saith the Lord, and touch not what is unclean", because purification in its outward aspect involves separation, but follows that by saying "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us purify ourselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear". Ch. 7 : 1. Undoubtedly in that injunction he is including, not only the outward purification which necessitates separation, but what is inward. Similarly, in 2 Timothy 2 : 21 he speaks of purification and separation, "If therefore one shall have purified himself from these", (that is from vessels to dishonour) "in separating himself from them, he shall be a vessel to honour, sanctified, serviceable to the Master". We cannot think of Paul

having anything in mind other than that those who separate themselves do it as a result of what is inward. We have to take warning in that respect, from the remnant who returned from Babylon. They left Babylon and returned to the truth of the house and of the city, but, while there were those who maintained an outward separation, the inward thing lapsed. And so the bitterest enemies of the Lord in this gospel were those who were maintaining an outward separation—the Pharisees—but their inward parts were full of plunder and wickedness. We have to face this matter, because we have come out; we are positionally in purification through separation; but then we have to face the question as to whether our purification has begun from within, especially those of us who have been brought up in the meetings. If things are not worked out within, our separation becomes something which is very obnoxious, like the unclean beasts with the cloven hoof who did not chew the cud; there was nothing inward. So I think we can see the great importance, from this standpoint, of the gospel of John, because, if we take heed to it, we shall become purified persons inwardly, and a person purified inwardly could not be other than so outwardly; but the great thing is to get the inward matter right.

So the gospel commences with this great presentation of the person of Christ, for two reasons; first that we should be purified from every Philistine intrusion and speculation about His Person, and from every wrong thought of God; and secondly, the presentation is so great that if we really apprehend it, Christ will eclipse all others for us and we shall be purified as to our Object and motive. The first chapter thus stands out as very important in that respect, bringing in a most purifying presentation of the Person of Christ. Later in the chapter we get the marvellous scope of His work, taking away the sin of the world, and then the present aspect of His work, baptising with the Holy Spirit. At the close we see persons coming to Him, the gathering

Centre, and His glories in dominion engage the heart. So this is a wonderful chapter.

We might consider first the glory of His Person, and the glory of His Person, in this gospel, links with "The Name" of the Old Testament. There are *names* and *titles* in the Old Testament, but the name of the only true God was "I am that I am". The creature's answer to that is "Jah", the One who is, and in revelation, "Jehovah"; but those three cognate words, "I am", "Jah", and "Jehovah", constituted the name of God, as disclosed in the Old Testament, and this gospel links on with that. The first gospel, Matthew, brings in the greatest of *titles*, "El", "Emmanuel, . . . 'God with us'" ch. 1 : 23, and closes by telling us who that God is, what His *name* is as known *now*, "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" ch. 28 : 19. But this gospel does not go back to a title in that sense, nor, in the first three verses, to Christ as the subject of prophecy; it goes back to the fact that the Person who came is the "I AM".

J.Hr. Does it help to see that this Person who is so glorious was found in the midst of all the corruption that is in the world, and yet maintained every feature that was right in relation to God?

G.R.C. Is not that involved in the word "In him was life, and the life was the light of men". J.N.D. says:

"Thy path of true perfection  
Was light on all around."

P.H.H. Is your word about the "I am" emphasised in ch. 8, where the Lord says "unless ye shall believe that I am (he), ye shall die in your sins" v. 24, and then in v. 28, "When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am (he), and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father has taught me I speak these things". Is it striking that He brings out the name in speaking to the Jews thus?

G.R.C. Yes, and He immediately brings out the perfection of His dependent manhood. One such as He,

who is "I am", could yet say that "the Father has taught me".

P.H.H. I was wondering about that very thing, His dependent manhood, in the very same verse as He mentions His own name, as God.

G.R.C. Scripture seems to delight to put His deity and manhood together. They are so often put in juxtaposition, "When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am", but then He goes on "I do nothing of myself, but as the Father has taught me I speak these things".

P.L. The expression "In him was life" Ch. 1 : 4. bears of course on His deity; but in chapter 5 He speaks of the Father having given Him to have life in Himself. Would that bear on His perfect dependence, ever preserved as the Sent One, in the midst of corruption and death?

G.R.C. Indeed it would.

P.B. You spoke earlier of purification and life. This begins with life. Could you say how it bears on your remark?

G.R.C. "In him was life". We cannot limit that expression. It seems a kind of absolute statement which no doubt involves the truth of His Person. But then, it was what was manifested *here*; such an One here manifested life in perfection in manhood. "That eternal life," John says in the epistle, "which was with the Father, and has been manifested to us," 1 John 1 : 2. "And the life was the light of men". All the springs of His life were in God. He did nothing but what He saw the Father doing, He did not speak except words given to Him by the Father. There was manifest here on earth a Man whose springs were all in God, and were therefore absolutely pure, He was altogether what He said; He did not seek His own glory, but the glory of the One who sent Him. Life was seen in perfection in Him. As regards ourselves, apart from purification there cannot be life in relation to God. Life in the

proper sense of the word cannot subsist apart from purification. I am referring to us now. In Christ life was manifest in all its purity, and it was light on all around, it was the light of men.

A.J.G. Does that mean that in thus manifesting that life, God had in mind that men should be brought into it?

G.R.C. That is what I was thinking. The life of Jesus here, while it exposed man, was a manifestation that it was God's mind for men to be in a life like that, in so far as the creature can be. And is not that where purification from our point of view becomes essential?

A.J.G. Yes I am sure it is.

E.J.H. In chapter 20 : 31, you get the words " that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life in his name ".

G.R.C. That is the great objective. Believing " that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God " is really believing on Him as the theme of prophetic testimony. That is what comes in later in ch. 1.

G.R.D. Does the darkness not apprehending the light, mean that there is some moral cause for that, hence the need of purification to follow, if the light is to be apprehended?

G.R.C. Yes. And I suppose we have to take account of the fact recorded in Genesis 1 that darkness existed before man. *The* darkness is spoken of here, it is an awful thing, " the darkness apprehended it not ". No doubt it is physical darkness that is actually referred to in Genesis 1, but nevertheless, one would think that it is to bring home to us the spiritual darkness, " darkness was on the face of the deep ". Darkness had come into the universe before man was made. But man having been created, and set up in innocence, the darkness engulfed man, as I would understand.

P.L. Would the incapacity of man to respond, bear on the moral darkness that marks him according to v. 5, and then the religious darkness in the end of v. 26, " In the midst of you stands, whom ye do not know ", and



then the natural darkness of one outwardly related to the Lord, "I knew him not", v. 31?

G.R.C. That is very helpful. I think we need to take account of those features of darkness, influences which will hold us in the darkness if we allow them, moral darkness, religious darkness, and the darkness of nature.

F.H. In Matthew it says Jesus "went and dwelt at Capernaum", and "the people sitting in darkness has seen a great light" ch. 4, vv. 13-16. Has that any bearing on this—Light manifested?

G.R.C. It has. It speaks there of light springing up. But there is the darkness in itself, "*the* darkness" is an awful thing, but the light has now come. "And the light appears in darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not". But the light had come for *men*. Angelic beings are involved in the darkness, there are those called "the lords of this darkness", but the light was not for them.

—I. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God". Matt. 5 : 8.

J.O.T.D. Would there be some reason for the use of the present tense in v. 5, "And the light appears in darkness"? Has that some reference to what has come out in continuity, not only in Christ in the days of blood and flesh, but what has continued now in the Spirit's day?

G.R.C. It may be so. But it is for *men*; God has in mind extricating men; not angels but men; men who have become engulfed in the darkness. So that this refers to Jesus in manhood, "the life was the light of men", but then, if men were to apprehend it, purification was essential.

L.A.C. Is there a link in Ezekiel's prophecy with what we have here? The question is asked in ch. 8 : 12 "Hast thou seen, son of man, what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark", and in ch. 43 : 2 it says "And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came

from the way of the east; and his voice was like the voice of many waters; and the earth was lit up with his glory”.

I wondered whether what we have here is the glory of the God of Israel coming in.

G.R.C. Quite so. And I think before we proceed farther we ought to take account of the first three verses, because they are a very emphatic assertion by the Spirit of God that Jesus is “I am”. We have His own assertion of it in ch. 8 : 58, but the Spirit’s assertion that Jesus is “I am” is in the first three verses of the gospel. It says “In the beginning was the Word”; that is, He had no beginning, in the beginning He was; “and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God”. There is certain light in that as to the Godhead, that is, the distinction of the Persons, “He was in the beginning with God”. But then it says “All things received being through him, and without him not one thing received being which has received being”. The idea of the name “I am” is that God alone is self-existent, He is the great self-existent One, and all other existences are derived; and that is what is predicated of Christ here. He ever was, He never began to be, but all things began to be (that is the literal word here) through him. That is the idea of the “I am”. He alone has existence in Himself. Every other existence, everything else, began to be, and began to be through Him. So that Jesus is presented in His glory, as “I am that I am”.

A.T.B. Would the thought of “the Word” go as far as God expressed, the unfolding of God?

G.R.C. I think it does. It involves the expression of all that is in God’s mind. The word “Logos” involves what is in the mind. The whole mind of God is in expression in Jesus.

A.H.G. Did you say that the apprehension of Jesus in this way was the real beginning of inward purification?

G.R.C. Yes. For one thing it purifies our minds from all the speculations of the natural mind as to

Jesus; all such speculations come to an end if we accept these first three verses, that Jesus is "I am". Some Ephesians were being led away by speculations, according to 1 Timothy, 1 : 4—interminable genealogies. But this goes back beyond even the line of prophetic testimony. Prophetic testimony declares that the coming One would be the Christ, the Son of God (Psalm 2). It was this prophetic testimony that Nathanael accepted. But verses 1-3 present to us the greatness of the Person who came to fulfil all prophetic testimony.

P.L. So that you have self-existence—"In the beginning was the Word"; and "the Word was with God",—His own eternal personality in the Godhead; and "the Word was God",—absolute Deity. It excludes everything that could emanate from man.

J.H. The reception inwardly of the glory of this Person, the "I am", would result in the exclusion of every opposing element inwardly; the "I am" cherished in our affections.

—I. Did not the apostle Paul bring this before the Colossians to save them from being carried away?

G.R.C. He brings a very powerful testimony to the deity of Christ before the Colossians. And yet, in a way, this presentation by John is unique, as setting out, without any question, that Jesus is "I am", the great self-existent One, through whom everything began to be. That is the One we are in the presence of; and it would lead to prostration before Him. Then in v. 14 it says "The Word became flesh", that is, it is viewed as His own action, "the Word became (or began to be) flesh".

A.P.B. I would like to ask as to the only two things that God is said to be—light, and love—whether there is a sense in which we have to understand the purity of God as light before we can really enter fully into the blessedness of His love?

G.R.C. I think that is right. So that light is the thing that first comes.



A.P.B. Yes. And light has to do with purity, has it not?

G.R.C. It has. Light makes everything manifest.

P.H.H. Is it remarkable that the Person of Christ appears quite extensively in the opening verses, before there is anything said about ministry? I am connecting the ministry with John, "There was a man sent from God", and it says of him in v. 8, "He was not the light, but that he might witness concerning the light". Does that put in right perspective for us, first the Person of Christ, and then any ministry, even the most powerful, about Him subsequently?

G.R.C. I thought that. Does not John come before us in this chapter as what we might call a purified servant? The glory of Christ was so filling his vision. When Jews from Jerusalem, and priests and Levites came, and said, "Thou, who art thou", he had an opportunity to eulogise himself, but "he acknowledged and denied not, and acknowledged", it is very strong language, "I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he says, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. They said therefore to him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness". He is only a voice to draw attention to the glorious Person who was standing in their midst, and they knew Him not. And then further he says, "the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to unloose". Surely that is the language of a true servant. He was not worthy even to be a slave, "the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to unloose".

P.H.H. I was thinking of that and wondering whether as a practical experience it would not help us to get things in right order in these days; thinking both of the privileged persons whom we know, who have served us, and also of Christendom being carried away by false voices, and persuasive speech; whereas

the Person and the theme to hold us is the Word.

P.L. So that John the baptist's credentials as a servant, in purification, in the light, are established against the pretensions of the Pharisees; and then he is active contemplatively and ministerially in love in his appreciation of this glorious Person. Is that the order?

G.R.C. I thought so. It says that these persons were sent from among the Pharisees, they were sent from those who were in an outward position of separation, but there was no inward purification.

E.J.H. Whereas "a man sent from God" would be a purified vessel to bear testimony to such a glorious Person, in contrast to those who were sent from the Pharisees.

G.R.C. Quite so. "A man sent from God" would have an appreciation of this glorious Person. For us it would mean that we frequent the holiest, we are sent from God in that sense; we are often in His presence.

A.H.G. Would this purification then, involve the removal of ourselves, from our sight?

G.R.C. I think that is a great point in purification, the removal of ourselves from our own sight. And so John says, I am a voice. He does not even claim to be a prophet, he says "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the path of the Lord", he is directing to the Lord, "as said Esaias the prophet". And Esaias was another man who knew how to keep himself out of sight; like the Seraphim, who covered their faces and their feet, in the presence of the glory.

P.B. "These things said Esaias because he saw his glory" John 12 : 41.

J.A.P. Is the light purely in relation to men, "the life was the light of men"?

G.R.C. That is how I understand it. It is not the light of angels, nor even of Israel only; but "the life was the light of men". So that the whole setting of this is outside of any restrictions. It is not going back to the promises to Israel, it does not even begin with any

reference to what happened in the garden of Eden; it goes back to "In the beginning was the Word", introducing us to the Person who came. So that we must have our minds purified from every human speculation about Him.

P.L. And is the final issue of this, the tabernacle of God being with *men*, that order of being?

G.R.C. It is.

*Ques.* Would this voice draw attention to "the Word"?

G.R.C. The great thing is that we should take account of the Word, "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us". And so you get the idea there of a purified circle, "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among *us*"; the previous verse indicates who the 'us' were—"but to as many as received him, to them gave he the right to be children of God, to those that believe on his name; who have been born, not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God". That is a very sweeping verse, it cuts out everything that brings in impurity. They "have been born not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God".

R.C. Have we therefore the great thought of purity, not only in regard to the Person Himself, the Word; but now in regard to those who are the subject of the work of God?

G.R.C. I thought so. This verse does not give us the moral working out of it in exercise of soul; but it presents it from the divine side. They receive Him, and therefore are given the right to be the children of God, but they have been born, not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God; and it is in a circle like that that the Word dwells. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among *us*", so that we have a circle where He is appreciated as the Word.

A.P.B. Is that the "wholly right seed", the pure seed, in contrast to the profession? Is not that what we need in ourselves?

G.R.C. Quite so. So that we should be exercised to be true to our birth, and to judge everything inconsistent with our birth.

A.T.B. Would you say a word as to "There was a man sent from God, his name John". His birth was contrary to the ordinary course of nature, I suppose that is referred to; and yet those you are speaking of are of a greater order than John are they not?

G.R.C. He had a remarkable birth, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb; and it says here "he was sent from God", freed from other influences, "sent from God"; but then as you say, those who are born of God, according to v. 13, have a greater place than John the baptist.

P.H.H. What is involved in the expression in v. 12, "but to as many as received him"? Am I right in thinking that it involves receiving the One in whom the whole declaration of God is?

G.R.C. I would think that. Then it says "those that believe on his name". That would bring us to this point of the declaration of God. We have the greatness of the Person of Christ, and then His greatness as the Declarer of God, He shares with no one in that.

P.H.H. I was thinking that sometimes, "as many as received him" might be taken up in a gospel setting, as receiving Him as Saviour, on the line of relief, forgiveness of sins; blessed as that is, this is greater, is it not?

G.R.C. And is it not a fact, specially at the end of the dispensation, that for persons to come into blessing, it involves receiving Him in the light of the greatness of His Person? I was thinking of your remarks as to John 8, He said to the Pharisees, "unless ye shall believe that I am (he), ye shall die in your sins". Is not that a special feature of these days, that for persons to come into the blessing that is available at the close, it is essential that they should receive the Lord as appreciating the greatness of His Person as "I am", It is really the test of every one.

L.G.B. Do we need to be maintained in the spirit of receptiveness?

G.R.C. We do. In the early days of the dispensation, before John wrote, numbers of heresies had come in, speculations as to the Person of Christ; and they have been revived in the last hundred and twenty years. With the revival of the truth, Satan has revived the heresies under modern names; and the feature common to them is this, that they deny that Jesus is "I am". If you face them with the deity of Christ, they are exposed. So that it is a very testing question at the present time, as to all that is around us, as to whether persons believe that Jesus is "I am". Have they received Him according to this setting forth of His Person, in the gospel of John? That is the test to people today. If they receive Him like that, it means that their minds, to begin with, are purified from all Philistine ideas. They have a purified start.

A.W.G.T. Even in the creed that is used very widely in the Christian profession, Christ is said to have been begotten in the past eternity. Is that not inimical to what you are saying as to His being "I am"?

G.R.C. It is. And then, because He is "I am", He is competent in manhood to declare God. It gives Him, of course, competency for everything. If He comes for instance, on the line of prophecy, He comes as Son of God, King of Israel, Son of man; but His competency to fill out every position of which there is a prophetic testimony is based on who He is. But then the greatest thing, I suppose, of all, is that He has declared God. And so, if we look at v. 18 the first phrase, "No one has seen God at any time" would link back with v. 1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God".

D.B. Is it significant that in chapter 8 where we have the woman taken in adultery, and the scribes and the Pharisees, it is to the latter that the Lord says "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not



walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”?

G.R.C. I think it is striking, because, as we were saying, the Pharisees were those in outward separation; but inwardly they were corrupt, and therefore in darkness, walking in darkness. But this verse, “No one has seen God at any time” seems to be an absolute statement; I mean, it would refer even to the Lord Himself, as in deity. If we take v. 1 by itself, the Word was there with God, and the Word was God; but no one has seen God at any time.

A.J.G. You mean that He Himself had never been seen until He became man.

G.R.C. And as to Deity, He never will be seen. Is that right?

A.J.G. “No one knows the Son” it says in Matt. 11 : 27.

G.R.C. It is the inscrutability of Deity as such. We have to cherish the Deity of Christ in our souls, and that He is included in the expression in 1 Tim. 6 : 16, “dwelling in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen, nor is able to see”. As to the glory of His Person, He is a Person of the Godhead.

J.Hr. Would you clarify for us please, an expression that is current amongst us, as to the Persons of the Godhead, that ‘They have Their part in Deity’.

G.R.C. We get expressions amongst us which need to be tested by scripture. We tend to get dogmas, certain phrases which sound well when you first hear them, and tend to carry a force with us as though they were scripture. But I think we have continually to go back to scripture to test expressions that are current.

E.J.H. And if we think according to scripture we shall speak according to scripture.

G.R.C. Yes. But then it goes on to say here, in the verse we are on, v.18, “the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared (him)”. So that we have the glory of Christ’s Person, and then the

glory that belongs to Him as the One who has declared God. He has become flesh, and He is now known as the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, and, as in that place, the place of the sweetest affections, He has become the Declarer of God.

P.H.H. That is not in His Deity, is it? That is in His manhood. While we could say that His Person never changes, yet the condition which He has taken up is something new.

G.R.C. Quite so. He is unchanging in His Person.

P.H.H. What would you say about 1 Timothy 3 : 16 " God has been manifested in flesh, has been justified in the Spirit, has appeared to angels ", or " has been seen of angels "? I am linking on with what this word says, " No one has seen God at any time ", and in Timothy it says " God has appeared to angels ", or " has been seen of angels ". Does that also point to His manhood, God has been manifested in flesh?

G.R.C. Quite so. God has been manifested, it is not only that Christ Himself is God, but He manifested the nature and character of God.

C.W.O'L.M. Would you say a word please in this connection as to the statement in Matt. 5 : 8, " Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see *God* " ?

G.R.C. I think we have to take account of abstract Deity. That is what I think is meant by, " No one has seen God at any time ". In the abstract conditions and relations of Deity, He is beyond the apprehension of the creature, as Paul says, " dwelling in unapproachable light " 1 Tim. 6 : 16. We know it is light, but it is unapproachable. But then, " the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared (him) ", brings in what we call the economy.

A.J.G. And he is " image of the invisible God " Col. 1 : 15.

A.P.B. Is it in your mind that we need to let this full light really penetrate into our hearts, because, if there is darkness still there, it is through lack of the full appre-

hension of the declaration of God as made known in this Person who is the "I am"?

G.R.C. That is just what I have in mind. And we need to cherish Him in our affections as the One who has declared Him. No one else was competent. No one but One who is Himself "I am" was competent to declare God. *He* has declared Him.

*Ques.* And is the declaration just what God has been pleased to let creatures know?

G.R.C. It includes that God is known in His nature and character. What I mean by that is, God coming out as He has done in this economy of grace, means that we know God in nature and character as He always was and as He always will be. So that we can speak of what is "from eternity" as well as "to eternity". His nature, that is love, and His character, are now in radiant display in Jesus. It is not that God has changed in His character. It is what He always was and always will be; He is the unchanging God. The title "the Same" emphasises that. But then, what He is, in His nature and character, was not known; certain light as to it was given in Old Testament times, but now, Jesus, the "I am", has come into this relation, the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, and there is a full display of what God is in His nature and His character.

P.L. So that God has become His own testimony.

G.R.C. Yes. So that when we say that we are limited to the economy for our knowledge of God (and it is in the economy that God is fully known) it does not mean that we cannot carry back what we learn of Him thus, in the sense of what He is in His nature.

A.J.G. It is because He is what He is, and always has been, that He has devised the economy so that He might make it known to man.

G.R.C. That is what I thought.

-G. Is what you say supported by the other reference to "No one has seen God at any time" in 1 John 4 : 12? John links it with love, and the indwelling of the Spirit.



G.R.C. It goes on to say "If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us." So that God in His nature is to shine out in the saints.

J.W.S. Job says "but now mine eye seeth thee" ch. 42 : 5.

G.R.C. Scripture makes it quite clear that we do see God in the sense in which you are speaking. The pure in heart see God. But it is God in the way He has manifested Himself. We see God expressed in a Man, the Son. All that God is, all that can be known of God, is shining out in a Man; the nature and character of God is shining in the face of Jesus. He has been into death, and is now glorified that we might be brought into the presence of that radiant outshining of God, and be at home in it.

W.B.H. Is your point that as that is apprehended by us, and appreciated by us, it would promote this matter of purification?

G.R.C. It would, particularly as giving Christ the place that He should have before our vision; who He is in His Person, and what He has done in declaring God. He has manifested God in His nature and character, and not only so, but He has brought out all that can be known of the Father, and of Himself, the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and of the activities and the relationships which are proper to this great economy. There is the full declaration.

A.J.G. Would you say that He has also brought in, and presents in Himself, the perfect answer to it in Man? Otherwise, the light of God without a perfect answer to it would leave us disappointed, so to speak, and incomplete.

G.R.C. Is it not wonderful that there is a full answer in the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father?

J.O.T.D. Does this statement "full of grace and truth" imply that there is to be also an adequate answer in the saints, in whom, through this service and the

ministration of grace and truth, the darkness has been dispelled?

G.R.C. If we apprehend Jesus in this way, I think it will bring us into line with John the baptist. We shall count it a privilege just to be a voice to draw attention to Him; and we shall regard ourselves as unworthy even to unloose the thong of His sandals.

A.P.A. Will you say a word as to the expression "only-begotten"?

G.R.C. Does it not give Him His unique place.

A.P.A. Yes. I was thinking of the word "begotten".

G.R.C. It links with Psalm 2 : 7, "Thou art my Son; I this day have begotten thee". But "the only-begotten" brings in a peculiar affectionate touch.

J.Hgs. Does the reference to contemplation indicate that it is a matter which is really learned in the presence of God?

G.R.C. Contemplation is an important word; we need more time in the presence of God to contemplate this glorious Person in whom God is shining forth.

A.J.G. It is a striking thing that John uses it in the gospel which presents Him as the Word in whom God is fully presented to us, but He also uses it in the epistle which presents Him as the word of life, in whom there is the perfect answer to the outshining of God; as though contemplation is to mark us in our appreciation of Christ in both lights.

L.L. John the baptist contemplated Jesus and seemed to get a fresh impression the next day—"On the morrow"; as if the contemplation of the glory of the Person would give us something to consider every day.

G.R.C. Quite so. The first thing he says in v. 29, is "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world". This brings out the scope of his work and service, or one of the great features of it. He has laid the foundation in His sacrifice, but, He is about to take away the sin of the world publicly. It is a wonderful thing to contemplate One who can do that, and who, at

all cost to Himself, has laid the foundation for it in sacrifice.

P.L. And on His way to take sin out of the world, would He take sin out of our hearts?

G.R.C. He would. He baptises with the Holy Spirit. He is the One who takes away the sin of the world—not the sins of the world—it is not a question here of people being freed from their sins, but the sin of the world. He is going to remove from the world the whole principle which alienates the world from God.

A.P.B. Is that unbelief?

G.R.C. It is unbelief, but it is really man as his own centre. The Lord Jesus is going to take away the idea of man being the centre, and make God the Centre.

A.P.B. Is not that what we ourselves need so very much, in order to be purified?

G.R.C. That is just what I think. He is going to take away the sin of the world, but at the present time, it is a question of taking away that principle in us, so that sin should not dominate *us*. Sin is self-centredness, and we can be self-centred, as we know, even in service. The presentation of Christ in the greatness of His own Person, and as the Declarer of God—bringing God in, the full outshining of God, the full light of the economy—is to make God the Centre for us. That is real purification, when God becomes the Centre of the heart. Then the principle of sin is overthrown.

G.W.B. In the epistle of John it says the darkness is passing. Is that what is going on in the saints now?

G.R.C. And so John says here, after referring to how he knew the Lord, “he it is who baptises with the Holy Spirit”. The full taking away of the sin of the world is future, but He is baptising with the Holy Spirit, and that is one of the greatest conceivable things, because it is through the baptising of the Holy Spirit that the greatest vessel that divine purpose has conceived, has been brought into existence. Baptising with the

Holy Spirit relates to the church period. Thus we have presented a Person, coming from His place in Deity into manhood, without specific reference to Israel, or to promises, but coming forth and declaring God, bringing the full light of God to man; but first of all with a view to securing the body, that which was the subject of eternal purpose. And so, while the scope of His service is to the world (not simply to Israel, as on the line of promise), yet, as coming forth from eternity, His first concern, if one might use that expression, is to secure that vessel which is the subject of eternal purpose. "He it is who baptises with the Holy Spirit". So, while the word assembly is not mentioned in John, the assembly is really the first thing. It is ever first with God.

A.J.G. So that there is a full answer to God as thus declared in a creature vessel. Not simply a perfect answer in Christ, but a perfect answer in His body.

G.R.C. "The assembly in Christ Jesus".

P.L. So that Colossians 1 : 18 brings Him in, "And he is the head of the body, the assembly", and then we have "by him to reconcile all things to itself" v. 20. Is that everything gathered up in response; but the assembly introduced as the choice vessel of present divine operations?

G.R.C. Very good.

G.R.D. Would you say something about the title "Lamb of God"? How far would that include the thought of what is sacrificial?

G.R.C. It stresses what is sacrificial. Apart from His sacrificial work, no persons would be retained. If the sin of the world were taken away without His sacrificial work, sinners would go with it, and there would be no "habitable world which is to come, of which we speak".

*Ques.* So that the fire must first come upon the burnt-offering which God provides, and that should touch our hearts.

G.R.C. The sacrifice of Christ is the great basis,

not only for the world to come, but for the new heavens and the new earth.

P.H.H. Have we got the new world, so to speak, now, in the baptising with the Holy Spirit? It says, "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world", but does the baptising of the Holy Spirit, so to speak, bring in a new world for us now, where the saints are what Paul would call the "one body"?

G.R.C. So that what is going on at the present time is the greatest of matters. Following this we see how all are drawn to Christ; John's ministry draws to Christ, He becomes the Centre. You can thus see purification working out in individuals who are drawn to Christ, and in that connection we have His glory shining in connection with His dominion, things that were foretold in prophecy, that He is the Christ, the Son of God. This glorious Person has come in to fulfil all that was foretold.

P.L. But the greater things follow, and "henceforth" would be now, would it not, with us? It was offered to Nathanael by the Lord.

G.R.C. Tell us how it works out now.

P.L. Christ apprehended as the Sun and Centre of the universe of bliss.



## PURIFICATION AND LIFE (2)

JOHN 2: 1-25

G.R.C. We are engaged with the subject of purification, and we were noticing that John deals with inward matters, and that true purification begins within. If purification marks us within, outward purification, in the way of separation from everything that is not of God, will be a very simple matter; and our separation will be real, not a pharisaical one; it will be a real separation to God. So that while separate, we shall be true witnesses. Perhaps many of us can look back over our history and feel how exceedingly poor we have been as witnesses to Christ, even though we have been in an outward path of separation; and if we have failed in our witness it is because of lack of inward purification. We have been retaining something of self, the principle of self-centredness has not been completely eradicated; and therefore the glory has failed to shine through. It is a sad thing for oneself to look back over one's life from that angle. So that in bringing this subject forward one would desire for oneself, as well as for the brethren, that, in the little time we have left here, we might really be purified vessels. I believe that is the aim in this day of recovery, purified vessels. And every such vessel is great, a great vessel in the mind of God, like the great fishes in the end of this gospel. Not that such a one is great in his own eyes, it is just the reverse: in his own eyes such an one is not fit even to be a slave of Christ, Christ is so great; but though we are not really worthy to be slaves, yet in the greatness of His grace He permits us to be, as in the sphere of testimony. We are brought into intimate relationships, in infinite grace, but in the sphere of the testimony the great thing is to comport

ourselves as those who are His slaves, and yet we are not even worthy to be that. So that we become witnesses to this glorious Person. If His glory filled our souls, He would be on our lips at every opportunity. How we have failed in that! He was on John the baptist's lips at every opportunity and thus how effective his testimony was. When he was not talking to anyone but himself he says "Behold the Lamb of God". His heart was prostrated as he considered the greatness of the Person walking there. And that affected others, but it did not draw them to John. If we are purified persons we shall not draw people to ourselves, we shall draw people to Christ, direct people to Christ. And so the first chapter of John really brings out the great principle of purification; that is, that instead of being self-centred, we become Christ-centred. Christ, and God in Christ, becomes the Centre, the Object, the Motive; the whole man is thus affected. Therefore this great presentation of Christ in chapter 1, as to *who* He is, the "I am"; as to *what* He is in manhood, the Word, the full expression of the mind of God; as to what He is as the Declarer of God, whom no one has seen at any time, but He has declared Him. So that God is known in the fullest way in which the creature could possibly know Him, but Jesus is the Declarer, no one else. We do not go to apostolic doctrine for the declaration of God. *Jesus is the Declarer of God.* And then John sets out His operations, how vast, the One who takes away the sin of the world. Who else could do it? And He has sacrificed Himself in the most absolute sense in order to lay the moral basis to put things right in the world; to take man away from himself as the centre, and bring God in as the Centre. He has laid the moral foundation in His death. Then there is what He is doing now, baptising with the Spirit, forming the body, the vessel that is the subject of eternal purpose and counsel. All this is so great; not, in a specific way, the subject of prophetic testimony, but One coming out of eternity, as it were, and bringing all

this with Him. Then you get the idea of prophetic testimony, John bearing witness that He is the Son of God. That means that He is the Anointed. Psalm 2 shows that when the One they were expecting, God's Anointed, should come, what would mark Him out would be that He would be the Son of God. So that the great centre of prophetic testimony is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, or as Paul would present it, that Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ. Paul's ministry is in the reverse order. He is the subject of prophetic testimony. We have spoken of other glories, but there is something that peculiarly draws the heart out to Christ, as we see Him as the fulfilment of prophetic testimony. He has come at last, the One who fulfils all prophetic testimony. The Son of God has come, and the Son of God is the Anointed of God; He is the One that God can trust. But then Nathanael has to learn that the anointing is not limited to "King of Israel", but as "the Christ", He takes up all that is His as Son of Man. The title "the Christ" is no longer limited to Israel, but it takes in heaven and earth, the whole dominion of the Son of man. So that the glories of chapter 1 are exquisite, they are surpassing, and are calculated to deliver us completely from self as a centre; that Christ, and God in Him, might become our Centre, our Object, our Motive.

Now in chapter 2, we have His own activities in two spheres. When it comes to the practical working out of purification, there is much to be done, and the Lord commences in chapter 2 what needs to be done, first in the sphere of natural affections, and then in the religious sphere. It is remarkable that in this most spiritual gospel He should manifest forth His glory, and begin His signs, in dealing with the sphere of natural affections, reminding us of Ephesians where detailed directions as to natural relations are brought in on the highest level. We were speaking of the darkness this afternoon as including the darkness of nature and the darkness of religion, and



they are touched here. Satan has a foothold in both, and you find both running on in this gospel. For instance, chapter 5 is the darkness of religion, where they seek to kill the Lord because He violated the sabbath, and called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. It is the darkness, the murderous hate of men who feel that they are being outshone; they are not prepared for purification. We have all been outshone; the point is, are we prepared for it, religiously? They were being outshone, and they would kill the One who was thus taking away from them all their vaunted glory. But then in chapter 6 you have the natural setting, and it is just as dark, only a different form of darkness. It is the 'work-a-day' setting, the setting of ordinary everyday work and relationships (that is Galilee). The working population were glad to be fed, and they wanted to make the Lord king; there was no religious prejudice. But then they were overcome by natural prejudice; they said "Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph" v. 42, and at the end of the chapter there were only twelve walking with Him, so that He says "Will ye also go away?" v. 67. We have to see how darkness is entrenched, both in the sphere of nature, and in the sphere of religion. If we have got a brethren's religion, darkness will be there. But then the Lord is operating so that natural relations, and the setting up of homes, might stand related to the testimony, on the basis of purification.

P.L. Is the Spirit brought in in chapter 4, in relation to distorted affections naturally, and religious darkness, both in the woman?

G.R.C. I think so. In chapter 4 we really see how necessary the Spirit is in us, in connection with purification.

M.H.T. And as purified, the woman in that chapter becomes a worshipper, and secondly, a witness.

G.R.C. That chapter shows the need of the Spirit as living water in connection with purification. But in this first instance the Lord is attending a marriage, and,

according to verses 1 and 2, He is there as by no means the centre of the occasion in the minds of those present. It says "on the third day a marriage took place in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there", as though that was the important thing; it may be she was regarded as the principle guest. And then it says "and Jesus also and his disciples, were invited to the marriage", as though that was somewhat incidental.

P.B. Is the thought in our minds that what Jesus has brought will contribute to *us*? and that that is not really the right way to look at things?

G.R.C. Yes. If we think of the glory of the Person as set out in chapter 1, what place can He have but the Centre of every occasion? If He is there, then the scene must be filled with *His* glory, and we should make way for it.

E.J.H. Would you say that two of the best things in the natural realm are here, a marriage and a mother; and the Lord waits until He is given the first place in that scene, and when He is given the first place, the whole matter changes?

G.R.C. Yes. Wine being deficient, the mother of Jesus speaks, and speaks to Him. She says "They have no wine", as though He would add to the occasion, not as the centre, but just to make up the deficiency. But "Jesus says to her, What have I to do with thee, woman? mine hour has not yet come". That is to say, He would rebuke the natural, and put it in its place.

P.H.H. Does that open up the importance of the hour, and the way that John speaks of it? The Lord says here, "mine hour", and in chapter 13 it says "his hour . . . that he should depart . . . to the Father". I wondered whether it was in line with your thought about the Lord becoming the Centre, and controlling and dictating the operations, whether in this sphere of natural affections, or whether in spiritual movements, like John 13:1, "his hour had come that he should depart out of this world to the Father"?

G.R.C. Are you meaning that in this passage He was not in any way governed, as to the time of His intervention, by nature; He would wait for the proper time?

P.H.H. Yes. J.N.D. says in one of the notes, that in John the hour is a point of time characterised by one thing. Whether in one setting, or in another setting, "mine hour" must be very important.

G.R.C. Yes, the time when He is going to move. We have to wait for that, do we not?

L.A.C. Would verse 12 indicate that the adjustment has been accepted, where He is put before His mother? And would it be akin to what comes in in Jacob's history, where he puts Joseph before Rachel, in Genesis 33?

G.R.C. Much adjustment had taken place, "He descended to Capernaum, he and his mother and his brethren and his disciples". Nevertheless, things were not yet fully on spiritual lines; it says "there they abode not many days". The Lord may bear with a position like that. He has the first place, and then His mother and His brethren, and then His disciples; but that is not finality, they do not abide there long. Abiding is a great point in John. The point is, Where is the Lord going to abide? Where the Lord abides, in a final sense, is not in the natural at all. He recognises the natural, and would use it relative to the testimony; but it is not where He abides in a final sense. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us", that is the children of God, those who were born of God; their birth being right outside of nature, and then chapter 1 : 38, "Rabbi, . . . where abidest thou? He says to them, Come and see. They went therefore, and saw where he abode". It is a great point to know where the Lord abides in a permanent sense.

L.A.C. That is very helpful. Would that include too, the suggestion in what John refers to as to unloosing His sandals? I wondered whether there would be any thought of His sandals being finally unloosed, and His

coming to rest in the assembly, for which John was not great enough?

G.R.C. You are thinking that John could not bring Him into those restful conditions, but we are privileged to do it. That sounds good.

E.A.K. Does the second sign, alluded to in chapter 4 : 54 suggest that there has been advance, as it says in v. 46, " He came therefore again to Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine " ?

G.R.C. I think there is a link. Here we have the setting up of a home, a marriage, but there we have an established home. And that is what is in view. If the Lord graciously attends a marriage, He has in view the setting up of an established home, which you get at the end of chapter 4. It needed adjustment; and when our homes are established they need adjustment, not only on the marriage day.

P.L. Would it be the joys of the kingdom?—it is a millennial scene. The mother saying " Whatever he may say to you, do " is like the remnant in a coming day addressing Israel. The whole scene does not go beyond kingdom and millennial joys, and your point is that love, for its own satisfaction, could never stay in what is merely beneficent; it must secure conditions of rest worthy of itself.

G.R.C. You are thinking of v. 12, " not many days ". So that millennial conditions though blessed are not final; they would not satisfy the God who has been declared. When God made His name known as " I am ", it was connected with dwelling. He had made Himself known in connection with certain titles in Genesis, such as Elohim, and El, Most High, Almighty, and so on; and those titles were connected with promises to men; but God had not promised to dwell; God promises what men feel the need of, He promises things to encourage faith. But while the promises meet the need of man, dwelling meets the need of God, as we may say, the need of His affections. And while He did give light

as to His house to Jacob, in the testimonial setting of it, the thought of dwelling, from the love standpoint, comes into Exodus, when God makes known His personal name; because we dwell with people known and loved personally. And therefore, if God was going to dwell, He would make known His personal name, "I am that I am". And we can see now that love was in that, for God is love. And so He makes it clear that He would dwell, even though there were 'bush' conditions. He would not wait for perfect conditions, He would dwell in mixed conditions amongst His people; and that is the position at the moment, He loves us and He dwells amongst us. But then He dwells relative to His own work in us, which is outside of nature, even though we are still in mixed conditions. The millennial scene would not fully satisfy God who has come out thus; love requires the eternal scene.

A.J.G. Does not the hour really have in mind this present dispensation when the Spirit is here, and God is dwelling? The Lord, in John 17 : 1 says "Father, the hour is come", as though it was a period that, speaking reverently, the Persons of the Godhead had long looked forward to, and it had now come. Here the Lord says "mine hour has not yet come". His hour was not connected with improving the best of what was natural, His hour was connected with the introduction of what was wholly spiritual.

G.R.C. That is very good. So that His hour would be connected with spiritual conditions where dwelling could be permanent. The later chapters of John would have that in mind.

F.H. Will you say a word as to the servants. They filled the vessels with water?

G.R.C. We find that His mother was rapidly adjusted, that is, nature was rapidly adjusted, and she says "Whatever he may say to you, do". So that nature stands aside, and He now is in charge so far as directing operations is concerned; and "Jesus says to



them, Fill the water-vessels with water ". They were true servants. They did what they were told.

F.H. Would you indicate to us how that operates now with purification in view.

G.R.C. If we take the place of being servants, and we each would do so, in our measure, then we must look to it that we fill the water pots with water. I would think in that case the water pot is myself.

E.J.H. " And they filled them up to the brim ". Do you think that might suggest the totality of the acceptance of purification?

G.R.C. What a response it was! " Fill the water-vessels with water. And they filled them up to the brim ". It was thorough. And it is just a question of whether the water becomes wine unless they are filled to the brim. The Lord says " fill " them.

P.L. You are referring to servants. Paul says " Death works in us, but life in you " (2 Cor. 4 : 11). Is that the water to the brim, and the wine poured out? And then " bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus " v. 10; is that the water to the brim? And then " that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh ", is that the pouring out?

G.R.C. I think that chapter is excellent as bearing on this, because it is a testimonial chapter. We have spoken of witness, and that chapter opens up how we can be true witnesses of Christ here, " always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh ".

P.H.H. Do you think that the mention of ' stone ' here would allude to something permanent brought about in the saints, although dispensationally the incident relates to the millennium? Is there a sense in which this goes on to some kind of completion, " the third day "; that is, in the present time of the Spirit there should be the working of death with us, fully; and then the wine available? Would that point to something permanently with the saints which might mark them at any time?

G.R.C. I think so. After all, the work of God in us stands related to eternity, and remains. It comes into evidence and effect in the testimonial sphere; but it remains.

A.T.B. Would you say, in relation to the water pots being according to the purification of the Jews, that it never went, with them, any farther than that? There was always something lacking. Now this glorious Person coming in brings in a different realm altogether. It says "Wine being deficient", and wine always will be deficient until He has His place, will it not?

G.R.C. The purification of the Jews could only be something outward, and would therefore be an offensive thing. But true purification involves the *filling* of the water vessels with water, and that means the complete displacement of self. John the baptist himself is the great sample of one of these water-vessels, only he is not thinking of an ordinary marriage. He says "He that has the bride is the bridegroom". He is thinking of the great marriage, and he, as the friend of the bridegroom, rejoices to hear His voice, and says, "this my joy then is fulfilled", or 'filled full'. But why was his joy filled full? Because he was 'filled full with water'; he said: "He must increase, but I must decrease". John the baptist I believe, in this section, is the great example of a water pot filled to the brim, and therefore his joy was filled full. He was a vessel full of joy; and this is the way of joy. We do not realise it; we think purification is going to mean loss in the sense that we have got to give up things, but purification is going to mean immense gain, because it means that our joy will be filled full. It is that little bit short of the brim that spoils things. Some of us have enough water nearly to come to the brim, but not quite; so we lose the pleasures of sin on the one hand and we lose the joy of God's world on the other. We have retained just a little bit of self-centredness, even in our service, it may be. But it is a question of filling to the brim.

W.S.S. Does the beginning of Luke give us a picture of vessels filled—Zacharias, and Elizabeth, and Mary, and Simeon, and Anna?

G.R.C. Indeed; and what a portion God got from them. Song is the result of joy. If there is to be song to God there must be joy. “He hath put a new song in my mouth”, it is the joy of Christ coming forth in resurrection, all the toil and suffering over, a new song, a song that He had never sung before, and could not have sung until He had been through those experiences. Christ coming forth from death, greeted by the glory of the Father, and ascending to the Father says “And he hath put a new song in my mouth” Psalm 40 : 3. It is the fruit of fulness of joy. So that the service and praise of God depend on purification.

W.S.S. And the water becomes wine in that way; the purification becomes joy.

G.R.C. Yes, and how little we understand it, how little we believe it. If we really believed it, what an incentive to fill the water pots to the brim. As I say, it is that little bit short of the brim—how we know it in our experience—that little reserve of self-centredness, instead of thoroughly letting everything go for Christ, that mars the joy.

G.R.D. Was this lacking with Barnabas in wanting to take John Mark? There is the danger of nature, and its links, intruding into the realm of divine operations.

G.R.C. Nature must be kept in its place, and the filling with water would involve that all motives that spring from the influences of nature are judged. Barnabas, at that time, was not quite filled, he had got reserves of nature about his nephew.

G.R.D. Would you also link with nature what is national? It may have come in in connection with Barnabas and John Mark going to Cyprus.

G.R.C. Family pride and national pride are both close to us.

A.J.G. While the feast-master and others enjoyed the



wine, it was the servants who had filled the water-vessels up to the brim who knew where it came from. It shows that they had got some gain out of the experience, and what the Lord had told them to do.

G.R.C. So they would be true Levites; they would know how to get the wine. Would it show how much such persons would benefit the saints as a whole?

A.J.G. I think so. I suppose the stone would be the work of God in us, which basically is ready to respond to the truth, and will respond to it as it is presented attractively in Christ. But there is the side of our responding to the truth, and taking up the exercise of filling up the water pots with water.

E.I. Is there some parallel with this and the various stages in the recovery from J.N.D.'s time onward? Are we in the best days, to which the past ministry has led?

G.R.C. We are having the best wine.

R.C. Would there be any link with this water and what is said to come from the side of Jesus?

G.R.C. I think so. The water would not be available apart from that.

R.C. Would the means of effecting this purification be presented in such a touching way, to move our affections to make room for the water.

G.R.C. "This is he that came by water and blood". He has brought, through His death, the means of cleansing. So that the water, that is the application of His death, is available to us, and it is an affectionate matter, as you say. It should not be a hardship to us to fill with water, when we think of the death of Jesus.

P.H.H. Is the water more for our state?

G.R.C. Quite so. And here particularly the state of nature, the way nature would intrude and hinder what is spiritual. At the same time we need to keep in mind that the Lord would come to marriage meetings with a view to securing the natural sphere of home life relative to the testimony, but on this principle of purification. Young people are often reminded, and rightly, that

without it, the joy will run out; that the real joy, even of the natural link, depends upon those concerned being set together in the testimony. We see all around us that the natural link in itself does not satisfy; it breaks down amongst men. But it is a great thing for the Lord to have households based on this principle, where nature, in itself, is not relied upon; but in the running of the home, and the appointments of the home, and all that is done in the home, God is the Centre and the Object and the Motive.

W.S.S. Would it raise an exercise as to what is the prominent thought in a marriage meeting, whether the Lord has the first place there?

G.R.C. I think this incident should teach us to give the Lord first place at a marriage meeting, so that it becomes a sphere for the manifestation of His glory; and where His disciples believe on Him.

P.H.H. So that what we were reminded about the other day (in London) becomes a practical matter, that is, that the meeting is to be an occasion for the glory of Christ. It would not be right to forget that the literal bridegroom and bride are there, so that there would be practical touches in ministry given which would bear upon the couple; but they would be on the high level suggested in Christ and His link with the assembly.

G.R.C. How sanctifying that would be for the commencement of the marriage link! This water is not a question of asceticism, it is not legality. We are in a right way, to enjoy nature; in fact, in the literal setting, the Lord supplies an abundance of wine.

W.B.H. A.E.M. was remarking a little while ago that a great deal that obtains at a marriage meeting, might well come before the saints at a prayer meeting, so that the occasion might be given up more to a ministry bearing on Christ and the assembly.

G.R.C. Yes, having in view, a purified household. Not an unnatural household, not a household marked by

asceticism, or death to nature, which is a heresy, but a household where the Lord has the place He should have; the Lord is the Object and Motive, whereas men generally, in all the appointments of the home, have self before them.

A.W.G.T. Would the households referred to in the end of Corinthians be very happy households? One of them is spoken of as being addicted to the saints for service.

G.R.C. The households become spheres for enjoying what belongs to eternity. Unpurified households may become centres of mischief. But the whole of the light of John 1 should govern our homes. We have to remember that those who have left us have been defective in their apprehension of the glory of the Person of Christ. Christ is not accorded by them the honour and glory due to Him as a divine Person. That lies at the bottom of the difficulty as to the worship of God.

F.E.S. In contrast to that these servants would suggest a circle where we can help one another? The servants filled the vessels.

G.R.C. We would all seek to be servants to serve the Lord in some way; so what an exercise it is for each of us to see to it that he is a vessel filled to the brim with water. We cannot help people in our service, morally, beyond where we are ourselves. How important to have really purified Levites. The Levites were purified, the water of purification was sprinkled on them apart from the question of whether they had touched a dead body or not. Apart from any question of actual defilement the whole exercise of purification was to be entered into by them.

W.B. Referring to the brim, is it interesting that the brim of the great molten sea was ornamented with lily-work?

G.R.C. The lilies would suggest chastity and purity. You can understand that being linked with the brim.

A.G.B. The marriage becomes the setting for the beginning of signs. The purified household becomes a basis for all that God has in mind in the signs. John says he writes that we might believe.

G.R.C. In the recovery of the truth, things began in households, one would judge. The truth was cherished there, and it led on to an apprehension more and more of the truth of the assembly. How households figure in Paul's ministry in Europe particularly; we have Lydia's house, the jailor's house and others.

L.A.C. Does not purification become the means of preserving the saints in the testimony from being reduced and lessened in quality? The feast-master suggests that the normal course of things would be for the worst wine to be brought on last. Has it not been noticeable in the great recoveries from the Reformation onwards, that things have not been maintained on the level where they began? And have we not to be preserved now from a decline?

G.R.C. I think so; and I do not think there will be a decline. Some of us may decline, individuals may decline, we have all got to watch that; but I do not think this revival is going to end in decline; I think it will be the best wine at the end.

We have in what follows the purification of the ecclesiastical scene, the Lord cleansing it from commercialism, and what would go with it, clericalism. Those two things are linked in Christendom, and are things we have to face up to; we have to see that our motives are in no sense governed by commercial, or clerical, considerations, because commercialism and clericalism are foreign to the house of God. The Lord "made a scourge of cords". If we think of the history of the revival, this was what the Lord did through J.N.D. But it is touching that it says here *the Lord* made it. Think of the Lord setting to work to make a scourge of cords, and then the courage of it, "he cast them all out of the temple, both the sheep

and oxen; and he poured out the change of the money-changers, and overturned the tables, and said to the sellers of doves, Take these things hence ”.

A.P.B. Would the Lord have the temple, which was the Father's house, as He spoke of it, in keeping with the temple of His body?

G.R.C. As to the temple that He cleansed, we should have to apply it in our day to Christendom generally, with a view to the temple of His body coming into view in its practical working at the end. That is what you have in mind?

A.P.B. It was. Do we see the uniqueness of what there was in His actual body, what was manifest in Himself, in His life here? But then there has to be “ the body ” as a practical thing down here now which reflects Himself.

G.R.C. Just so. The Lord has made the scourge of cords, and cleansed the temple, doing it, in the main, through J.N.D. Luther had a part no doubt, but J.N.D. was used of the Lord to expose every corrupt practice in Christendom, from one end to the other. He exposed clericalism and commercialism unmercifully; and it made way for the recovery of the truth of the body, and therefore of the true temple.

M.H.T. Do we see similar violent action in the closing chapter of Nehemiah, where he commanded the Levites that they should purify themselves (Neh. 13 : 22), and cleansed the city from commercialism?

G.R.C. Specially there relating to the sabbath. Nehemiah had purged the house of God of the household stuff of Tobijah; but then the commercial element endeavoured to intrude upon the sabbath. It shows the kind of vigilance we have got to maintain. If the wall is up and the gates are functioning, we must not be slack, lest these practices again appear. What a sad thing if they appear amongst those who have part in the revival.

E.A.K. I was thinking of Zechariah 14 : 21. Would it be right to say that the Spirit's present voice is to the



end that "there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts?" Would not the meaning of Canaanite, given as merchant, be over against the precious thought of the merchant in Matthew 13, relative to the assembly—the pearl of great value?

G.R.C. Very good. Zechariah 14 : 21 begins "And every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto Jehovah ". That links on with the first part of this chapter. Here the Lord is cleansing God's house, but in Zechariah "every pot in Jerusalem " refers to what is in our houses; the houses are in keeping with God's house. Zechariah 14 : 20 says "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses HOLINESS UNTO JEHOVAH ". That is something like John the baptist going forth. There was no secret about his testimony. Whatever our goings are, the bells of the horses should indicate holiness unto Jehovah. That is a purified idea; and then "the pots in Jehovah's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. And every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto Jehovah of hosts ". So that all the homes of the saints, as we say, are in keeping with the house of God.

P.L. Would the expression "and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein " bear on the dying of Jesus? Vessels available for the suffering of Christ to find expression testimonially?

G.R.C. That is a very deep suggestion, and very searching. You are thinking of ourselves as the vessels?

P.L. Yes, "come and take of them "; a vessel meet for the Master's use, but serviceable to all, do you think, who have the service of God in mind. I thought that Mary Magdalene was such a vessel. She had stood at the cross, she had entered into the sufferings of Christ; what a vessel suited of the Lord to communicate His mind as to God's service.

G.R.C. Very good.

L.L. Does the principle of trustworthiness enter

into this? Just before the close of the chapter it says "But Jesus did not trust himself to them". Should the principle of trustworthiness be found with us, and the principle of purification be constantly applied, if we are to get the benefit of this holy joy in our homes and in the assembly?

G.R.C. I think that is the point of the closing part, "many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he wrought". That is, they were convinced by the signs; it may have been only the natural mind convinced. The natural mind may be convinced by evidences of God's work, and say, 'There is something in Christianity', and may even patronize it, without any real repentance or self-judgment. There is no purification there.

*Ques.* Is that seen in Nicodemus, in the next chapter, when he says "we know that thou art a teacher"?

G.R.C. Yes. But then, the record shows that there was more than that with him. There was something underneath. But he was not clear, the rubbish was not removed.

P.H.H. Are we to observe that there is an inward bearing to this sign? The word 'temple' in v. 14 is the public building, but when they ask Him "What sign shewest thou to us, that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple", which is *Naos*—the shrine. Does that point to the necessity for our minds to take a spiritual turn, and observe what is inward in the signs which Jesus is doing?

G.R.C. So that the point is for us to arrive at that inward thought, the shrine itself; and, on the way to it, there is the cleansing from commercialism and clericalism. We must get those things away, and keep them out. There must be the purification, in that sense, in ourselves, as well as in those we walk with generally, and first of all to make way for what the Lord calls "my Father's house". It is not "my Father's house" in the sense of John 14 here, but the Lord is referring to what

is on earth at the present time, and it should be a sphere of family affections, and family affections are lacking in Christendom. Commercialism and clericalism dominate, and we have congregationalism instead of the family. And so the first result, I believe, of cleansing in this sense, is to bring back the saints to true family affection. "By this shall all know that ye are disciples of mine, if ye have love amongst yourselves" John 13 : 35—a circle of love. Then, where you have a circle of love you get the gain of the shrine, as 1 Corinthians 13 indicates. You have the body, and the manifestations of the Spirit, in chapter 12, set out as doctrine, but the apostle in effect says, If you are to know this, you must have love. And so where there are family affections operating, it makes way for us to understand the truth of the body, and therefore, the truth of the temple.

P.L. God dwelling among you of a truth. The temple would be where God speaks.

P.H.H. And "The zeal of thy house devours me". Would that reflect upon our practical exercises in bringing in purification ourselves? Here it clearly referred to the Lord Himself, but I wondered whether the spirit of it might extend to the exercises which we are sharing together now, for instance.

P.L. So that Psalm 69, from which that verse is quoted, says in v. 8, "I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's sons". Is that the purification from the natural, so that there may be zeal for the spiritual, the house?

G.R.C. So that undoubtedly this should come to us by extension, "The zeal of thy house devours me".

E.J.H. And then it says "and the reproaches of them that reproach thee have fallen upon me". Where there is concern in regard to purification in a religious way, there will certainly be reproach to be accepted?

G.R.C. We have to be prepared for that.

G.R.D. Would you think that the disciples had particularly got the gain of this purification, when it

says they “believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken”. I was wondering whether the great thought of the temple as a place for divine light to shine, does not make the scripture shine, and also brings the present word of the Lord, spoken by the Spirit, in a living way amongst us.

G.R.C. I think you have the principle of the temple there, that they believed the scripture—that is, nothing would pass in the temple that had not a basis in scripture—but then there is what is current, and what was current at that time was “the word which Jesus had spoken”. Today it is what the Spirit is saying. There is what is current, what the Spirit is saying; and it shows the importance of always relating the two together. If we want to support what is current, it is not sufficient to go back *only* to past ministry; that will help, and elucidate, and carries a certain authority; but if a thing is questioned, we must get back to scripture to support it. They believed *the scripture*. Past ministry was based on scripture. It is a great thing in reading meetings to get the basis in scripture; we can happily bring in past ministry when there is no conflict on, it supports; and, of course, in measure it can be brought in when conflict is on, but then you must also have scripture, otherwise you will lose the battle.

A.W.G.T. “To the law and the testimony”.

G.R.C. Yes. So they believed the scripture, but then there is what is current. Of course the Lord’s word was on the full level of scripture we know, but then there is the Spirit’s word today, what the Spirit is saying. It is not part of the inspired written record, but there is what the Spirit is saying, and it shows the importance of all of us keeping in touch with what is current.

P.L. Would it be right to say that the Lord trusts Himself ‘Philadelphianwise’ to such? He makes a good deal of the temple in Philadelphia, does He not? and would the Laodicean setting be the Lord refusing to trust

Himself to what claims falsely His name, do you think?

G.R.C. Yes. So that I believe Philadelphia is the condition that this gospel would bring us to, on this line of purification.

P.L. So that there is a moral judgment of all that morally lies outside of that.

P.H.H. Going back to your remarks about the ministry; I discern what you have in mind is the importance of discerning what is being said now. You used the word 'current', that, while the ministry of old may, in general and in regard of principles, be very useful, there are certain nice distinctions being made nowadays; and would not the Spirit bear them out in what He says? So it is very necessary for us to be spiritually up-to-date. I am impressed with this expression they "believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken". One of the Lord's words in each of the addresses to the assemblies is to the overcomer in relation to what the Spirit says. So that we would be coming short if we did not add that now, what the Spirit says to the assemblies.

P.L. Could you make an application as to the glory filling the tabernacle in Exodus 40? The scripture, corresponding to the tabernacle, the law and the testimony, all according to the divine pattern; but then the glory filling. Could you liken it, by way of application, to the word of Jesus and the voice of the Spirit, giving a character, a fulness and tone, to all that has been set up?

P.H.H. I think we can see what you mean; I am sure that is something enriching.

A.J.G. You have been referring to Philadelphia. The Lord makes a good deal of reference to His word, in speaking to that assembly. They had kept His word, and they had kept the word of His patience. You were speaking of the word that Jesus had spoken, the present mind of Christ.

A.P.B. Has not much that is adjusting during the



last 40 or 50 years, come out in temple conditions? Therefore we must not belittle the truth that has come out in meetings such as in London and elsewhere, because, if we are alert to see it, we see that it is what is being spoken in the temple.

G.R.C. So that really it is in the temple we get the present gain of the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us. I mean, Christ is not here now personally, but the Spirit brings to us what is presently needed, of that which is fully expressed in Him as the Word.

## PURIFICATION AND LIFE (3)

JOHN 3: 1-30

G.R.C. Chapter 2 deals with purification in the sphere of natural relationships, and in the sphere of the profession, the religious sphere. This chapter brings it down to each one of us in a personal way. The Lord's teaching goes to the root of the matter inwardly. So that it is of the utmost importance that we should get help by the Spirit to understand the meaning of the Lord's teaching to Nicodemus. Some may wonder why we are linking purification with life; Romans links justification with life. Death has come upon us because we have all sinned, and justification from the judicial standpoint is essential if we are to have life. The cause of death coming upon us must be removed. Justification frees us from the sins, the guilt, which brought death upon us, so that justification is in view of life, it is justification of life. And on that basis of judicial clearance, the act of favour of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. But if we are to *enjoy* eternal life, purification is essential. It is one thing to see that, as justified, the way into life for us is clear, but it is another matter to enter into and enjoy eternal life. That necessitates purification, so that John in his gospel speaks of purification, and purification is spoken of in Hebrews, where it is a question of drawing near to God. The way is open for us to draw near to God, but nothing impure can come into His presence. So that even as to sins in Hebrews, it speaks of the Lord Jesus as "having made by himself the purification of sins", ch. 1 : 3. *We* need justification, but *God's nature* requires purification. The work of Christ upon the cross has provided for both. It is the basis of our justification and of our purification.

So that John's gospel has in mind that we should come into the *enjoyment* of eternal life, just as his first epistle has. And, of course, if we are not in the gain of eternal life, the other great thoughts of God cannot be worked out. We saw yesterday how the Lord deals with what is in the sphere of profession; commercialism and clericalism have been exposed. And, in the ministry God has given, they have been swept aside in the minds of the saints, (and we need to beware lest we let them come in again) but all with a view to God's great thoughts being worked out, such as the family and the truth of the body. We have been restored to these things, the truth of the family, the truth of the body, and therefore the truth of the temple, because where there are body conditions the Spirit is free, and we have the truth of the temple. But underlying all those matters is the enjoyment of life. Life is enjoyed in the family, and the working of life is in the body, and in the temple we prove that God is dwelling among us. You can understand therefore, how purification is needed, not only from the practices which the ministry has exposed, but also inwardly, and this chapter is basic to that. The Lord is dealing with a teacher in Israel. We may say this is most elementary truth, being born anew, and yet it seems perfectly certain that many who have taken the place of teachers amongst us (I mean right from the beginning of the revival) and yet have gone astray themselves, have never understood this. They have never understood the implications of the word, "It is needful that ye should be born anew". There must have been with them some retention of that which is born of the flesh, carried along with whatever they had in a divine way. This chapter is intended to sort the matter out for us, so that we do not carry along with us, in a practical way, that which is born of the flesh.

J.Hr. Has the Lord got in mind Ezekiel 36 : 26, when he speaks of a new heart, and a new spirit within you?

G.R.C. "Thou art the teacher of Israel and knowest not these things?" Ought not Nicodemus to have known that chapter?

J.Hr. Yes. I was thinking of the inward matter, the entirely new beginning, a *new* heart, and a *new* spirit within you. "And I will put my Spirit within you", Ezek. 36 : 27.

P.L. And "I will increase them with men like a flock. As the flock of Jerusalem in her set feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am Jehovah" in v. 38. It is the *person* born anew, not just something in them, is it? Would that finally, as seen in John, give us to increase flock-wise, which is really, according to John 10, in eternal life?

G.R.C. That is very helpful. God hates mixtures, and as you say, the man himself is born anew; but then we have in us that which is born of the flesh, but we are to see that we do not go along with a mixture in ourselves. There is to be maintained a thorough self-judgment, we are to be preserved in dust and ashes as to all that we are after the flesh, so that we go on with what we are as born anew; and, as chapter 4 would show, doing so in the power of the Spirit springing up within us. But what you say is very beautiful, because this is how the sheep are brought to pass, is it not?

P.L. That is the flock of Jerusalem in her set feasts. Would that bear on the great matter of holiness? We have righteousness in our justification, but holiness relating to our purification; and without holiness no one shall see the Lord (Heb. 12 : 14)—the service of God being ultimately in mind in all that is before us.

G.R.C. That is just what is in mind. So that the sheep are brought to pass by the sovereign operation of the Spirit, "My sheep hear my voice", but how are they brought to pass? "The wind blows where it will, and thou hearest its voice, but knowest not whence it comes and where it goes: thus is every one that is

born of the Spirit ". There are to be no mixtures, we are to learn to sort things out within, just as there are to be no mixtures without. We are to purify ourselves both in this inward sense, and also in the outward; perfecting holiness in both connections. And, as you say, it has in view the set feasts of Jehovah. The feasts are referred to in this gospel. They were just feasts of the Jews, but what is in mind in the gospel is the great feast of Jehovah, and in particular, the last, the great day of the feast; that we should arrive at finality as to God's thoughts and purposes and be before Him in full liberty relative to them, for His praise.

E.J.H. And the sheep in John 10 have no element of imperfection in them, everything that is said about them is in accord with new birth.

G.R.C. Showing that the Spirit of God does not look upon us from the standpoint of mixture. We are identified, in the divine mind, with the work of the Spirit in us. It is the man himself who is born anew.

M.H.T. Is it of interest to see that the word "anew" is the same word that is applied to the Lord's body-coat later on, that was without seam, woven from the top; suggesting, "as he is, we also are in this world".  
1 John 4 : 17.

G.R.C. I remember J.T. speaking of new birth as from the top. And the same word is used at the end of the chapter, "He who comes from above" v. 31; it is the same word as "anew".

M.H.T. I understand that the derivation of the word implies tracing a river to its source and is found elsewhere; in Luke 1 : 3 we have "from the origin", and the veil of the temple was said to be rent in two "from the top to the bottom", Matt. 27 : 51.

G.R.C. It shows that this operation is outside of the scope of man; it is from above in that sense, it has not its origin in anything that man could do; it is a sovereign divine operation.

P.H.H. Is the Lord therefore speaking to Nicodemus



in order to get him on to this spiritual line? That is, would the rulers and teachers in this setting think that everything was governed by them, whereas the Lord is setting out that there must be 'a new source of life and point of departure'. That is, in divine operations by the Spirit.

G.R.C. So that it is a great thing to trace things to the source, and the source here is the Spirit, it is God; God is the source, and it is God operating Spiritwise.

F.E.S. Are we helped in chapter 1 of this gospel as to those who were born of God? Do we get the right beginning and source there, not of man's will, but born of God?

G.R.C. I think the thought of "born of God" gives the full idea. This gives detail as to the operations, "born anew", "born of water and of the Spirit", and then the character of what is wrought, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit". But it all sums up in that great thought of being born of God, which can hardly be predicated of anyone until they receive the testimony of God. The Spirit operates before we receive the testimony of God. Born anew—that operation may occur in some cases some time before conversion; but, the soul, as the result of these operations, then receives, and therefore is formed by, the testimony of God in Christ, and can then be said to be born of God.

L.A.C. Is it important to notice that the water is mentioned before the Spirit in Ezekiel 36, and the clean water which is used for sprinkling Israel comes before the wind, or the Spirit, in chapter 37. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your uncleannesses and from all your idols will I cleanse you", Ezekiel 36:25. Then v. 26 goes on "And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you". In chapter 37 the matter of the wind, or Spirit, is introduced as following the mention of the clean water. I wondered if they were connected.

G.R.C. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you" may

bear upon the thought of being born of water and of the Spirit, as the Lord goes on to enlarge on the subject. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except any one be born of water and of Spirit", so that there is the clean water, and how thankful we should be for the water that flowed out of the side of Christ, and that we are born relative to that. It enters into our very birth, the very beginning of things with us. And we get the idea of the sprinkling of the water of purification upon the Levites; apart from any question of whether they had touched anything dead, the water was sprinkled upon them, "And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: sprinkle upon them water of purification from sin". (Numbers 8 : 7). Then there is what they do, "they shall pass the razor over all their flesh, and shall wash their garments, and make themselves clean". There is what is done for us, and in us; but there is our taking the matter up—what *they* did, *they* passed the razor over all their flesh, and *they* washed their garments to make themselves clean. John 3 would be more initial for it refers to birth. What you say as to Ezekiel 36 bears on new birth, as applying to Israel; but I think the breath, and the bones coming together in Ch. 37 refer to what is collective. It is a question here in John 3 of what is personal and we each need to take it to heart. The Lord is dealing with one man, a teacher in Israel, who did not even know this; and there are many teachers in Christendom who do not know this, there may be those amongst us who do not know this; they may know the terms of it, but not the meaning of it. But then, what is corporate is in view; the bones coming together, and so on, refers more to body formation. Is that right?

A.J.G. Yes, I thought so. The early part of this gospel is dealing with the individual in view of what is collective and corporate in the latter part, is it not?

G.R.C. That is just what I thought. And finally the Lord does breathe into them.

A.B. Would the question of being born of water and the Spirit refer to what is constitutional?

G.R.C. I think that is what is implied. Our very birth is on this principle; we are *born* of water, and of Spirit.

E.I. When F.E.R. brought forward the truth as to eternal life, and it was being opposed and refused, he fell back upon the truth of the kingdom, and the moral side that has to be faced.

G.R.C. I am glad you refer to F.E.R., because what happened at that time gives point to what is before us. Those who opposed the truth of eternal life were, I understand, continually preaching and pressing the idea of people being born again. It was one of their great themes. But, if they had known the truth involved in being born anew, they would never have gone out of fellowship, they would never have opposed F.E.R. Those who talk most loudly about being born again, at this present time, are those who know least about it.

P.H.H. It is confused with conversion in a good many cases.

G.R.C. It is. In fact, the men who opposed F.E.R. seemed to be in complete confusion about the great truths of Christianity; reconciliation, justification, new birth, and other things, all meant the same thing to them. But we are intended to distinguish between each feature of the truth—each feature is distinctive. And the seriousness of not understanding this truth is very great; for it lies at the foundation of personal purification, and therefore of liberty and serviceability, as suited to the God dwelling amongst us. If we are not clear about this, we shall carry something of that which is born of the flesh into the meetings, and even let it intrude into the service of God.

P.B. As having been born after the flesh, have we not partaken of a contaminated source?

G.R.C. We have. It is a great and a sweeping thing to recognise that all that we have derived, as after the

flesh, is polluted, and that purification involves the setting aside of the whole man, as we speak; that is the setting aside of all that is born of the flesh, in each one of us.

A.W.G.T. Has not that been spoken of as the collapse of the man? You have spoken most solemnly about those who have turned aside after having ministered, and was not that the lack—the collapse of the man was not appreciated in relation to new birth?

G.R.C. One desires that there might be something of this collapse this morning. I feel the need of it myself.

A.J.G. Is it not significant that this chapter 3 brings in the serpent being lifted up? Was not that a great lesson that Israel had to learn, and that we have to learn, that what characterises the flesh has been derived from the serpent, it is the poison of the serpent?

G.R.C. That is very interesting, because it links with the idea of source. We have spoken of source in connection with “Except any one be born anew”; we have got to trace this operation to its source; it comes from God by the Spirit. There is nothing pure about man in the flesh; if there is to be anything *for* God, it must come *from* God. Sin in the flesh comes from another source, and that is the serpent.

A.J.G. It is either the serpent or God; and when Paul was sent to preach, he had to preach that the people might turn from the power of Satan to God; there was nothing between the two. It was either one thing or the other.

G.R.C. I am very glad you have brought that in, because we have to take account of the fact that new birth and the brazen serpent are put in juxtaposition in this chapter. One is the moral counterpart of the other; and that is why so few people who talk about new birth know the meaning of it. They have not reached the brazen serpent. No one understands why they *had* to be born anew, until in their experience, they reach the brazen serpent. They may talk about it, and may be

sure they are born anew—thank God for that; but no one arrives at the fact that he *had* to be, that it was absolutely essential that he should be born anew, until he arrives at the brazen serpent. Perhaps not many of us have arrived there.

—P. You were speaking of using the terms and not understanding the meaning. Is that why John uses the expressions “which is interpreted”, and “which means”, the interpretation suggesting the help of the Holy Spirit in understanding.

G.R.C. I do not think any soul understands the real meaning of new birth until they have arrived at the brazen serpent. And I think we ought to take that to heart. We can talk very glibly about new birth, but have we arrived at the brazen serpent? Because if we have not arrived there, we have not understood the implications of new birth.

W.B.H. Does David arrive at this thought in Psalm 51, when he says in vv. 5 and 6 “Behold, in iniquity was I brought forth, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou wilt have truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom”, and in v. 10 “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me”?

G.R.C. Yes. It bears on the point that we *have* to be born again. The Lord says in v. 7, “Do not wonder that I said to thee, *It is needful* that ye should be born again”. And there is a link between that verse and v. 14, “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, thus *must* the Son of man be lifted up”. In the Authorised Version, ‘must’ is used in both verses, “ye *must* be born again”, “the Son of man *must* be lifted up”. The word is exactly the same in the Greek. So that they are equally forceful expressions.

E.A.K. Is it apposite that Elisha, at the outset of his ministry casts the salt in at the source, that there might be no more death and barren ground? It was an initial matter with him, in the ministry of grace.



A.T.B. "He who comes from above is above all. He who has his origin in the earth is of the earth, and speaks as of the earth. He who comes out of heaven is above all". (v. 31). There is a distinct new source, altogether from Him.

G.R.C. The truth is that man cannot rise above himself, he is the source of his own thoughts, and he is a creature under the power of sin and Satan. And if you think of that, that he cannot rise above himself, and yet is under the power of the serpent, where can he get to? Only to perdition! We are dependent upon a source outside of ourselves.

L.A.C. Why is sight introduced here, "cannot see the kingdom of God"; and the serpent as lifted up had to be looked upon? Would there be a link with Ecclesiastes 11 : 5, "As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, (or the wind) how the bones grow in the womb of her that is with child, even so thou knowest not the work of God who maketh all". And v. 7 says "Now the light is sweet, and pleasant is it to the eyes to see the sun".

G.R.C. That touches on what we have here as to the wind. The wind blows where it will, but it is all with a view to man having his eyes opened to see the light. Apart from that operation of the Spirit none of us would ever have capacity to see the light. And I doubt if we see the light properly until we have looked intently at the brazen serpent.

L.L. Will you please say a little as to the meaning of that remarkable statement, the brazen serpent?

G.R.C. It is quite evident that if those who opposed F.E.R. had looked intently at the brazen serpent they would never have gone astray, and they would have understood eternal life in the way he was putting it out. They were marked by the refusal to accept God's complete condemnation of sin in the flesh, when Jesus was made sin; it is necessary to accept that, as bearing on myself; it is not just something that bears generally,

but looking at the brazen serpent means that I accept it as bearing on myself, in the determining of matters in *myself*; and that is a crucial matter.

A.J.G. So that anyone who was bitten by a serpent at that time was conscious that the poison of the serpent was working in him, and his only relief was to look intently at the brazen serpent.

G.R.C. Quite so. The poison of the serpent is working in us, and we may not realise it. These persons in the end of chapter 2, who "believed on his name, beholding his signs which he wrought" were such that the Lord did not commit Himself to them, because they had not arrived at this lesson. If a man calls himself a believer you cannot trust him unless he has arrived at this. Has the man collapsed? Has the man arrived in his soul at the truth of the brazen serpent? If so, he will have arrived at the fact that he *had* to be born again, because nothing in him after the flesh is worth anything at all.

F.E.S. Why is it a brazen serpent here? I was wondering whether there is a certain deliverance in seeing that the brazen serpent really refers to Christ in the position He has taken. It is not an actual serpent, but it is something as seen; a great matter of deliverance that Christ has actually been into death for us.

G.R.C. You mean it refers to Christ taking a vicarious position. How we need to ponder it, that "*Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us*" 2 Cor. 5:21; that He was hanging on the cross as made sin, and the full condemnation fell upon Him. All that God is, J.N.D. says, He is against sin. And all that fell upon Jesus.

F.P.S. Is the statement "The Son of God has been manifested, that he might undo the works of the devil" 1 John 3:8, going right back to the source of sin coming in?

G.R.C. I think what we are referring to lays the basis for that undoing. The undoing suggests work in

detail. In His death the Lord Jesus annulled him that has the power of death, and annulled death itself; but the works of the devil are detailed matters. This meeting may help in the undoing of the works of the devil, through our sorting things out in ourselves. The undoing is a process. It is going to be done in the world as a whole; man is going to be removed from his place as centre and object, and God will be Centre and Object. But that is being worked out in us now, and this chapter is fundamental to it.

A.P.B. Is this reached through what we speak of as 'the seventh of Romans', in that you have there a picture of a person who is born anew, but who has not really yet reached the full condemnation of himself, and his identification with what he is as born of God?

G.R.C. I think so. The man in Romans 7 is an encouraging condition, because he is conscious of being serpent-bitten. There are persons who profess Christianity, and one would not say they are not true believers; they are like those at the end of chapter 2; they are convinced that Christianity is true, but yet retain themselves. This is what one dreads because, if you retain yourself, you just clothe yourself with Christian virtues to make a better man of yourself, and it makes you all the more impervious to the truth inwardly. You take the ground of being a good Christian man. Even amongst ourselves, it may be one may say, 'I am in touch with all that is going, I keep in touch with all the ministry, I am right in the forefront', but he is clothing *himself* with all that and it makes him all the more important in his own eyes. It is extraordinary how we can use the terms of the truth to make ourselves more important in our own eyes; so that we really have not got anywhere as to purification; we are, in a way, more impervious than ever to the real facts of the position; we are hiding our real state from ourselves. But the Lord is helping Nicodemus. The way that he approached the Lord shows that he was still hiding his state from

himself; " Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God ", as much as to say, ' I am quite in line with what is moving '. But he was hiding from himself his own state, and I believe it is possible to do that for many years, and therefore not come to the real conviction that we are serpent-bitten.

A.P.B. You mean there is a certain agony connected with being serpent-bitten, and it is the persons who know something of that agony that reach the conviction that they are really worse than they thought they were, and the agony is caused by what has really caused Christ agony on the cross?

G.R.C. And it is mortal agony. It is a life and death matter, the soul is in mortal agony; it cannot see any way out because of its state; not because of what it has done, but its state. If only we knew more of that mortal anguish which brings us to the point of desperation as at the end of Romans 7, so that we give up all hope in ourselves, and look to another, the Lord Jesus, the One who was lifted up, and look intently, in order to apprehend the meaning of His death. That is the only way that that mortal anguish can be relieved.

P.H.H. Does it emphasise the two positive expressions " born of water " v. 5 and " thus is every one that is born of the Spirit " v. 8? Those two elements being voiced by the Lord, do they begin to give us a view, and a line of positive comfort, leading to what is substantial?

G.R.C. Do you think that, while from the divine side it is true we are born of water, and one would not disqualify any one from that in whom there is a work of God; yet the thing is worked out in our souls *only* when we arrive at the brazen serpent.

F.E.S. And is the need of this all the more emphasised, that in the world in which we are, the enemy is using culture and education, to hinder us from seeing what man really is after the flesh?

G.R.C. I believe that is why the Lord is raising the

matter of professional associations; because of the tendency to retain the cultivated man. If we retain him in our associations I doubt whether we will ever get free of him in ourselves. What do you say to that?

A.J.G. I think that is right. I was thinking that we need to keep the Lord personally before us as having been crucified, and not even simply the truth as to the brazen serpent, so to speak. I was thinking of Paul, he says "I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live, I, but Christ lives in me", Gal. 2 : 20. Is not that a man who is in the good of purification?

G.R.C. I am very glad you have said that. It is Christ Himself, as the One who has been crucified, who is before us.

J.Hr. Do you think, as tracing things to their origin, we have the matter met in v. 3 of Romans 8, "God, having sent his own Son, in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh". *His own Son!*

G.R.C. Beautiful. So in verse 16 of our chapter we have the only-begotten Son. There is the judicial side in v. 14, "the Son of man *must* be lifted up"; the Son of man, the One who took man's place, He *must* be lifted up, just as we *must* be born anew. The two things go together. But then it immediately says "For God so loved the world", God was the source of this movement, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son that whosoever believes on him may not perish, but have life eternal". This seems to show that no one who has not accepted the truth of the death of Christ, in the way we are speaking, really knows the love of God. If we pass by judgment, we pass by the love of God. The Lord says to the Pharisees, "ye . . . pass by the judgment and the love of God" Luke 11 : 42. You cannot have one without the other. If I am retaining a little bit of self and self-importance, then, in that measure, I fail to enjoy and understand the love of God. It is in accepting the *complete* setting aside of all that I



am as after the flesh, and seeing how God has set it aside in the cross of Christ, where His only-begotten Son suffered, that I understand the love of God.

J.W.S. Naaman, having gone down seven times says "Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel " 2 Kings 5 : 15.

G.R.C. So you can see how in Romans 8 the love of God is developed; the love of God is spoken of in chapter 5, as "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit " v. 5; and commended to us "in that, we being still sinners, Christ has died for us " v. 8. But having faced the issue of the brazen serpent, Christ crucified, in Romans 7, what a flood there is of God's love in Romans 8. It is a chapter *full* of the love of God. God sending His own Son, and then "He who, yea, has not spared his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him grant us all things?"; and "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, . . . nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord ". The whole chapter is full of the love of God.

P.L. And is the vessel who stands by the cross, John, contemplatively—not just relievingly but adoringly you might say, in regard of Christ—is he the great apostle of love?

G.R.C. John did not pass by judgment, and therefore how fully he enjoyed the love of God.

P.L. The only serpent who had never bitten any one was the serpent of brass.

G.R.C. I would like more help as to why it was a serpent. It says that God has made Him *sin* for us.

A.J.G. I thought God was tracing things to their source. To be bitten by a serpent is a very serious matter because the poison of the serpent has been injected into the person, and is working in his whole system, eventually resulting in death. Is not that what we have to come to, that what is working in our flesh is of the serpent?

G.R.C. And ends in death. " This body of death ".  
L.A.C. Is it not explained by the word " likeness " in Romans 8 : 3?

G.R.C. " In likeness of flesh of sin ", that would refer to the fact that He was the Son of man, that He must be man to take our place.

E.I. Is there not a line running right through scripture, starting with the Spirit of God brooding over the waters, and carried through to this chapter, as to the operation of the Spirit in new birth?

G.R.C. Christ in the greatness of His Person is presented to lift us out of ourselves, with a view to purification, but there would be no results without the operation of the Holy Spirit, which, as you say, we can trace right through scripture.

R.C. Does not the Lord give a wonderful presentation of Himself by Himself in v. 13, preceding the sacrificial side in v. 14?

G.R.C. It is very impressive that the Lord should say " no one has gone up into heaven, save he who came down out of heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven ", and yet after such a statement He says " thus *must* the Son of man be lifted up ". Such an One as that!

A.P.B. Would there be, both in v. 13, and in v. 16, which refers to the only-begotten Son, a reminder of what had come out in chapter 1, and that *such* a Person has actually taken that place upon the cross?

G.R.C. I think so. And would it not move us to the depth of our beings if we considered who it is that took our place.

A.J.G. It is God Himself taking up the matter in the Person of the Son.

G.R.C. And to think of the heavenly grace and beauty of the Person, the Son of man who is in heaven; *such* an One, to be made sin.

G.R.D. Is there something similar in the reference to the Holy Spirit's sovereign action? " The wind blows where it will " seems to give some reference to the

greatness of the Person of the Spirit, and then "the Son of man who is in heaven" brings in the greatness of the Son. Why are there these references both to the Spirit, and the Lord, in the greatness of Their Persons?

G.R.C. Do you think then that would lead us to worship of the Spirit, as well as the Son?

G.R.D. Yes. Both as regards the Spirit and the Lord Himself, this matter is not worked out without the souls of the persons going through it being deeply affected.

G.R.C. We ought to be deeply affected by the Spirit, and His operations. He was brooding over the face of the waters at the beginning, the word suggesting deep feeling there. How much we owe to Him, because as to all that has been wrought out objectively in Christ, and all the glory of His Person, we should be impervious to it all, but for the gracious, loving, sovereign activities of the Holy Spirit.

F.D. Could we bring into the thought of "the Son of man", another Man altogether as so essential in deliverance?

G.R.C. "The Son of man who is in heaven" is a remarkable statement. It involves the truth of His Person, of course, but how it stresses that He is a Man of another order altogether.

P.H.H. Does it imply His deity? There are the three expressions in v. 13, "no one has *gone up into* heaven save he who *came down out of* heaven, the Son of man who *is in* heaven". That last expression as taken in connection with the first two would imply not only His manhood I suppose, but what lies behind His manhood—the deity of His Person.

G.R.C. I think so; and yet stressing how beautiful was His manhood here, how heavenly the source; He came down out of heaven, His manhood is entirely out of heaven.

A.J.G. You were remarking yesterday how we get instances in this gospel of the skilful interweaving by the Spirit of the truth of Christ's deity and of His

manhood; and this 13th verse is one example of that. We get another in chapter 6 : 62, where the Lord says " If then ye see the Son of man ascending up where he was before " ?

G.R.C. It is most remarkable the way scripture puts the things in juxtaposition, so that we should never lose sight of one side or the other of the truth.

A.P.B. And is not the truth of this kind of life that we need to come into dependent on the Son of man being in heaven?

G.R.C. I am glad you have mentioned that, because in the verse before (v. 12) what the Lord says might read " If I have said the earthlies to you and ye believe not, how if I say the heavenlies to you, will ye believe? " The word there for heavenly things is the same as used in Ephesians for " the heavenlies ", and it is used in Hebrews, " the heavenlies themselves with sacrifices better than these " are to be purified, Heb. 9 : 23. The Lord has in mind here " the heavenlies ". He Himself is the Son of man who is in heaven, and the very purpose in coming was to open up the heavenlies to us! His operations at this time were not in view of the ' earthlies ', they are coming later; there will be those born anew on the earth according to Ezekiel, to fill out the place of earthly families; but the Lord had in mind the heavenlies, and this teaching lies at the root of our entrance into the heavenlies. Those who have spoken a lot about being born anew, but have never accepted that they *had to be*, so as to discard that which is born of the flesh, have never touched the heavenlies. They will talk a lot about heaven and going to heaven when you die, but the Lord was bringing this truth in so to purify Nicodemus that he might have present entry into the heavenlies.

P.L. So that the heavenly road into the land is at once opened up after the brazen serpent. After that the children of Israel journeyed, not wandered. They pitched towards the sun-rising, and much water is referred to. Is it like Romans 8?

G.R.C. So that can you not see what a land-mark the brazen serpent is? It was from that point on, after looking intently on the brazen serpent, that Israel had typically, spiritual vision; and furthermore, while the kingdom had been set out objectively in the early part of Numbers, in all the tribes being ordered round the camp (that is a picture of the kingdom of God in its present aspect, God the centre, and everything arranged around Him), yet the intervening history shows they were not in accord with it, they were rebellious, they had not really entered the kingdom of God. But after the brazen serpent, typically they were in the gain of the kingdom. They were moving in divine order, so that Balaam says "How goodly are thy tents, Jacob, and thy tabernacles, Israel!" Num. 24 : 5. He sees them encamped in divine order, he sees the kingdom in its present aspect, the tribes all in their place, and he says "the shout of a king is in his midst" ch. 23 : 21. The kingdom is there, and they are moving on to eternal life, to Canaan.

P.H.H. Do these three references therefore to the brazen serpent, namely Romans 8 bearing towards the wilderness, John 3 bearing towards the land, and 2 Corinthians 5 bearing on the great heavenly realm in finality all show how the truth centring in the brazen serpent should receive more attention with us, and become expanding in its glory?

G.R.C. I think so. We do well to examine the scriptures you have mentioned, and also 1 Cor. 1, where the word of the cross is so prominent, because they bear on the idea of the heavenlies. Romans 8 shows that, as we face the brazen serpent, we are thoroughly endowed in the Spirit with wealth to fulfil all our responsibilities here, so that nothing need detain us; we are on the road to the heavenlies and we are paying our way in divine currency, so that there is no moral hindrance; and this chapter has in view that we should enter into eternal life. 1 Corinthians has in view that we should, therefore,



take up, in the power of these things, the whole matter of the assembly, the assembly as a heavenly vessel here. The tabernacle of witness was patterned on what was in heaven, so that even in the Corinthian setting, viewed as the tabernacle of witness, the assembly stands related to the heavenlies. I might say another thing about those who have not accepted this truth—they have never touched the assembly. We need to have the whole matter exposed to us, that those who opposed F.E.R. and professed to be standing for the truth of being born anew, and yet had not apprehended its meaning, and thus were carrying along with them that which is born of the flesh, did not fulfil responsibility according to Romans, did not touch eternal life, which they professed to know so much about, and they did not understand the assembly as a heavenly vessel here.

P.L. The deity of the Spirit has been emphasised in chapter 3. v. 8. Would you say that in recent years the refusal, or reluctance, to give the Holy Spirit divine honours, as of the Deity, would also bear on the brazen serpent not being understood?

G.R.C. Yes I would. If the truth that “we must be born anew” was really understood, we could not fail to worship the Spirit, if we think of His grace, and how, from this standpoint, we owe everything to Him. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh”, and that which is born of the flesh is serpent-bitten, nothing good can come of it; but “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”. And then in v. 8 “thus is every one that is born of the Spirit”. How can I help thanking and worshipping the Spirit? I have been born of the Spirit, and, from this standpoint, I owe everything to Him.

A.P.B. After the brazen serpent they sing to the Spirit, asking Him to spring up. So that if we have come to the end of ourselves as the source of anything good, we delight to be able to ask the Spirit to spring up and bring in what is good.

G.R.C. We can claim Him, as it were, to do it. We have been born of Him. If He has operated in us, is He going to fail us in the other matters? Not at all!

-.P. Would you allow that there might be a danger with us of what happened in Hezekiah's reign in 2 Kings 18? The serpent of brass had become an object of worship and he destroyed it. The meaning of it had been lost.

G.R.C. It shows that if the truth is not held in power, the very terms of it become a snare. As we have been saying earlier, we may clothe ourselves with the terms of the truth, and become more self-centred than ever. A man who is clothing himself with the terms of the truth, but not taking it home inwardly, is the kind of man who will leave the path of the testimony eventually, and it is very difficult to get beneath the surface with such a man. We have generations growing up amongst us who from early days know the terms, but a meeting like this is to exercise us all to get beneath the letter and to understand and accept the truth.

*Ques.* Does Hebrews 6:4 bear on what you are saying, relative to the new birth? "For it is impossible to renew again to repentance those once enlightened, and who have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the works of power of the age to come, and have fallen away, crucifying to themselves as they do, the Son of God, and making a show of him".

G.R.C. Those would be persons who had never been born anew; we have been referring to persons who we trust were born anew (we have to leave it with God), but they have come to a point where they have left the path of testimony. We cannot say much about such persons. We would give them credit for having been born anew, but they have never accepted the implications of it; whereas it is essential to accept the implications of it, which are so vast, so complete.

P.L. I wondered whether typically Moses entered in

his spirit into the implications of it. He was not told formally by Jehovah to make a serpent *of brass*, the word "of brass" is added. One wondered if the deep feeling ministerial character of this ministry of brass, so to speak, (one thinks of J.B.S.'s ministry peculiarly, among many others) would help us to hold the truth, not merely in terms, but as furnishing feelingly and experimentally what would enhance the ministry, and keep it on its living and holy level.

G.R.C. I am sure that is right. The word is "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole" but "Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole".

A.T.B. Would Paul exemplify what has been said about the brazen serpent, the Spirit's comment is "Saul who also is Paul". He had reached that ground experimentally. Paul I understand means 'little', that was a good start towards accepting the brazen serpent, he was nothing at all in himself. The Spirit of God says of him in Acts 13:9 "But Saul, who also is Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixing his eyes upon him said, O full of all deceit and all craft; son of the devil".

G.R.C. It does not simply say that he was also named Paul, but "Saul, who also is Paul". It refers to a man who had accepted this truth that we are engaged with.

P.H.H. In connection with your remarks about the word of the cross in 1 Corinthians 1, does it release Paul to say so much in the next chapter of that epistle, about the Spirit, speaking, not so much about our receiving the Spirit, but as to what the Spirit does, searching the depths of God? Does that cut away practically the first man from us, but opens up another world in the Spirit, and another power?

G.R.C. It really opens up, (although the Corinthians were not in the gain of it) what you get typically after the brazen serpent, in Numbers; that is, the Spirit was characterising everything. It was a dry and thirsty land

that they were in, but it says that they were like “ gardens by the river side ”. There was an abundance of water. “ Water shall flow out of his buckets ”. 1 Corinthians 2 seems to remind us of that.

P.H.H. Yes, and it fits in with the clear sight and view of the assembly now, the vessel where all these things are presented to us so clearly.

R.C. Would the lifting up of the Son of man have in mind that God should Himself be the Centre of every heart and every desire?

G.R.C. “ I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all to me ”. He draws all to Him on the basis of the complete judgment of sin and the display of God. God’s love and glory are in full display.

A.J.G. So that the fact that we are born of the Spirit shows that God, who is a Spirit, wants us to be in the closest possible affinity to Himself.

E.A.K. Does the fact that it is the initial work of the Spirit in our souls that is engaging us, have a special appeal to our affections in the light of what the Lord Jesus says in John 14 as to the thought of knowing the Spirit, “ ye know him, for he . . . shall be in you ”. Are not our affections being touched in this way by the Spirit Himself, to help us away from mere terms?

G.R.C. I feel it should touch our affections greatly, to think that we have been born of the Spirit. He had to do with us before we knew anything about Him. But the time comes when the Lord says “ ye know him ”.

G.W.B. After a long painful process, Job was brought to abhor himself. He was not of Israel, but I was wondering whether his history would illustrate our side of the matter. In John 1 it says “ the life was the light of men ”. Would the Lord coming in show the need of all those exercises leading to the point of abhorring self?

G.R.C. I think so. It bears on the word, “ God so loved the world ”. It is not Israel here, but God so

loved the *world*. How wonderfully God dealt with Job and he says, "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes ". And I believe that is the place for us all to be, in the light of this chapter. We recognise that that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and from the divine standpoint, in the death of Christ, that has ended judicially. Dust refers to death, and ashes to the judgment borne.

M.H.T. Is it of interest that Romans 8 begins with the grand principle of " no *condemnation* ", followed by the touching truth that Christ was offered in our stead, and then how the truth is arrived at, at the end of the chapter; " it is God who justifies, who is he that *condemns*? "; showing that Romans 8 is Psalm-like in structure. He begins with the point that he reaches at the end of the chapter.

L.L. Should this touch our affections, that the Lord would go over all these wonderful things with one man. We speak often about Nicodemus going to Jesus by night, but the Lord met him by night. He was available to him at any time.

G.R.C. So that we can all go away from this meeting with this in our minds, that the Lord will go over this with us, if we give Him space; although we are gathered collectively, it may be that He has been going over it with us in some degree in a personal way, even as we have been sitting together.

L.L. Some of us who have been brought up by Christian parents have a lot to be thankful for, but do you not think that we can take too much for granted, and we have got to reach this each one for himself?

G.R.C. Let us remember what you have said, that the Lord is prepared to go over this again with each one of us personally.



## PURIFICATION AND LIFE (4)

JOHN 4: 1-30, 39, 49-54

G.R.C. The Lord is continuing His personal dealings in the three cases in chapters 3 and 4, indicating great variety. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, the woman of Samaria was living in sin, and the courtier, was a man moving in court circles; showing the truth of the word "*whosoever*". "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him may not perish, but have life eternal". And the word "*whosoever*" links up with "the wind blows where it will". It is a question of the sovereign action of the Spirit; He is not restricted by religious, national, or social distinctions, because that which is born of the flesh is flesh; whether in Nicodemus or in the woman or in the courtier, it makes no difference, the flesh will not do for God. Whatever type of flesh it is, the bite of the serpent affects all, and therefore the work of the Spirit is essential, and the "wind blows where it will, and thou hearest its voice, but knowest not whence it comes and where it goes; thus is every one that is born of the Spirit". The Spirit is operating in all classes of society. So that it is a question of "whosoever believes on him", they may come from every class of society, God is no respecter of persons. It is a question of the sovereign operations of the Spirit, the wind blowing where it listeth—and we have to be on the look-out for these. The Lord was ready, as it were, for everything, and everyone. He was ready to see Nicodemus in the night, ready to meet the woman when weary with His journey and sitting on the well, ready to meet the courtier without being influenced, or feeling patronized, because a courtier sent to Him. The courtier

no doubt expected Him to go down to his house, and perhaps to feel somewhat honoured that a courtier should take note of Him, a prophet of Galilee; but He just said "Go, thy son lives". He was ready for every kind of case.

But the passage we are on, in a way springs out of the close of the previous chapter, where we get the closing testimony of John the baptist, and the heavenlies coming into view in a very choice way. It is not only a matter of eternal life, but the bridegroom and the bride, a most exquisite feature. If we think of Genesis 1 and 2 as giving some idea, in its spiritual application, of eternal life, we see a most exquisite feature in the man and the woman; there are other features, of course, but this is one which would strike us first, and captivate the heart. It is remarkable that John closes his testimony thus. The Lord had said "If I have said the earthly things to you, and ye believe not, how, if I say the heavenly things to you, will ye believe?" And now John is finishing his service with a setting forth of something most choice connected with the heavenlies, "He that has the bride is the bridegroom". You have this great disclosure that the glorious Person of chapter 1, One so ineffably great, takes this place in manhood as the Bridegroom. Surely, the very thought of it would make us all long, in a practical way, to take on the features of the bride! Think of having *such* a Bridegroom! Then the Lord, in the next chapter, follows it up (if we might so say) in speaking to the woman by saying "the hour is coming and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father". That is the voice of the Bridegroom. If the Bridegroom has His place with us, He will lead us on. But both of these things are in the present, "He that *has* the bride". It is something connected with the heavenlies at the present time, "He that *has* the bride is the bridegroom", true in its fulness in the future, but true now; and then in chapter 4 : 23 "the hour is coming *and now is*, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father". So we

are being introduced to the heavenlies, and, connected with that, as it must be, the great economy of God is coming into view. We have spoken of what souls have missed who have never faced the Lord's teaching in chapter 3 in its true meaning, and who have retained and carried with them that which is born of the flesh, which is flesh. We can be sure if we carry that with us it will ruin us in the end. But with such persons, how little entry, if any, have they had into these great matters vitally! The heavenlies can only be entered into by purified persons. And how little they have known of the Bridegroom and the bride, how little they know of the active and practical working of the economy of God! So I think we shall begin to see the immense advantage of making way for the teaching we have had before us, so that we might have an unhindered entry into these great, these superlative things. John the baptist, therefore, closes his ministry as a great example of a purified man. There was a reasoning going on, "a reasoning of the disciples of John with a Jew about purification", showing how we can reason about these things, and know the doctrine of them—clothe ourselves with knowledge—and yet retain the flesh untouched. But there was no need to reason about purification, you had only to look at John and you saw it. There was one man standing out as an example of purification, like one of the water pots at this great nuptial scene, the Bridegroom and the bride. He was like a water pot filled to the brim, and therefore, his joy was filled full. The water had turned to wine in John and so he says in v. 29 "this my joy then is fulfilled". The joy of his heart was available for others and the joy that was in the heart of John is carried to us today. He was but the friend of the Bridegroom, and yet what an example for us who through grace form part of the bride, that we should be self-effacing, so that no personality might come between the heart of the bride and the Bridegroom.

E.J.H. It is a very great encouragement that in new

birth, and the Spirit, there are all the divine potentialities for this to be realised, if we will only make room for what is on the divine side, in our favour.

G.R.C. It is most encouraging when we see it working out in this woman, because, if it would work out in her, it could in any of us.

E.J.H. I wondered whether that is why the word is changed from 'well' to 'fountain'. The source is usually in a well, but the Lord speaks of a fountain. The source would not be in her; but if one has an inexhaustible source, as in God Himself, you can have a million fountains.

G.R.C. So that the idea of source comes into the matter again, in that expression. We have spoken of source as to our birth, and the source of sin in the serpent; but now we have the living water. Wherever the source of the water is that is supplying a fountain, the fountain will rise to the height of the water from which its source is. And the source is God Himself. "If thou knewest the gift of God". So that we each have a fountain in us, as having received the Spirit, which, if not hindered, will rise up to its source, which is God Himself, and that is the idea in chapter 4.

P.H.H. When you speak of the economy here, is it with the idea that there is a great divine system now, the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit, for the benefit of these persons who are being individually dealt with, and yet being drawn on to what is greater than anything individual? I was thinking of the end of chapter 3. "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand", and then that theme continued, in chapter 4 : 5, "near to the land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now a fountain of Jacob's was there".

G.R.C. Exactly. So that chapter 3 closes with what is most choice in connection with the heavenlies. There is "He that has the bride is the bridegroom", the wonderful presentation of Christ as the Bridegroom, and as having the bride, what a glorious conception! And

then, v. 35, "The Father loves the Son", the great economy of God, "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand". And as you say, in chapter 4 we see that even the gift of the Holy Spirit is in His hand.

P.L. Would it be that you have the ultimate in divine operations in relation to Christ personally, in the bride; and then, is there a thought in this administration in sonship, of what God is to have in His sons? And would Ephesians abound in that, in regard to the service of God, not only union with Christ, but sonship? Are these two great landmarks in divine purpose? It is the economy, and divine Persons in it, operating to the satisfaction of Their own love?

G.R.C. What you say is very affecting, divine Persons in this economy operating for the satisfaction of divine love. What could satisfy divine love but the Bridegroom having the bride, and the Father having worshippers?

R.D. Is there a link between John saying "He that has the bride is the bridegroom", and the Lord's use of the word "Woman" in chapter 4 : 21, as following the resolving of the moral issue?

G.R.C. I thought there was. We might say in connection with chapter 3 : 29, 'Where is the bride?' "He that has the bride is the bridegroom". 'Where is she?' But the bride was coming into evidence. Two of John's disciples had heard him say "Behold the Lamb of God", and they had followed Jesus. And so we have seen others being drawn to Jesus in chapter 1. But now, the thing was taking more specific shape in this woman; that is, there were features of the bride. So that we can see that in chapter 4, in principle, the bridegroom was securing the features of the bride; for at the close of the interview, her heart was filled with one Man. She had had dealings with other men, five husbands, and one who was not her husband; but all that was passed for ever. "Come, see *a man*"—only one Man!



J.O.T.D. Why does this come to light in Samaria? Does it link with what is brought to light in the time of recovery, after all the departure has come in, and the mixture is fully rooted in the sphere of the Lord's name? This choice matter was now being brought out in its pristine glory, but after all the degradation and mixture had been thoroughly developed?

G.R.C. It is evident that the way the Lord is presented in this gospel, is for our day particularly. It is to bring us out into separation and personal purification, so that the features of the bride might be in evidence at the close.

P.L. That would be Philadelphia, after all the sorrow and unfaithfulness of the public vessel—"they . . . shall know that I have loved thee " Rev. 3 : 9.

P.H.H. Would it also bear on Paul's ministry to the Corinthians, where he says in 2 Corinthians 11 : 2, "For I am jealous as to you with a jealousy which is of God; for I have espoused you unto one man, to present you a chaste virgin to Christ ".

G.R.C. I think the presentation of the Lord in this gospel has recovered us to that thought; so that through grace, it is our concern at this present time, that local companies should be espoused to one Man. Paul says, "I have espoused *you* ", that was that company in Corinth. And that should be in our minds in connection with each one of our local companies. Persons have purified themselves, in separating from what is around, and we should help one another as to inward purification, so that each local company in these last days, however few in number, might be espoused to one Man and presented a chaste virgin to Christ.

P.L. And would that work out on the Ephesian line, "Grace with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ *in incorruption* ". Is that the bridal thought?

G.R.C. What a word that is! It touches motives. What are really our motives in going on with things? What are our motives in service? How this tests us!

And yet, if we touch this question of purification we have got to get down to those inward matters.

R.C. Is it encouraging that despite the mixed conditions that have come in, divine Persons continue to proceed with Their own thoughts at Their own level. I am thinking of v. 5, "near to the land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph". That reaches far back, but it is carried through now.

G.R.C. The woman says in v. 12, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well", so it is traced back to the giver, "and drank of it himself". The Lord had said to the woman "Give me to drink". That is the initial thing. But the woman goes back to Jacob, the giver of the well, who would represent God, and says that he drank of it himself. And that is what is in mind in this chapter; the Lord is going to receive drink, but the Father, too, the One who gave the well, is to receive drink, and so are His sons and His cattle. The gift of the Spirit as the fountain has great results.

A.G.B. Will the return flow come through our knowledge of what the Lord would unfold, as speaking of "the gift of God, and who it is that says to thee, Give me to drink", "The woman says, Sir, give me this water". Does the return flow go back by way of our knowing, and asking, and drinking?

G.R.C. I think that is the only way. We *must* drink, that is our side. *He* gives, but *we* must drink. And then, as drinking, it *becomes* in us "a fountain". It is when it has become in us a fountain that there is really the return flow, in bridal affection for Christ, and responsive love to the Father.

A.G.B. I was thinking of 'asking' as over against the sovereign operations of the Spirit. There comes a point in this chapter where everything depends on the asking, and the drinking, on our side.

G.R.C. If we have really arrived at the truth of chapter 3, we shall ask. The Spirit will be an absolute necessity to us. Romans 7 shows that the work of the

Spirit in us, as born of the Spirit, is not sufficient. The work of the Spirit in us gives us right desires, but no power to carry them out. The soul in Romans 7 is in a state of misery, and captivity to the law of sin in his members. So that the work of the Spirit in us, if we make way for it, and go through those exercises, leads us to cry "who shall deliver me?" And we arrive at the two sides of the deliverance. The Son of man lifted up is the way God has met the matter judicially; we see that the condemnation with which we are condemning ourselves has been met and borne by Christ. But on the other hand, it is "in order that the righteous requirement of law should be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh but according to Spirit". That is to say, God having condemned sin in the flesh in Christ on the cross, the Spirit is available for the asking. "You would have asked of him", the Lord said. A soul that is born of the Spirit "hungers and thirsts after righteousness". That is one of the things it thirsts after. The soul in Romans 7 is wanting to do right, but evil is present with him. He is thirsting to do right. Whatever the thirst may be, it is quenched in the gift of the Spirit.

E.J.H. Has not J.T. said about Romans 7, that when you have solved the problem, and reached the end of the chapter, the Spirit is standing by, so to speak, saying 'I will now take you on, and carry you through in regard to every right desire'. So the Spirit is mentioned 18 times in Romans 8.

E.I. Is there moral progress in the way water is brought forward in the two chapters; in chapter 3, moral cleansing, there was "much water", and then in this chapter, is it more water in the way of refreshment, satisfaction, and life?

G.R.C. I think both aspects of the water have to do with purification. This side stresses satisfaction, but it is also purification. This woman's inward parts were purified by the gift of the living water. Living or running water is brought in in the Old Testament in

connection with matters of cleansing; as with the leper, for instance. And in Numbers 19, the ashes were placed in a vessel with running water. "Born of water and of the Spirit", would involve the word of the cross brought livingly home to the soul by the Spirit. I think the idea of being born of water and of the Spirit links on with the thought of deliverance.

A.J.G. And does not that deliverance take form by the Spirit connecting the heart with the Man, that is Christ. It is important to keep that in mind, otherwise we begin to get occupied with the Spirit's operations in *us*.

G.R.C. I am sure that is right. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and *who* it is". The woman is coming into the range of the economy. This is how a soul first has to do in a practical way, with the operations of the economy of God. The first Person that the soul consciously comes in touch with is the Lord Jesus. The Spirit has operated, perhaps, long before; but the soul does not know the Spirit at that stage. The Lord Jesus is presented in the gospel that souls might come into living touch with Him. And so He says to her "If thou knewest the gift of God, and *who it is*". The first thing that begins to dawn on the soul is who Jesus is. And the gospel is presented that souls might come to some apprehension of who Jesus is. Then He says "thou wouldest have asked of him, and *he* would have given thee living water". So the second touch is with the Spirit. You come into touch with the Lord Jesus, but then, as obeying Him, you normally receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

P.L. This woman comes into the economy in contact with Christ in relation to personal exercises and responsibility; while when you come to the man in John 9, and his contact with Christ, and worshipping Him as the Son of God, the basis is laid in his soul for being in the economy collectively with his brethren, the sheep—he is one of them.

P.H.H. Would you say more about the water? I am thinking now of Ephesians 5, where Christ is already before the soul, in Paul's ministry, "Christ also loved the assembly, and has delivered himself up for it", then he goes on to say "purifying it by the washing of water by the word, that he might present the assembly to himself glorious". (Ch. 5 : 25 and 26.) The question that has been in my mind for some time is a kind of double view of the water in John (if that is correct). First of all in and behind both views there is the Spirit Himself; but in some cases, would it be right to say it is the death of Christ that is in view, surely being ministered to us by the Spirit, on the basis of John's later word, "this is he that came by *water* and blood" and so on, 1 John 5 : 6. Then in the gospel, in ch. 19 : 34, "immediately there came out blood and water". Would it be right to carry that thought of the water forward into this assembly setting in Ephesians 5, where the Lord uses His own service in ministry, and dealings, with the assembly as such, in order to bring about complete purity in the assembly, everything being in keeping with His own death? My main question is in regard of how the water stands in Ephesians 5.

G.R.C. I am not sure that I can answer your main question, but I think your remarks in regard to the water in John are thoroughly right. The water that flowed from the side of Christ would be the water that is in mind I would think in chapter 3. And yet, as you say, born of water and of the Spirit implies that the meaning of the water in cleansing power, as linked with the death of Christ, is brought in power into the soul by the Spirit. In chapter 4, the Spirit springing up within us does not cease to bring that side home. We cannot shut that side out of ch. 4. He springs up in us as a source of refreshment, but ever keeping us in a fresh sense of what the death of Christ means. But then the main point is the positive side, that He springs up



within us, that is, He would fill every compartment of our being. And I think that is the idea of drinking; we open all our inwards to the Spirit, we let Him have full control of our inwards. The Lord *gives*, but we *drink*; and a thirsty person loves to feel the water entering the inwards; and we should open all our inwards to the Spirit; not holding back any reserves, so that every part of our being is filled and energised by the Spirit, who springs up, and therefore would lead us in chastity, in response to Christ, and also in response to the Father.

P.B. Does this have the effect of regulating our affections?

G.R.C. He would fill our inward parts, and lead all our affections in chastity to Christ, the Bridegroom, and through Him to the Father.

A.B. Is that why the Lord does not immediately answer her question when she asks for the water, in v. 15, but says "Go, call thy husband, and come here"?

G.R.C. It was evident that there were things to be judged in her soul. She could not properly drink until that matter was settled, there were compartments of her being that were closed to God; she was living a life without God, she was living in sin. And all that had to be exposed with a view to her drinking freely of this water, so that every compartment of her being would be filled with the living water.

A.B. Had the Lord in mind to gain her affections in raising the question, so that she says "Come, see a man"; One who had gained her heart?

G.R.C. Had He not also in mind the necessity of raising the question, because this matter *must* come into the light.

P.L. If He did not raise it then, it would have to be raised when He was seated on the great white throne.

A.T.B. I believe many of us have never been really clear as to who the Lord was referring to when He said "If thou knewest the gift of God, and *who it*

is ". The Person was there. In chapter 3, " For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son ", I mean what a Giver God is; He gave His Son. Primarily, is He referring to that, or the gift of the Spirit?

G.R.C. I would not like to limit, but I would think primarily the gift of the Spirit is in mind here. Jesus says to her " Give me to drink ". So that drink is the subject of the conversation; and He says " If thou knewest the gift of God ". But then, it must include the gift of the only-begotten Son, for the Spirit would not be available otherwise. But I think what is primarily in view here is the Spirit. And then He says " who it is ", the One who was speaking was the only-begotten Son.

A.T.B. J.N.D. has said, if you would have a Giver, you must come to God. Man has nothing to give. What a God we have!

G.R.C. The thought of God as a Giver is to come into our souls, and in the preaching that is in mind, that men should get an impression of God as the great Giver. But then, they must in the first instance, having got that impression, come in touch with the One who says " who it is ". We present the Person, we present Him in His manhood, and in His deity, in the gospel, " Who it is ", so that souls might learn who He is, and what His place is in the economy. " The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand ". And if you asked of Him, He would give you. The Father is the great Giver in the economy, and He has put everything in the hands of the Son with a view to dispensing to such a person as this. So He says " he would have given thee ".

A.P.A. At the end of ch. 3 it says " For God gives not the Spirit by measure ". Would the opening of our inwards be our answer to that?

G.R.C. Yes. The only measure is the size of the vessel. The thing is to open our inwards, so that we are completely filled.

L.A.C. Would you say something further as to the thought of 'drinking' in v. 12? We can understand the thought of Jacob drinking, and perhaps even his sons. Would you enlarge further as to the thought of his cattle?

G.R.C. I think the cattle refer to our spiritual wealth, what is available as offerings to God. Everything in the way of our satisfaction, and in the way of divine satisfaction, depends on the presence of the Holy Spirit in the saints. We have satisfaction, we never thirst for ever; but then, there is drink for the Lord Jesus, there is the response in bridal affection, and the Father, the great Giver, the Head of the economy, drinks of this well Himself, and His sons, and His cattle. I would think we could apply it to what is in the saints in the way of spiritual wealth. It all thrives through the gift of the Spirit.

L.G.B. And all on the line of life. The cattle would be live-stock.

G.R.C. Yes. "Offerings to God are in abundance brought".

A.J.G. Is it not important to realise that the gift of the Holy Spirit is *the* characteristic blessing of Christianity? Peter announced it on the day of Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptised, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins, and ye will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" Acts 2 : 38, as though that was the great thing that God had in mind to give. All the great thoughts of God, whether it be Christ and the assembly, or the Father and sons, or the worship of God; for all these to be entered upon in any degree of reality and power by the saints, we need the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit is *essential* for bringing in all that is characteristic of Christianity, in contrast with the other dispensations.

G.R.C. So that this chapter would again cause our hearts to well out in worship to the Spirit.

G.W.B. Whosoever drinks shall never thirst for ever.

Does it involve that we are characteristically opening our inwards, continuously?

G.R.C. Very good. On the Lord's side it is a gift, "he would have *given* thee living water", but our side is the drinking, "whosoever *drinks*". We have to open our inwards to the Spirit, and see that there is no compartment reserved. This woman had had five husbands, what compartments she had had. And there was one she was living with who was not her husband. If that had not been all brought out and judged, how could she have drunk of this water, what room would there have been for the Spirit, in her inward parts? We need to make room for the Spirit.

F.E.S. Would you say that purification is essential for enjoyment of and availability to the Spirit?

G.R.C. There is the initial purification, like the woman judging her course, and receiving the Lord into her affections by the Spirit, but then as we go on drinking, giving place to the Spirit, this pure fountain springing up, keeps us pure all along the line.

L.L. There were some compartments in Nicodemus that were reserved, but there seems a total collapse in this woman.

G.R.C. It refers to the land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Here was some of the land, as it were, coming to light. There was the land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph, and a fountain was there; and that is the position in this world. There are those the Father has given to the Son, and what makes the position so potential is the gift of the Spirit, that there is a fountain in that property which the Father has given to the Son.

C.J.H.D. Was that land not secured on the basis of conflict? Would the reference to the taking of it out of the hand of the Amorite, by "the sword", indicate the direct matter of conflict in the death of Christ, but then "the bow" is also used, and is this woman not coming within range, as it were, that more territory might be secured from a distance.

G.R.C. I would think that. The Amorite was an inhabitant of the land, it shows that the heavenlies are in mind. It is heavenly territory on earth, taken out of the hand of the Amorite; not out of the hand of the Egyptian, nor even out of the hand of the Moabite; but out of the hand of the Amorite. There is heavenly territory on earth; and it consists of those whom the Father has given to the Son. The potentiality of the territory is that a fountain is there.

F.H. Why is the word changed from "fountain". She speaks of "a well".

G.R.C. I think in a way the woman herself becomes the well. The well is the containing thing, it is the fountain that fills the well. In natural things, to have a well you must have a fountain in it; and the level of the well will be the level of the place from which the fountain, which is in the well, draws its source. But in our case, it is more than the figure of a well; we become vessels, but the fountain that is in us has its source in God himself. So that there is a fountain in us with its source in God, and it rises to God. That is how I understand the fountain.

P.H.H. Is there therefore an upward trend in this section of the scripture? First of all in the exercises of the woman, and what we might call her desire for the Spirit, then what you say about the fountain rising to the level of its own source, and then the way the Lord takes up her word "worship". Is that going still higher on this upward trend?

G.R.C. It is. But in moving on we have not got an answer to your question on Ephesians 5. Although the setting in John 4 was quite different was the Lord dealing with this woman with a view to bridal features coming out, and would His words to her be in view of her purification? Had not the Lord's words a washing effect upon her?

P.H.H. Might we ask Mr. G. about Ephesians 5.

A.J.G. I do not know that one can say much, but



one thought the word was the bringing home to us, in an intelligible way, what the full import of the death of Christ, where His love was expressed, is. The washing of water by the word in Ephesians 5 is the full thought of bathing. It is not like feet-washing, it is the full thought. It is the removal completely of the man, in order that we might intelligently enter into what we are by the work of God, as suitable to be united to Christ.

G.R.C. That is very helpful. We ought to keep in mind that it is the full thought of bathing there. Some have likened it to the bridal bath that was customary in the East.

A.J.G. So that the Lord would bring it home to us, perhaps freshly every first day of the week, so that we might be free in our spirits to enter into union without any hindrance.

G.R.C. That is very fine. He would speak to us as we approach the Lord's day, in order that we might be in the gain of our complete cleansing from the man that would hinder, and, instead be marked by the fragrance of His words, because it is the spoken word in that passage. His words of love leave their fragrance upon the vessel, as in the case of the spouse in the song of songs.

E.A.E. It says in Psalm 147 : 18, " He sendeth his word, and melteth them; he causeth his wind to blow—the waters flow ". Do not those three expressions come out in what you are drawing our attention to now in these chapters in John, with regard to purification, and the effect. Might this reference to " word " help us in view of cleansing, because Psalm 119 : 9 says " Where-withal shall a young man cleanse his path? by giving heed thereto according to thy word ".

G.R.C. It shows what an important place the word has in cleansing, the word applied in the power of the Spirit. And the personal word of Christ, His personal service, in Ephesians 5, is specially affecting. Here, in another setting, we have the personal service of Christ to

this woman, His own words, how cleansing they were.

C.W.O'L.M. In Ephesians 5 : 26 it speaks about cleansing "it", the assembly. Is not that a little different from working in our inwards?

G.R.C. Certainly that passage has its own distinctiveness. It is the assembly there viewed as a whole and it is bathing. No doubt it takes place in detail, as we go along; but the full picture is presented there, "that he might present the assembly to himself glorious, having no spot or wrinkle, or any of such things".

A.P.A. Is not the final touch in the Lord's word here in v. 26? It is literally "I am who speaks with thee".

G.R.C. No wonder it broke her down. She had nothing more to say; the disciples came, and the woman left her water pot. Her soul was filled at this point. She had said "I know that Messias is coming who is called Christ; when he comes he will tell us all things". That is a feature of the Christ, He tells all things in connection with the service of God, and about everything else too. Solomon would be in mind in this title, the Christ. What marked Solomon was that he spoke of everything, from the cedar unto the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke about cattle and creeping things; there was nothing, in that sense, outside of the range of Solomon. Everything that related to God and His service, and had any bearing on it, Solomon could speak about. And that was undoubtedly in the woman's mind. The Lord had told her something about divine worship and service, but she says, When the Christ comes, He will tell us everything. What an impression she had got of the greatness of the Christ. And here was the Person, He had come, the "I am" was there, who had come to fill out this great office of the Christ. What could He not tell her? But then, when she goes to the men of the city, she goes as a true witness, her heart full of Christ, a worshipper, "Come, see a man who told me all things I had ever done". What a

powerful witness she was, her heart full of Christ, emptied of everything else! "Is not he the Christ?", is not a question of doubt, not at all. But she does not begin to tell them what He has said about this mountain and Jerusalem; she knows just what to say in evangelizing and that is, "He told me all things *I* had ever done". Had she begun to speak to *them* about worship they would have been antagonised, but the impression *she* had got of Him was that He would tell her all things. There was nothing that He could not tell her, as to the greatest things of God; but in the gospel message she says "he told me all things I had ever done". That shows how we need wisdom in the gospel.

P.L. Is she taking a woman's place in the economy suitably, she is not asserting, she is saying, "is not he the Christ?" Is there a large field for sisters in that way?

G.R.C. The feminine word is used in Psalm 68 : 11, and in J.N.D.'s French translation, he actually uses the word "women", "great the multitude of the women that published it". The Lord gave the word (and the Lord gave the word here to the woman) but great were the multitude of the women that published it. And sisters have great scope, I believe, in publishing the word. They have personal contacts with local people that often the brothers have not. They have also opportunity to do kind deeds among neighbours, doing good to all men. What opportunities for testimony; and what a powerful testimony if a sister can speak like this woman, in the spirit of it, "Come, see a man who told me all things I had ever done".

J.O.T.D. Should we not be on the line of securing persons for the assembly?

G.R.C. I am sure we should. And that takes us back to what we have passed over. The woman says "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where one must worship. Jesus says to her, Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when ye shall neither in this mountain

nor in Jerusalem worship the Father ". It is wonderful how He is leading her into the truth of the economy. She has had touch with Him, and if we apply it to a soul nowadays, she would have had touch with the Spirit; and now the Lord speaks to her of the Father. I do not think the Lord had spoken to anyone of the Father before this, He had spoken of " My Father's house ", but He begins to speak of the Father. Whatever must the woman have thought, when He said " shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship *the Father* ". She had never heard God called Father before. " Ye worship ye know not what; we worship what we know, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for also the Father seeks such as his worshippers ". What a wonderful presentation of the Father to this woman! How it must have captivated her heart, the thought of true worshippers worshipping the Father, and the Father *seeking* such as His worshippers! What an eye-opener to this woman! And what a complete purification of her mind in connection with religious systems! What the Lord says here, in a few words, would free the minds of the saints from all religious systems; it is not a question of this mountain, nor Jerusalem; it is a question of worshipping the Father in spirit and truth, which again goes back to inward purification.

P.H.H. Is that why the word spirit is used two or three times here? It says in v. 23 " worship the Father in spirit and truth ", then " God is a spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth ". Is the Lord driving at this inward thought?

G.R.C. Yes, and it really settles the whole matter of 2 Timothy days for us. It is remarkable how the Lord, in a few words, can put things which in apostolic doctrine, rightly take quite a long discourse to unfold. It is not a question of here or there, not a question of any human system, because all these human systems

are linked with “ that which is born of the flesh ”; and that has all been set aside, as we have seen in the previous chapter. All human systems are cleared from the mind and now you come to the real thing—worshipping the Father in spirit and truth, and that involves purified persons.

E.I. Do we get the idea of drinking in Genesis 24, and the thought of the digging of the wells in chapter 26?

G.R.C. It all bears on what we are saying, Genesis 24 brings in something that we have not got here, that is, that the Spirit Himself has a portion. The servant asks for a sip.

A.J.G. As the attractiveness of the suggestion of worshipping the Father in spirit and truth came home to the woman, she would be prepared for all the exposure, so that every element of darkness in her should be out and judged, and she would be free to worship, would she not?

G.R.C. That is wonderful, because what she had done merited judgment; but then the Lord says in this gospel, “ the Father judges no one ”. She must have had an impression of grace when He brought in the word “ Father ”. How it would set her conscience at rest.

A.J.G. In principle she passed the judgment seat of Christ.

A.P.B. In John’s gospel, the character of life that is in view really has its origin in the wonderful economy in which the Father loves the Son; and the affections seen between God as Father, and Christ as Man, in sonship, give character to everything, including the worship.

G.R.C. I think “ The Father loves the Son ” is the key to things in the economy. A.E.M. has said, the Father is the great Originator and Director of everything in the economy, and I think the motive of it all is His love for the Son.

A.P.B. I was thinking of “ God so loved the world ”,



but then, in the actual working of it out, it is "The Father loves the Son", is it not?

G.R.C. "God so loved the world" is the great testimony, it is the display of God in His nature and character. Nothing could be greater than the display of God's nature and character. What God ever was and is has now come into display; God is light and God is love. He is righteous and holy. Every feature of His character is in radiant display in Christ. But then though all is in display, there would not be the slightest response in man if left to himself. Man is serpent-bitten, and that radiant glory could shine, and there would be no response from a single member of mankind. So you must have the economy. You must have the operations of the Spirit, and of the Son, and of the Father. The Father is the Head of the economy, and is the Source of these activities; He sends the Son, and sends the Spirit, and the great motive is His love for the Son. The economy means that there *shall* be results, and that there *shall* be souls brought into the gain of divine love in such a manner that they can be set down in the presence of the display of God in His nature and character, and be perfectly at home there. But it is the economy, and the operations of the economy that bring that about in the economy.

P.L. So that in Hebrews, to deliver the saints from lifeless religion, the economy is emphasised at the beginning. The apostle and the high priest, and then the great high-light, so to speak of the economy, the bringing of many sons to glory, and "both he that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one", and the declaration of "Thy name to my brethren" and "in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises". Have you, in the presence of the derelict religion, so to speak, in the beginning of Hebrews, God setting out that the economy is going through to the satisfaction of divine love in the greatness of the Persons who compose it?

G.R.C. This chapter confirms it, for the worship "now is". Think of this going on at the end of the dispensation, as you say, amongst derelict religion. It is going on now, this great service, the worship of the Father, through the operations of this great economy of love. And souls are set down in the presence of Him who is the effulgence of God's glory, and the expression of His substance, to worship God in spirit and truth. That effulgence could have shone for ever, and there would be no results, but the activities of the Persons of the Godhead in the economy have brought about results, and men are there, in the presence of the effulgence, and at rest.

A.T.B. We get the light shining in the darkness in chapter 1, but there was no ability whatever for man to enter into it, until there was movement from the divine side.

G.R.C. So as you say, chapter 1 sets out the position generally. In human affairs, the moment you bring light into a dark room, the darkness goes; but the darkness was such, that though the light came, it did not alter the darkness; it shows the awful character of what is called "the darkness". It needed fresh operations on the part of the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit, fresh sovereign operations, to effect anything.

A.W.G.T. It says in Ephesians 5 : 8, "for ye were once darkness, but now light in the Lord". The fruit of the light comes out in the woman, who was once darkness, but now becomes light.

*Rem.* We have in Revelation 21 : 25, that "night shall not be there".

G.R.C. The darkness is gone. What a wonderful thing!

M.H.T. In the language of Hebrews, does the woman really become a purged worshipper, having no more conscience of sins?

G.R.C. I am sure she does.

*Ques.* Verse 22 says "ye worship ye know not

what ", is that worshipping in darkness? But the verse continues " we worship what we know ", is that worshipping in purity?

G.R.C. Yes. Through this great economy of love we have been brought into the closest conceivable relations with God, and we can say " we worship what we know ".

Now the last section completes the subject of these chapters. The Lord had attended the marriage at Cana of Galilee, and now He comes again to Cana of Galilee, and we have a *household* set up now in the light of what has preceded, and that, I think, is what the Lord is seeking. We have spoken of the importance of households, and it is of the very first importance that, in these last days, there should be households in the full light of the economy, and the full light of what God is securing for Himself.

P.H.H. Are you stressing that in the first sign, it was a marriage, which brings before us that behind everything is Christ and the assembly, and then the second sign, it is a house where the father and son is being stressed?

G.R.C. Yes. So it is a house as a ' going concern ', patterned after God's house. This is a house as a ' going concern '—what an acquisition to the testimony. This man begins as a courtier, and addresses the Lord as a courtier, in v. 49; but in v. 50 he is called a man, " And the man believed the word which Jesus said to him "; he is getting purified; and finally, in v. 53, he is called the father. And the child becomes a son. So there is development and purification enters into the whole matter. There is the purifying word of the Lord. The courtier would have expected Him to go down to his house, as he asked Him to, but the Lord tests him; He says, " Go ". He takes no account of his courtiership, He just says " Go, thy son lives ". And it says of him " And the man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way ". He has

dropped his courtiership, he is just the man who believed the word of Jesus. He went down to his house, and then it says "The father therefore knew that it was in that hour in which Jesus said to him, thy son lives; and he believed, himself and his whole house". That is a house as a going concern in the testimony, purified.

P.B. He believed today, and he had confirmation tomorrow. It says in v. 52 "Yesterday at the seventh hour". Are not we often tested as to that, the genuineness of our believing?

G.R.C. Yes. We are tested in household conditions often, we are tested by our children, but it is all to bring about a house established as a going concern in the testimony. These exercises are to purify us householdly. Our child may sicken spiritually, and be in danger of dying, but it is to help to purify the house, that it might be a going concern in the testimony.

L.A.C. Are we to understand that this truth of purification rids us of rivalry? There are these rival religious systems, "this mountain", and "Jerusalem". Do we finish on the understanding that there is to be no rival to Christ? He becomes the Supreme One in our hearts?

G.R.C. That is very fine. It would end household rivalry. The man comes to the Lord as a courtier, but finally he is a father.

P.L. With a living son! Will he now operate in this wonderful economy under the hand of the One to whom the Father has committed all things? It is a fine word for the living continuation of things in affection, "thy son". I was thinking of Timothy. What a household Paul had in that way for the testimony!

## PURIFICATION AND LIFE (5)

JOHN 8: 54-59; 9: 1-17, 24-41;  
JOHN 10: 1-3, 27-30

G.R.C. In this section beginning with chapter 8 things become clearly defined as regards associations. We have seen in chapter 3 how things become clearly defined inwardly in the believer, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"; and the writings of John indicate that there is no idea in God's mind of a mixture. We are to be helped to come to a judgment so that we do not allow a mixture in ourselves. That bears on what has occupied us already, the water pots being filled, and the Spirit filling the believer as a fountain. But then John indicates in his epistle that there is no idea of a mixture between the children of God and the children of the devil. He traces things to their source in that respect also. He says in chapter 3, "he that practises righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that practises sin is of the devil" v. 8; and then in v. 10, "In this are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil". And the Lord Jesus, in ch. 8 : 44, traces things to their source, "Ye are of the devil, as your father, and ye desire to do the lusts of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning". So that there is no idea of a mixture, the two generations are incompatible. John puts things in this abstract and telling way; things are traced to their source; persons of a certain character—those who practise righteousness—are children of God, and those that do not practise righteousness, are not of God; their origin is traced back. So that this section of the gospel is very searching. It brings up, one would judge, the whole question of "what participation is there between righteousness and lawlessness? or what fellow-



ship of light with darkness? and what consent of Christ with Beliar, or what part for a believer along with an unbeliever?" 2 Cor. 6:15. The Lord Jesus was speaking in the temple; a wonderful thing that He could stand in the temple and say, "I am the light of the world"—not simply the light of Israel, but the light of the world. Divine light in its fulness was shining in the temple, and we see the sharp division between light and darkness. The light was shining in the One who could say, among other things, "a man who has spoken the truth to you" v. 40. The Lord was there, a perfect Man, a Man who spoke the truth; He stresses His manhood, and His perfection in manhood. But then, the chapter closed with the assertion of His deity. So that the greatest light was shining in this chapter. There was the light of perfect manhood, teaching in the treasury, as it says in v. 20, "These words spoke he in the treasury, teaching in the temple". How rich the treasury was at that moment. Jesus was there, everything precious to God found in His Person! So that there was the light of perfection in Man, but also the light of God shining; *God* was in His temple. Not only a perfect Man was there, but *God* was there. "Before Abraham was, I am". The One who is "I am" had come to His temple, and the glory was filling the temple, yet the darkness was such that there was no eye to take it in.

The blind man is a sign, bearing on chapter 8. The Lord in grace performs this sign, if, by any means, the Pharisees might be saved. But He shows them by the sign that what hindered their vision was their state, and that the way to get vision, to see the glory that was shining in the temple, was to go and wash. The spittle, and the mud which he made, and put on the man's eyes, refer back to the ministry of the previous chapter of the presentative in incarnation of the perfect manhood, and yet the deity, of Christ, "Before Abraham was, I am" (Ch. 8:58). As J.T. said, the mud, in a way, made the man blinder than ever, and that is the

effect on the natural mind of the presentation of the perfect manhood and yet the deity of Christ; it makes men blinder than ever, more opposed than ever. So the Lord was, as it were, putting the mud on the eyes of the Pharisees in His ministry. The blind man was a sign of what the Lord had been doing. But if only they would wash, they would see.

A.J.G. So that there is the combination of the works of God—it says “that the works of God should be manifested in him”—but also of the moral element involved in the man being required to obey the word of the Lord, “Go wash”.

G.R.C. The works of God become manifested in a person who becomes obedient to divine command.

P.B. Has the word ‘sent’ any reference to Jesus as the sent One?

G.R.C. I think so. It is stressed all through this gospel. In chapter 8 He says “He that has sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, because I do always the things that are pleasing to him” v. 29. He is there as the sent One, a Man sent from God, a Man who had spoken the truth to them; and how easy that should make obedience to us; the fact that “though he were Son, he learned obedience from the things which he suffered” Heb. 5 : 8. From the time He took the body prepared for Him He was entirely at the disposal of His God and Father. The coming into that body was His own act, “Lo I come”. But having taken the body prepared He was here as the One under command; and that especially came to light after His baptism when He was sent out in service.

J.Hs. Does the feature of obedience in the blind man evidence the undoing of the works of the devil?

G.R.C. It is really the primary step; the glad tidings are presented for the obedience of faith among all the nations, and then the truth of the mystery was made known, according to Romans 16 : 26, by command of the eternal God, for obedience of faith to all the nations.

So that the whole truth is to be received on the principle of the obedience of faith.

L.A.C. Is it not remarkable that in the book of Nehemiah, where the enemy attempted to bring in the greatest possible form of admixture, we find that the walls of the pool of Siloam are repaired, ch. 3 : 15?

G.R.C. In that chapter it speaks of the fountain-gate, and then the wall of the pool Shelah (or Siloam), and then in v. 16, "the pool that was made". I think these things have a remarkable connection; there was the fountain-gate, and we have already spoken of the fountain. But then there was the pool of Siloam, which was, we understand, of moving water, not a stagnant pool; but then there was also the pool that was made. I believe the order in which things are put there, the pool of Siloam coming before the pool that was made, shows *the great importance of being in the current of what the Spirit is saying at any given time*. We are apt to go back to the pool that was made, which I think refers to past ministry; there is a vast pool that has been made, of very great value; but then, past ministry, as we know, can even be used, if taken out of its setting, to negate what the Spirit is saying at any given time. *The only way to get the real gain of past ministry is to be in the current of what the Spirit is saying now*.

L.A.C. The waters of Shiloah are said to flow softly, (Isa. 8 : 6) but they were refused.

G.R.C. That is it; and that is what was happening with the Pharisees. How soft and gentle the ministry of the Lord had been, how gracious! "Grace and truth subsists through Jesus Christ". In His words the waters of Shiloah, as we may say, flowed softly, but they were rejected, and His words in John 8 were, therefore, severe.

P.H.H. Does John speak uncompromisingly of certain elements like light and darkness, life and death; but does he also add, specially in the gospel, persons who are livingly in the flow of the Spirit? May we not

perhaps rest in words about what is needed amongst us, whereas the persons would give examples of those who act on the ministry, and therefore themselves become a living testimony?

G.R.C. So that the signs today are in persons; this blind man was a sign. If the sign had been accepted it would have meant salvation to those the Lord had been speaking so faithfully to. But then, as you say, there are living signs today. There are some persons who say they cannot see certain things; they are blind, and cannot see what is current. They profess to accept past ministry, but they cannot see what is current. It is always the enemy's effort, to blind people to what is current. But there are those who *are* seeing, and how do they see? By way of purification.

P.H.H. It says in Isaiah again, "Behold, I and the children that Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel, from Jehovah of hosts " ch. 8 : 18. Is that where the testimony is?

G.R.C. What a comfort it is that in all the conflicts there have been such; there have been persons we can fix our eyes on as models who help us into the truth.

-.H. Does Peter touch on this matter of obedience when he says " Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth " 1 Peter 1 : 22.

G.R.C. Quite so. We can see how this man's soul was purified. What a pure vessel this blind man became!

A.P.A. J.N.D. says as to the end of chapter 8, ' Oh Jesus, Jesus, what sort of subjection is this, that we owe to Thee?'

G.R.C. How easy subjection is when we get a view of the greatness of the Person. How could we be other than subject to Him who could say " Before Abraham was, I am ". You may remember too, that J.N.D., in that article, breaks out into a doxology, ' Oh Jesus, Jesus, God Most High '.

L.L. It would draw out our affection that He should so present Himself as a Man?

G.R.C. And we have to remember that He *is* a Man. In Phil. 2 it says "taking his place in the likeness of men; and having been found in figure as a man" vv. 7 and 8. We need to see that scripture is very careful; the Holy Spirit is very careful in His statements. Scripture makes it very clear that Jesus is a Man, a perfect Man, a glorious Man, the Man Christ Jesus; but it does not use the expression, which might be mis-construed, that 'Jesus became a man'. That expression might imply that He had left the state of Deity, and simply become a Man. Scripture says that He became flesh, and that implies that His Person never changed. There was no leaving of the state of Deity, but He became flesh; He entered another *condition*. But having become flesh, such a Person as He must be absolutely perfect in the condition into which He came; and so we see in Him real and perfect Manhood.

E.A.K. Is that involved in the truth that the Lord Jesus was sent on earth? It is not correct that He was sent from heaven.

G.R.C. That enters into this matter. Scripture says that Christ Jesus came into the world, and then, in coming, it says, "Wherefore coming into the world he says, Sacrifice and offering thou wilt not; but thou hast prepared me a body". Heb. 10 : 5. The Person was unchanged, but He accepted the body prepared, and came into human conditions, and both down here, and now as a glorified Man, He was and is perfect, the perfect Man. But He has never left the state of Deity, He has never ceased to be who He is.

A.P.A. Does not the word "subsisting in the form of God", (Phil. 2 : 6) go through in that way?

G.R.C. It says "subsisting in the form of God". J.T. pointed out that scripture does not say He left the form of God. It says, "subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God", and we see that in this gospel. Here He was, a Man; He said in chapter 8 : 40 "a man who has



spoken the truth to you ”; but, at the end He said “Before Abraham was, I am ”. That is, He did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God, and that marks the whole of this gospel. More than once the opposers attacked Him because they said He was making Himself equal with God. And it was not wrong for Him to do that, because He never ceased to be what He always was. But then it goes on to say in Philippians 2 : 7, “taking his place in the *likeness* of men; and having been found in *figure* as a man ”. One is only pointing this out that we might seek to think in terms of scripture, and to speak in terms of scripture.

A.W.G.T. Might it help to refer to v. 7 of Philippians 2, where it says “but emptied himself, taking a bondman’s form ”. I think some have had difficulty about the simultaneous action that is referred to there, and perhaps a word would help.

G.R.C. We are in deep waters, and I cannot say much about it. I think the emptying of Himself may refer to the *glory* that belongs to Deity, because He asks the Father, in this gospel, to glorify Him with the glory which He had along with Himself before the world was. He was here in humiliation.

A.J.G. It is a question of learning to think in terms of scripture, and express ourselves in terms of scripture. It is quite clear I think, that emptying Himself, whatever that involves, consisted in taking the bondman’s form. That is, it was simultaneous.

G.R.C. That is really the wonder of the matter, the bondman’s form, is it not? Because manhood *in itself* does not necessarily imply bondman’s form. But coming to do God’s will, and to be under command in every way, He took the bondman’s form.

Rem. J.N.D.’s note says “emptied himself by taking ”.

A.P.A. Does it correspond with the fine flour, that there was nothing, that we call ‘self’ there?

G.R.C. It is perfection, perfect humanity, and

mingled with oil, wholly energised by the Spirit. Wonderful contemplation, the perfect humanity of Christ!

E.I. J.N.D. said in Notes and Comments, that wherever you get the manhood of Jesus in scripture, His Person is always guarded.

G.R.C. So far as I have seen in scripture, it is most carefully guarded. The Spirit is most careful as to the birth of Christ. In Matthew 1 : 20, the neuter is used "that which is begotten in her", not 'he who'. And the same in Luke 1 : 35, "the holy thing". How carefully, at every point, the Person of Christ is guarded in scripture.

P.H.H. So that we are always reminded that the deity of Christ is there, although it may not be expressed in a definite phrase. Here in this chapter (John 8) it is, as you remark, the Man there, but He says Himself "I am". Is not that the way things are put to help our minds? We are limited, we cannot think too much about the manhood of Jesus, and the deity of Jesus at the same time; but they are always very close together. Would the word "subsisting" in Philippians 2 help us? It is not simply 'being', being might be accidental in the proper use of the word, but "subsisting" is not accidental, it is meant to convey something substantial and constant.

G.R.C. I thought that. One only brings these things forward so that we might exercise priestly care, as far as we are able, (the Spirit would help us) in thinking and speaking of Christ; and in these passages the incarnation is brought before us in a remarkable way. In chapter 8 : 6, "Jesus having stooped down, wrote with his finger on the ground". I think that is usually connected with His incarnation, and what a stoop it was—this permanent writing! What has come out in the perfect humanity of Christ is permanent; it is not now a question of the law of Moses, although that stands in its own place, but it is what has been written in the perfect Manhood of Jesus.

E.J.H. In chapter 18:5 the Lord Himself says "Whom seek ye?" And they declared they were seeking a man, "Jesus the Nazaraean". And He said "I am". Twice over He said "I am", and having said that, He allows Himself to be taken.

C.J.H.D. Do we not need to be in the highway of the fuller's field, according to Isaiah 7:3 before we can rightly consider the statement in v. 14, "the virgin shall conceive", and then the title Immanuel given to Him. Is not there the purifying effect of the fuller's field to be laid hold of by us?

G.R.C. And would it not be working out in these chapters, particularly in connection with the blind man.

C.J.H.D. They really refused the waters of Shiloah in chapter 8 of Isaiah because they had not faced the highway in the fuller's field in chapter 7.

A.G.B. It says in v. 2, "He answered and said, A man called Jesus made mud and anointed mine eyes, and said to me, Go to Siloam and wash; and having gone and washed, I saw". Is this a matter of light as to Christ, as to His Manhood and Deity?

G.R.C. We ought to look further at the way the incarnation is referred to in these scriptures. We have already remarked on the first stooping in verse 6. The second stooping and writing on the ground, no doubt refers to His death. But then you get a more forceful view of the incarnation in what the Lord does in chapter 9. It says "Having said these things, he spat on the ground, and made mud of the spittle, and put the mud as ointment, on his eyes".

J.O.T.D. Is it to be noted that the Spirit, in describing the incident says "he put mud as *ointment*", and the man says "A man called Jesus made mud and *anointed* mine eyes"? I am thinking of the anointing as suggesting that the man has got some sense of the majesty and dignity that has entered into this wonderful matter. If a Person beyond comprehension has taken such a lowly form, as may be implied in the expression

“ mud ”, it has reached him in this gracious and dignified form as “ ointment ”, and he speaks of it as anointing.

G.R.C. You are thinking then that this refers to Jesus in His humiliation here.

J.O.T.D. I thought the mud would mean that. But the man catches up some idea, and some sense of the glory of the One that has come into that condition. He speaks of anointing.

A.J.G. Does that connect at all with the thought of Siloam—being sent? The man had to go as being sent, but I wondered whether he had to come to an apprehension of Jesus as sent.

G.R.C. I think the mud would suggest that, Jesus in humiliation here. John quotes Isaiah in chapter 12 : 38, “ Lord, who hath believed our report?” referring to Jesus in humiliation, but it says in v. 41 “ These things said Esaias because he saw his glory ”. Esaias was one whose eyes were opened to behold His glory. But for others it was just mud, as it were, which only made if anything their blindness worse—Jesus in humiliation here.

W.S.S. The Lord says to Laodicea in Rev. 3 : 18 “ I counsel thee to buy of me . . . eye-salve that thou mayest see ”. I was thinking of what you said as to the blind man, bearing on chapter 8 and the Pharisees.

G.R.C. The ministry of the Lord in chapter 8 is really illustrated in what He did here. In ch. 8 He was applying the mud to the eyes of the religious leaders; He presented Himself in all His perfection as a lowly Man here, the sent One, doing always the things that pleased His Father, but they saw no beauty in Him, as Isaiah said, that *they* should desire Him. To them it would be nothing more than mud, as we may say. They saw no beauty in the Man, and yet His path of true perfection was light on all around, if only they could have seen it. But then, at the close, He brings in the truth of His Person. His manhood took its character

from the fact that the One who was there before them was "I am"; and that is an astounding fact. The Man that men did not appreciate at all—they despised Him—was the One who was the incarnate "I am". That is like the spittle mixed with the mud.

P.H.H. The man said, "having gone and washed, I saw". v. 11. But in v. 15, "I washed, and I see". Is it not a further work of God being manifested, the man had got on more?

G.R.C. His eyes being opened had in view that he should apprehend Jesus as He is, as at the end of the chapter, "dost thou believe on the Son of God?" And that title Son of God involves His deity. As the Son of God He quickens.

A.P.B. We can only rightly understand the humiliation of the Lord Jesus in manhood in the light of His death? It was only because of our state that He needed to be humiliated at all, and that really went on to its final conclusion in death.

G.R.C. I think that is where the acknowledgment of the need of washing comes in. If a man naturally was blind a doctor would send him to an eye specialist. It would be regarded as very absurd to send him to wash; and that is how men regard it. Men do not realise that the fact that they do not see things is because of their state. It is not that the eyes need operating on, it is the state that needs dealing with. When you think of what it meant to the blind man to go, what obedience meant to him, a blind man, finding his way to the pool of Siloam; how foolish he would appear in the eyes of those who might accost him on the way. What was he going to do? He was going to wash. They would say, 'That will not do your blindness any good'. But then, that was just the thing that was needed; purification was needed, purification of his whole outlook, as we may say, on current ministry—what the Lord had been saying.

W.S.S. Is it in your mind that the words "I see" should mark us characteristically?



G.R.C. Yes, he gradually sees more and more. First of all he says "He is a prophet", and then he goes on to say that He is of God. He says to the Pharisees "we know that God does not hear sinners; but if any one be God-fearing and do his will, him he hears". Then further, "If this man were not of God he would be able to do nothing". So he is arriving at things, he is learning to distinguish and in the course of it he is getting free from all his old associations. That is what marks a man who is getting light from God, he is getting free from all his old associations by the faithfulness of his testimony.

A.J.G. It is just at that point that their animosity is stirred up to the full, when he shows them that he is testing things by reference to whether they are of God or not.

P.L. And "One thing I know, that, being blind before, now I see"—is that the ground he takes testimonially, that he witnesses as having seen: and is he not confirmed in the sight of what is current, you might say, till he reaches the climax worshipfully? The Lord says when He challenges Him, "Thou hast both seen him, and he that speaks with thee is he. And he said, I believe, Lord: and he did him homage". Would this sight, as in the stream of the softly flowing waters of current ministry, result for us, in the climax of all obedience, the spirit of worship?

G.R.C. Very good. So that he is really moving on in the current of the waters of Shiloah, and his apprehension is getting greater. If we are obedient and move in the current of the Spirit, our apprehension will become greater and greater until we get a clear view of the glory of the Son of God.

A.T.B. He went and washed, and came seeing. As he went on the great range of things that Jesus had brought in became more and more real to him. Can we not prove the truth of these scriptures ourselves? If we are subject to the word, and purification takes place,

the Spirit would not keep anything back from us, would He?

G.R.C. That is what one has in mind—that we should prove these things for ourselves. This man proves that there is no mixture between light and darkness. He had got light, and he was true to his light, and it would not mix with the darkness; his natural relatives did not help him; and into whatever circle he came, because he had light, there was no affinity. “What fellowship of light with darkness: and what consent of Christ with Beliar, or what part for a believer along with an unbeliever?”, 2 Cor. 6 : 14–15. If we wash in the pool of Siloam, and are moving along in the current of what the Spirit is giving, we have only to be true to the light, to find that light and darkness do not mix. I believe the most effective way of separation is to bear witness. One wonders whether if we faithfully bore witness to what we have seen and known, we should experience more what this man experienced; people would not want us in their associations. *We* are to separate from associations, but then people would not want us, they would be glad to see us go. As to this man, they cast him out.

J.Hs. You are thinking of the way he got clear of his neighbours, and the Jews, and the Pharisees, and his parents. He gets gradually clear from every link.

G.R.C. He got clear of his neighbours, as you say, and then the Pharisees; and we have to remember that he had been brought up to revere the Pharisees. It shows how his eyes were opened. The Pharisees were seeking to judge him, but he judged the Pharisees, he had a judgment of the whole religious system. He became separate from his neighbours, separate from the whole religious system, and from the leaders that he had been brought up to revere, and even from his parents. His parents wanted nothing to do with him, because they feared the Jews. So here was a man in true separation.

J.Hs. And simply on the basis of being true to the work of God in him.

-.S. He refers to the will of God; not only being God-fearing, but doing God's will, "if any one be God-fearing and do his will ". Is not that a remarkable testimony?

G.R.C. I would say that he was able to bear witness to Jesus as the One who did God's will, because he was set for it now himself. This man had nothing else before him; a man called Jesus had opened his eyes, and his one concern was to be true to what he saw and what he knew. He knew, at this point, that a man called Jesus had opened his eyes, and he knew that though he was once blind, now he could see. He was gradually developing a right judgment of everything around him. He had had a wrong judgment of things, but now he is getting a right judgment; everything was becoming clear to him, and he was evidently set to go right through with no compromise.

L.A.C. In chapter 4 the question is asked, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob ", and in chapter 8 "Art thou greater than our father Abraham ", and in this chapter Moses is brought forward by the religious system as a rival. Do we find this man reaching Christ at last, as the unrivalled One in his eyes.

G.R.C. That is very fine. He is greater than Jacob, greater than Abraham, and greater than Moses.

J.A.P. The Lord says in v. 28, "When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am (he) ". Does not that have a bearing on making the mud?

G.R.C. Yes. And it is in the lifting up of the Son of man that the means of cleansing has come in. There would be no way for us to wash but for the precious death of Christ.

F.E.S. Is washing more than just getting clear of associations?

G.R.C. I think it is the recognition that our whole state is wrong. I think first of all, the washing here was

not cleansing him from his associations, it was what was applied to himself, to his own eyes. I think it is a question of recognising that our whole state is wrong, and that until we judge ourselves, and are prepared to obey the Lord's words, to obey the gospel, as we may say, we shall never see. All through John it is a question of we ourselves being purified in every way; and here it is a question of obedience, and learning to rely entirely on the Spirit as to our thoughts of Christ, especially the Person of Christ. We cannot afford to let our natural minds work for a moment. The natural mind is just blindness on this question.

J.O.T.D. John uses the title "unction" in his first epistle, referring to our need of the Spirit, so that our thoughts of Christ should be right and true?

F.E.S. And does the thought of washing involve the mind very particularly, our thoughts, not only of Christ, but our own importance, and how we tend to figure in everything?

G.R.C. That is the point in this aspect of cleansing; it is a question of judging the natural mind. It was the pride of the natural religious mind which made the Pharisees blind. They said, "we see". That is the pride of the human mind; it takes the ground of seeing, and of being able to judge even God Himself. The human mind would put itself, in that way, above God.

A.W.G.T. You have referred to state. J.T. said that it was not the *sin* that outlawed a man or a woman in an assembly issue, but their state. That is manifested in the fact that they will not hear the assembly?

G.R.C. And what lies at the bottom of that is that they say "We see". They take the ground of seeing, they know better than the assembly. The Lord says "now ye say, We see, your sin remains". It is the pride of the natural mind, specially the religious mind, working in divine things, which says 'We see, we have encompassed the truth, we are accepting nothing further'.

P.H.H. The reaction of this man is immediate, especially when it comes to the question raised by the Lord about believing on the Son of God. He has one question to be solved, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?" Does that show his state? He is a believing man characteristically, and then the Lord says "Thou hast both seen him, and he that speaks with thee is he, And he said, I believe, Lord; and he did him homage ". Is the road quite clear now for the service of God—the worship of the Lord Jesus, and what else may be involved?

G.R.C. Yes, a dependent obedient man, one who has judged himself, and his own mind's activities, is characteristically a seeing man; so that in what is presented to him, however great and unexpected it may be, he is ready; and that is the attitude we all would seek to be in, is it not, to be ready for what is presented?

P.H.H. He has judged himself, and in his testimony, he has really pronounced judgment on others, the Pharisees; and, in the end, he qualifies as a worshipper.

G.R.C. "He did him homage ".

P.L. And does he not form constitutionally what is to be characteristic of the company? His position here is pivotal. In this section the Spirit passes from the individual setting, to the collective, the flock being in mind in the next chapter. Does this man basically set up the two great thoughts of testimony in holy boldness, and the worship of God? Is that not the great thought to which we are collectively called—a united front in the testimony?

G.R.C. That is what I have in mind as to this section dealing with associations. There is the sharp division in chapter 8 of light and darkness. The Lord makes the sharp division, "Ye are of the devil, as your father ", there is to be no mixture, and it works out in chapter 9, that the man proves that there is no fellowship between light and darkness. Darkness will not have anything to do with him. And that will be so with us,



if we are true to the light. Darkness will have nothing to do with us, we shall be cast out. But then, in this mixed state of affairs that we have around us, and the generally tolerant attitude, men may be prepared to go on with us, and so the call comes "Come out from the midst of them". There is really no fellowship, there is no affinity, between light and darkness; this man finds himself outside of every association in which he had lived: he is alone, and the Son of God finds him, and says "dost thou believe on the Son of God?" And he says "Lord, I believe" and he does him homage. Then the Lord immediately brings in the flock (because there should not be a break in the chapters, as we know), after speaking to the Pharisees, and exposing them because of their pride. They were saying "we see", whereas the blind man was the only one amongst them that did see. So the Lord speaks of the flock. Now the flock introduces our true associations; the question is have we *any* collective associations outside of the flock? I do not know of any that God recognises. There is one flock and one Shepherd. All outside the flock is darkness. Outside the flock there is unrighteousness, outside the flock there is Beliar, outside the flock, unbelievers. The man is brought into associations of life in the flock, one flock and one Shepherd, and the Shepherd is the Son of God. And He and His Father are one. What a wonderful thing to be in those associations! And from the flock develops the family, in chapter 11, and from the family develops the body and the assembly (although the terms are not mentioned) in chapter 13 onwards. So that our whole associations of life are developed from this point onwards. But we are not available for them, unless we have gone through experiences similar to those of the man in chapter 9.

E.A.E. Does Saul himself go through that experience in Acts 9, meeting Jesus on the Damascus road, and then the opening of his eyes, and the effect of that is that he preaches Jesus, that He is the Son of God?

G.R.C. The word according to Acts 22 : 16 is " And now why lingerest thou? Arise and get baptised and have thy sins washed away ". There is no doubt Paul was true to his baptism, there is no doubt he found himself outside of every circle in which he had previously moved, there was no affinity now; he was a man who saw, and he had seen the Son of God.

G.R.D. Would you say more as to the man in chapter 9 getting clear of these associations because of his confessing Jesus in the various ways that he apprehended Him. It seems to me that that lies at the root of what is so vital for us, in being free from so many things in the world.

G.R.C. Do you not think that the only right way to get free from associations is to confess the Lord, to say clearly what we see and what we know, without any equivocation. And while we do it with a view to purifying ourselves, and separating from them, the effect of our saying those things will mean they do not want us. There will not be any difficulty about it, they will not want to retain us. In principle they will cast us out.

P.L. So that " he brought them forth . . . and there was not one feeble among their tribes " Ps. 105 : 37. And Egypt was well rid of them.

G.R.D. Through the help we have had recently as to the greatness of divine Persons, and particularly the greatness of Christ and the Spirit, in Their mediatorial service here, is it quite understandable that things that we have gone on with in the past we now view differently, and should be exercised as to getting clear?

G.R.C. I believe we have hardly grasped the fact of God *dwelling* among us. We have thought of manifestations and visitations; and we have them, of course, in the way the Lord comes to us at the Supper. But have we grasped the great truth " I will dwell among them, and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be to me a people "? 2 Cor. 6 : 16. The affections of God are so intense for the men who belong

to Him, that He dwells among us now, in these mixed conditions, not waiting for eternity; He is among us all the time. Do you not think the Spirit would help us to grasp this truth, for I believe it is of all importance? God is *dwelling* permanently among us, God, the great and eternal God. That is the point in this gospel, "Where *abidest* thou?" The Spirit, and the Son, and the Father—God, known, and dwelling among us. It is on that basis that the exhortation for purification and separation is made. *God* is among us. Oh, if only that laid hold of our hearts, how could we contemplate any mixture! How could we contemplate anything that is contrary to the holiness of God? There is no thought in John's writings of a mixture. Light and darkness are as separate as they can be. The children of God and the children of the devil are as separate as they can be. Why do we mix them?

A.H.G. And in one sense, there is nothing new in that, because God divided the light from the darkness at the very outset. He called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. He stamped the proper character upon each at the very beginning.

G.R.C. He did. Israel was not to mix things. In garments, there was not to be two kinds of material; in sowing the field, there was not to be two kinds of seed; and the ox and the ass were never to be yoked together. We must not say, 'It is all right to be yoked with the ass until he misbehaves himself.' That is not what scripture says. It says you do not yoke them together at all.

G.W.B. Is what you have just said supported by chapter 14:23, "My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him"?

G.R.C. "If any one love me, he will keep my word". It is a very illuminating scripture, because that chapter shows that the Spirit abides with us for ever. Even if we grieve Him He does not leave us; and how much we grieve Him! But we shall not know the presence of the

Son and the Father if the Spirit is grieved. But if we have the Lord's commandments and keep them, and if we love Him and keep His word, He says "my Father will love him, and *we* will come to him and make our abode with him ". That is, you have the Father, the Son and the Spirit, *abiding* with such an one.

—P. Do you think, if we are to be kept in the current of the ministry, we have to be prepared for the position suggested in Ezekiel 47, where it says " And he brought me out by the way of the gate *northward*, and led me round outside, unto the gate . . . that looketh eastward ". Then we have the river, then it opens out the measurements of the river. There is the willingness to face the northward position first, then eastward.

G.R.C. The north would mean suffering, and this man was suffering. It is not a small matter to be cast out of every circle you have lived in.

L.A.C. J.B.S. refers to this man as being brought out of the solitude of night. Leviticus 21 : 18 shows that a blind man is prohibited from approach to present the bread of his God. This man sees, is cast out, and becomes a worshipper.

G.R.C. So I think we might link up the woman of chapter 8 with the man of chapter 9. The Lord says to both " Go ". He says to the woman " Go and sin no more ". That is characteristic of this gospel and of the epistle. We are to sin no more. There is no need to, " every one begotten of God does not sin " 1 John 5 : 18. There is no need to sin if we learn to distinguish between what is born of the flesh and what is born of the Spirit, and to rely upon the indwelling Spirit. But then He says to this man " Go, wash ". On this line we come into the associations of life. The blind man, seeing things clearly, comes into new associations of life, and how wealthy they are!

## PURIFICATION AND LIFE (6)

JOHN 21: 1-25

G.R.C. This chapter deals with recovery, and I think one thing to learn from it is that, in days of recovery, God would secure 'great fishes'. Numbers may not be great, but it is a question of quality. And I would say that every person who has faced and gone through the exercise of purification, both within and without, would be included amongst these great fishes. So that in 2 Timothy days, God has in mind the quality of the persons secured through the very conditions which they have to face, God using these conditions to deepen the work in themselves, and to deepen their appreciation of the greatness and glory of Christ and of God. I think it would help us to look upon one another too, in this light, that those we are privileged to walk with, and thus feed upon in the way of fellowship, are great fishes; humble persons, it may be, as far as this world is concerned, but if they face the exercises that have been before us in these meetings, in God's mind they are great fishes. And what comes to light at the end is that the net is strong enough. There is no idea of the net breaking. The truth as to the assembly goes through intact, and these great fishes are held relative to that. Peter is used to drag the net to land, in this incident, according to v. 11, but he himself becomes an outstanding example of a great fish; a man who was a leader, appointed to be so, but who had failed in denying the Lord, and failed here too in independent leadership, leading others with him. But the Lord deals with him in this chapter, so that he becomes a thoroughly purified man. I think, therefore, we might, for our purpose today, apply to our own times the 14th verse, "This is already the third



time that Jesus had been manifested to the disciples, being risen from among the dead ”; and I think we may regard the first two manifestations as foundational, the first one relative to the assembly and the highest level of the truth, the second to bring about what the Lord is seeking from each one of us personally, our personal appreciation of Him, “ My Lord and my God ”. I am not now applying that to Israel dispensationally, but in the light of ch. 20 : 24, where it says that Thomas was one of the twelve. That means it is a foundational matter, and enters, in the way we are thinking now, into our dispensation. There is the assembly manifestation, and a personal manifestation, although the others were there; but it was particularly personal to Thomas, and we need to have our personal dealings with, and appreciation of, the Lord. All that is foundational and belongs to the beginning of things, but continues, of course. But then this third time, as we are applying it, would refer specially to the time of the end, to days of recovery, in a collective sense. That is to say, these fish were all in the net, and they were great. And so it says in v. 4, “ early morn already breaking, Jesus stood on the shore ”. It would touch our hearts to think of that surely, “ early morn already breaking ”, the morning just at hand, and the Lord coming in in this way in tender affection, so that there might be this recovery at the dawn of the morning.

—P. Is this third manifestation of Himself to preserve the life mentioned in the last verse of chapter 20?

G.R.C. It would have in mind that, in these last days, we should enjoy life in His name. 2 Timothy speaks of life; the apostle says he was the “ apostle of Jesus Christ by God’s will, according to promise of life, the life which is in Christ Jesus ”.

E.J.H. John takes particular delight in calling attention to Peter in regard to his various adjustments. He speaks more about Peter, especially on the quality side, than the other gospel writers.

G.R.C. That is very encouraging, because in actuality Peter *was* the leader in the Acts, even as the Lord had intended. So that the dispensation began with a man leading who had been recovered; who had known what it was to deny the Lord, and then to fail in leadership. But it began with a man, who, through those very experiences, was thoroughly purified.

E.J.H. He has to be adjusted here, in that he says "I go to fish". But is not the thought in John's gospel being sent, as in John 9 and John 20. In leadership he said "I am going", and others go with him, but he was not sent.

G.R.C. That is very important. He does not say 'I have been sent to fish'; he had had no word from the Lord. Whereas this gospel presents the Sent One; and shows that blessing comes on the line of obedience. And as you say, the Lord says in chapter 20 : 21, "as the Father sent me forth, I also send you"; and Peter was there when that was said. It shows that, if we have not faced the exercises that we have before us, the best of us can be led away. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. It may have seemed to Peter that some move was necessary at this time, the Lord was absent, and the Spirit had not come. Left to his own resources, he said, "I go", but he had no word to go. How easily we can move like that!

P.H.H. Does it suggest also the great matter of influence; Peter, perhaps, not reckoning what an influence he would have in moving in an independent direction. Is that something we have had impressed upon us during the last two or three years?

G.R.C. Very much so. The more influential a man is, the more damage he does, if he goes on an independent line. The line he is on may seem quite right to the natural mind.

L.L. There are five named persons, and two unnamed ones.

G.R.C. Quite so. He influenced other leaders, Thomas, Nathanael, well-known men, and even the sons

of Zebedee. Think of men like that coming under a wrong lead! Who would have thought that John would have been among them? It just shows what can happen. J.N.D. said that the greater a man's piety, the more damage he can do if he is on the wrong side in a matter of the truth.

W.S.S. Do you think the ever present tendency to revert to what is Jewish might be suggested in these names? Three names mentioned, Peter and Thomas and Nathanael were all distinctly connected with what is Jewish in the gospel, and I wondered if the lead Peter was giving might suggest that there always is a tendency to revert to what is Jewish and legal?

G.R.C. We have to watch the Galatian element all the time, in the way we apply the truth. We may have right principles, but apply them in a legal and harsh way, and an independent way. We have to wait for the camp of God to move. It is not for any locality to establish a set of rules of its own.

P.H.H. Did you say we have to wait for the camp of God? What do you mean by that reference, please?

G.R.C. In Numbers it is called four camps, but it is also called "the camp". So the four would suggest the universality of it, but it is the great camp where God and His dwelling place is the centre. We sing "Our God the Centre is", as a future idea, but Numbers shows it is also a present idea. God is the Centre of His people at the present time, for He is dwelling among them, and walking among them. And He does not depute to others responsibility to direct as to when the camp should move. It is entirely His own prerogative. Moses did not decide when the camp should move; the cloud moved, God Himself took the initiative. The priests, who were to be on the *qui vive*, were to sound the alarm, blow the trumpets, so that every eye should be on the cloud, and all should realise that the cloud was moving; but God Himself took the initiative. Here Peter is taking the initiative, "I go to fish", he says.

A.J.G. Is this all leading up to "Follow thou me"? Would that link with chapter 10 of this gospel, the shepherd's voice for the whole flock, and they follow?

G.R.C. I wondered whether that word was the final touch of Peter's purification in this chapter. How much adjustment he needed, and if *he* needed it, how much more do we need it. After all the Lord's dealings with him he turned round and said "Lord, and what of this man?" It just shows what our hearts are like. So the Lord's last words, in this gospel, are "Follow *thou* me". That would be His final word to every one of us. It is a final word which, if heeded, completes the purification.

E.A.K. The Lord's parental relation with His disciples is so touchingly brought into this matter.

G.R.C. That is so remarkable. When all had gone astray, the Lord did not act harshly, as we are so prone to do with one another, but came to them and said, "Children"; and the note says the word expresses peculiar affection. "Children, have ye anything to eat?" A true parent, however much the children have gone astray, would never let them starve. But on these independent lines we have nothing to eat. Eating here would involve real fellowship. In Leviticus 11 we are told the animals that can be fed upon, and those that may not be fed upon. There are the clean fishes (we are dealing with fishes in this chapter) and it is a question of who we can feed upon. We feed upon those we walk with, we cannot help it. That is why we should not walk with people who are unclean. But on the line of independency there is no real fellowship. If we go in advance of the movement of the camp, there is no real fellowship in that, there is no food in it.

G.R.D. What would save us from independency is what we have in chapter 10, "My sheep hear my voice". Does that not have a universal bearing today? If we are all hearkening to the one voice, the Spirit's voice in the ministry, we really are thinking one thing?

G.R.C. I am sure. So He led His people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Aaron the priest would see to it that when the cloud moved, all the brethren knew it.

J.O.T.D. Would the references in John to the early morning fit in with current concern about the Lord's day? Chapter 8 : 2, " And early in the morning he came again into the temple "; and it was early in the morning when His sufferings began, as depicted in this gospel, and He was apprehended. And in chapter 20 : 1, " Mary of Magdala comes in early morn to the tomb ", and here again, " And early morn already breaking ".

G.R.C. All that is very interesting.

A.G.B. Does not the movement suggest that there would be a constant expectancy that the testimony would move; the eye on the cloud, and the ear awaiting the sound of the trumpet, suggesting the sensibilities that would always be on the alert for some fresh movement on the part of God?

G.R.C. I think so. And if we are in the sense of being sent, we are here under direction; we do not know when the next command may come. And the most imperative command they had, in the camp of old, was God Himself moving. There were God's commandments, which were to regulate them at all times, but what kept them on the alert would be the fact that God might move at any time, and they were to move at the command of Jehovah. How did Jehovah command them? By moving Himself. It was not for them to be left behind. What you say is of much importance, that we should have our eyes open, and our ears; and, as priests, we should be concerned that the alarm is heard in every part of the camp. There have been times of conflict in the past, when the trumpet may not have been sounded so universally as it might have been. That may be partly the reason for such heavy losses.

P.H.H. Verse 4 says " Jesus stood on the shore; the



disciples however did not know that it was Jesus ". Was that one of the penalties, so to speak, of this false leadership, that they did not recognise the Lord when He was there? He was not a very great distance off, apparently just about a hundred yards. So that their sensibilities were very much blunted.

G.R.C. Do you not think that is the first thing that happens when we embark on anything independent. We lose our vision, and the alertness of our hearing. All our sensibilities, indeed, become weakened.

A.J.G. Without holiness none shall see the Lord.

A.H.G. Is it important that He manifested Himself? You have been bringing before us the glory of His Person. " After these things Jesus manifested himself ". Is that the point where recovery begins?

G.R.C. I am sure it is. And how affecting this manifestation was, that He should come and stand on the shore, and not a word of rebuke to begin with, but just " Children, have ye anything to eat? " They knew they had nothing to eat, they knew they were on starvation diet on the course they were on. Then, as we know, when they do arrive at the shore, Jesus Himself had prepared the repast. It is very affecting, and I think we can see that it is the way the Lord has brought about recovery in these days—not by chiding, but by bringing us back to the consciousness of family affection.

E.J.H. Is not independency disruptive of family feelings?

G.R.C. It certainly is.

*Ques.* Would you say something as to the difference in the way in which John is referred to in v. 2, and v. 7? In v. 2 he is just one of the sons of Zebedee.

G.R.C. In v. 7 " That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved says to Peter, It is the Lord ". It may be he is described thus in v. 7 because his sensibilities had become alert; he was the first one recovered.

W.S.S. J.T. used to draw attention to the fact that

the Lord said "Come and dine"—a very dignified suggestion—before He adjusts them.

G.R.C. That is very touching, too. There was no probing of Peter until they had dined.

W.S.S. The Lord brought fish, and then He says "Bring of the fishes which ye have now taken". There must be something special in that.

G.R.C. Their recovery was brought about in the first instance by obedience, although they did not recognise Him. He said to them "Cast the net at the right side of the ship and ye will find". Though they were still blind as to Himself, they obey what He says.

E.I. Would there be any link between this chapter and chapter 6, where the feeding comes in, and quite a crowd of them move off, and the Lord raises the question as to whether they would go away, and Peter says "To whom shall we go?"

G.R.C. That seems to be somewhat different. The point here seems to be that they obeyed the word, although they had not recognised Jesus. They must have felt the fatherly touch, though they did not recognise yet that it was He. "Children, have ye anything to eat?" And I think many of us have been affected by things in this way. A fatherly touch has come to us, it was from the Lord, but it came through those He used; and we have not realised, perhaps, in a direct way, that it was the Lord; but there has been the fatherly touch, a sense of care for our souls, and it has led us to be prepared to give heed to the word. And so they acted, they cast the net at the right side of the ship, "and could no longer draw it from the multitude of fishes". Now there are results, it is no longer a question of "have ye anything to eat?" They had got a multitude of fishes. You can see how this happened in the revival. The persons separating, in the early days especially, must have wondered whom they could have fellowship with; but the net has enclosed a multitude of fishes. It may not be many in actual number, a hundred and

fifty-three. But they are those available to walk with. The net has enclosed a multitude of fishes, so that we are not left alone, we follow righteousness, faith, love and peace *with those* who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, and they are wonderful persons. Persons who have really passed through the exercises we have had before us are wonderful persons, they are great fishes. It is good to be in their company, and it is real food. We have to take account of the idea of feeding on one another. Fellowship is a matter of feeding. We can feed on the clean fishes.

A.T.B. Would "the early morn already breaking", and "Jesus stood on the shore" have something to do with this? I take it the morn is in relation to that glorious Person coming in.

G.R.C. The sense that the coming of the Lord publicly is imminent was a main-spring in the present revival. The morn is about to break. But then Jesus Himself comes; and John is the first one who recognises Him—the disciple that Jesus loved. He says "It is the Lord". It is a great thing when we recognise His present manifestations.

J.Hgs. Does the reference to "This is already the third time" suggest that the present period is characterised by the Lord's manifestations?

G.R.C. The Lord does indicate in chapter 14 that He manifests Himself. It is a characteristic feature of the whole period—the whole period has been sustained by manifestations of the Lord. But these three are outstanding, two of them being foundational, which we should take full account of; and then this one being on the line of recovery.

G.R.D. Would you say that the Lord, in His dealings with us, on the line of recovery, has always in view to bring the assembly into prominence? I was thinking particularly of the days we are in, and the peculiar way assembly light and affections have been recovered. Whatever there may be in the way of depar-

ture through leaders or others, the line the Lord takes, in recovery, is to really make the assembly shine, and the personnel of the assembly come into greater prominence.

G.R.C. So that the net here did not break. Then as you say, the personnel are distinguished persons. I think in the light of this scripture, we ought to value one another very greatly, and we ought each to be exercised that we qualify for this, to be among what are called "great fishes".

P.H.H. How far would you take the thought of what is fatherly in this exercise? Verse 5, "Children". Would that element continue in the assembly as known to us practically now? It is the fatherhood of Jesus here; I suppose it continues in others, in a man like Paul.

G.R.C. I would say those who have helped us are those who have approached us on this line.

P.H.H. Does that ensure the affections, and the beginning of assembly affections?

G.R.C. I think so. We have been approached in a fatherly way, and we have had a touch of the family, and that is the way of recovery.

P.H.H. I was just thinking that, the family.

G.R.C. Yes. "By this shall all know that ye are disciples of mine, if ye have love amongst yourselves". Ch. 13 : 35. In that chapter the Lord calls them children, and really His service there is parental. A father will do anything for his children. He washed their feet.

R.C. Is that the way Paul took matters up with the Corinthians?

G.R.C. He took matters up as a father. They were his beloved children. How affectionately he exhorted them!

-.S. Is it not Christ's greatness and glory that He takes on such a diversity of positions?

G.R.C. It is in Him we learn fatherhood, "He that has seen me has seen the Father" Ch. 14 : 9. Fatherhood is perfectly set out in the Lord. So that the fathers

know him that is from the beginning; and I think it is the touch of fatherhood, and the family, that would impress all of us; specially, perhaps, those who have come into fellowship from outside. It is finding family conditions, which are not found around, that touches the heart, and helps us to move in response to the word.

A.P.B. Would it not be part of a father's love and vigilance for his children to see to matters that are not right? It is important that things should be done in a right way. It is not true fatherly care to let things drift, and not take them up, on the ground that we have got to feed people, and leave them to arrive at things themselves. People sometimes suggest that we must not say anything to these brethren, they are only weak, and they have gone astray, let us just show them love, and feed them, and so on. But the Lord, in *His* fatherly activities, while He acted in wonderful tenderness and grace, *did* take matters up. Recovery started from His doing something about it.

G.R.C. That is most important. He says "Come and dine ", but they were not very happy. It says " But none of the disciples dared inquire of Him, who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord ". There were things to be adjusted, and especially with Peter. Therefore, when they had dined, it says, " Jesus says to Simon ", and He begins to take things up. He takes them up with the leader, but in the presence of the others, so that all would be searched. If Peter was being searched, all were going to be searched to the very bottom.

-.G. This is a resurrection scene, the Lord is out of death. What does the shore mean? Were they not standing with Him on resurrection ground?

G.R.C. He was risen and they were in company with Him and they dined. How strengthened they must have been. But then the Lord begins to take matters up, and that is something that has to be done.

L.A.C. Is this the line on which we qualify for



witness? J.B.S. said ' We do not wish to be lecturers, but witnesses '. John refers to himself in v. 24 as a witness. I wondered if witness comes by way of this process of purification?

G.R.C. I think we are all tested by J.B.S.'s words, especially those who have a little part in the ministry. We speak a lot about these things, but what a pity if we are only lecturers. The thing is to be witnesses, and I do not see how one can be a true witness apart from purification. It is a real matter, beginning with John the baptist, in chapter 1. He was the witness that came to bear witness concerning the light, and what a witness he was! He made nothing of himself. First you get his witness concerning himself. And what was it? He would not claim to be anything but a voice, and not worthy to be a slave. But then you get his witness concerning Christ, and how much he can say of Christ. We need to be emptied of self, and to say much of Christ. But often we are afraid to say much of Christ because it will bring reproach—we shall lose our life in this world, and we are often not prepared for that.

W.S.S. Does the recovery here link with the saints being brought to the same appreciation of His people, as the Lord Himself, represented, on the one hand, in the fish, and on the other hand in the sheep and the lambs?

G.R.C. Quite so. The Lord is securing in these days great fish. They come out of the elements around, but in the very process of coming out, they become morally great. Peter was a sample in this chapter. He had been a leader, but now the Lord deals with him in the presence of the others. So this was a searching time for the whole company.

G.R.D. Is it the light of the recovery of the truth of the assembly that would bring into prominence the great value of our being together, and having everything in the light with one another?

G.R.C. It is. The Lord probed Peter to the very

depths, but in the presence of his brethren, in the presence of those whom he had led astray. But how it would lay the basis for mutual love in the circle.

G.R.D. That is just what I was meaning. The recovery of assembly affections means that there is a sphere where adjustment can work out in that kind of love.

G.R.C. So while the Lord is probing Peter, it is not so much a question of what Peter says, and yet it is delightful when a brother who has sinned makes a public confession before all, spontaneously; it is most affecting.

A.T.B. Would you say something about Peter being used. It says, before he was adjusted, that "he went up and drew the net to land full of great fishes".

G.R.C. He was obeying the word, he was an obedient man. The Lord says "Bring of the fishes which ye have now taken. Simon Peter went up and drew the net to the land full of great fishes". He is under command, and at this point, through John's help, he knows who it is that is commanding him. So that he is outwardly a recovered man. But now the Lord deals with him inwardly.

J.O.T.D. Is there any suggestion of there being a tinge of rivalry in regard of Peter's love for the Lord? One would speak carefully about it, but the Lord says "lovest thou me more than these?"

G.R.C. That is what I thought. The Lord is searching Peter, on a feature of the flesh which is perhaps one of the last we learn to judge. Peter really loved the Lord, but he was marked by self-confidence in that devotion, there was mixed with it self-confidence, so that he says in ch. 13 : 37, "I will lay down my life for thee". And in this passage, the Lord is probing him, for he really thought that he loved the Lord more than the others. In Matt. 26 : 33 he said "If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended". In other words, Peter thought he was the best brother in the

meeting, and that is one of the last things, I suppose, that dies with any one of us. A great fish is a man who is so purified in that respect that he esteems the brethren as better than himself.

W.B.H. Less than the least, like Paul.

P.L. And that could be fed upon. They fell upon Paul's neck and covered him with kisses. You were speaking of feeding on the fish.

G.R.C. Very good. What food and comfort brethren would get in seeing Paul, and his whole manner of life! What a delight to have fellowship with him in a practical way!

A.W.G.T. Would the secret lie in having an understanding of the greatness of the assembly, and every one in it. It would save us from these stupid ideas that we are something.

G.R.C. It would. Those stupid ideas mark that which is born of the flesh. "That which is born of flesh is flesh", and it intrudes in these matters. There is real affection for Christ, but that which is born of the flesh gets mixed up with it, we allow the mixture, and thus think we are a bit better, more devoted, than other people.

A.J.G. If you take up feeding the lambs, and shepherding the sheep, it will help you, because you will not have much time to trouble about yourself.

G.R.C. That is very good.

E.J.H. In the ground that Peter took, was he not really seeking to glorify himself? But as a recovered and purified man, he is going to have his original desire in laying down his life, but he is going to do it then to glorify God, as Jesus did.

G.R.C. Very good. His motives were purified. No doubt he had the true desire, he said "I will lay down my life for thee", and the Lord gave him the privilege, but not until he was purified. So that in doing it, self was not before him at all, but the glory of God.

P.H.H. Is there something in these words "know",

and "love", which appear in this section? I am think-ing particularly of the end of v. 17 "Lord, thou knowest all things" which apparently is conscious knowledge; but then "thou knowest that I am attached to thee". Is that more what the Lord could see, objective knowledge. Was it now shining in Peter adjusted and purified?

G.R.C. That is very good. This three-fold probe had had a great effect on him, so that he could say "thou knowest" in the objective sense. There was that which the Lord could take account of.

P.H.H. So, as extending the matter, the brethren ought to be able to see that we do love the Lord, and we love the brethren.

G.R.C. And as we were reminded yesterday, the great point is to love the Lord in incorruption. It is remarkable it should be put that way. It does not suggest that persons may not love the Lord, but there may be a mixture. Peter had loved the Lord, but not in incorruption.

P.B. Is the Lord directing Peter's attention to the idea of the flock? Is that where true love for the Lord is tested?

G.R.C. And the change from fish to sheep is interesting. There was the fish-gate, and the sheep-gate; the fish come out of the element of death, the corruption around, and it is in that exercise that saints become great fishes; but then, that is not the whole matter. Viewed as fishes we are persons still left in the old surroundings, but going against the stream, and "they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same sink of corruption" 1 Peter 4:4. So that "fishes" views the saints more on the line of Romans, and 1 Peter. But then there is another view of the saints, and that is "sheep". And that has in view our collective relations as under the one Shepherd, who leads us into new surroundings—eternal life.

P.L. So that the hundred and fifty-three great

fishes you could link on by way of illustration, with the salutations to those eminent spiritual persons in Romans 16. They have come through all this element you refer to. And then shepherding the flock which He purchased with the blood of His own, what about that? Is that viewing the saints Ephesian-wise?

G.R.C. I would say so. And is not the flock an initial thought? Everything else in a collective, or corporate, sense springs out of that, for it says that Jacob served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep. So that the truth of the assembly as wife springs from the saints being fed and shepherded, as one flock. In John you have got the one flock (ch. 10), and the family (ch. 11). One thing merges into the other. If you have got the flock, then you will have the family, and then the body, the assembly, but you must have the flock initially. So it is "shepherd the assembly of God, which he has purchased with the blood of his own", and he speaks of the "flock wherein the Holy Spirit has set you as overseers" Acts 20 : 28. We never cease to be the flock, we never cease to need shepherd care. But then the higher truths are super-imposed on that, as it were. Having got the sheep, the Lord led them out, free from all other associations. All our associations are in the flock. It says the Lord leads them out, and they hear His voice, and they follow Him. So that we are moving together, flock-wise, and it is in that setting that the family can develop, according to chapter 11. Really John 11 illustrates the fact that no one can pluck the sheep out of His hand, and yet the setting there is a family. Death comes to take one of the sheep away, and you have the Father and the Son brought into that chapter, proving the truth of the Lord's words that "none can pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one". So at the grave of Lazarus you have the Father and the Son as One, operating to rescue that sheep. It is a proof to us that not one of Christ's sheep can perish. But then as rescued from



death, we find Lazarus in the family setting. The family setting is greater than the flock. And then, as you move to chapter 13, you come to what, in Paul's ministry, would be the body setting, and the assembly setting.

A.T.B. Do we see in Peter's epistle, that he had come really into the good of all the probing? He says in chapter 5 : 2, " shepherd the flock of God ".

G.R.C. How unselfish the service of a true shepherd is, it is not *his* flock. He says there " the flock of God "; and here the Lord says " Feed *my* lambs ", " Shepherd *my* sheep ", " Feed *my* sheep ". But how deep the probing went! The Lord had seen Peter alone over the matter of denial, and in that way, his personal relations with the Lord on that question were settled; but the Lord opened the matter up here, in the presence of all the brethren, because he had made his statement in the presence of all the brethren. It was in the presence of all the brethren he had said " I will lay down my life for thee ". He had made that boast in real affection, but with self-confidence. Self was before him in a way which he would not understand at the time. In the presence of the brethren, according to Mark, he had said " Even if all should be offended, yet not I ". He was disparaging the brethren, as compared with himself. And so in the presence of the brethren, and those he had just led astray, this probing comes in, three times. " Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time "—not only that the Lord said it the third time—but because on the third time, the Lord drops down to his word. Up till then, the Lord had said " Lovest thou me?" the settled disposition of love, and Peter uses his own word, " thou knowest that I am attached to thee ". But then the third time the Lord says " Art thou attached to me?" As though to say, You are not saying what I am saying, but is what *you* are saying even, really true? And that cut Peter to the very depth of his being.

M.H.T. In Nehemiah 3, in connection with the rebuilding of the wall, the first two gates mentioned are the sheep-gate, and the fish-gate; and of the sheep-gate it says "they hallowed it, and set up its doors", and of the fish-gate it says "they laid its beams, and set up its doors, its lock and its bars". In regard to the sheep-gate it records what the Lord says in the earlier chapter, that they may go in and out and find pasture, there is liberty. But is there a suggestion of certain restriction in regard to the fish-gate?

G.R.C. I think so. So that in Matthew 13 the fishermen sit down and deliberate. They put the good into vessels, and they cast the bad away. There are no bad fish here, all those caught are great fishes.

E.A.K. Therefore, could we bring into this chapter the thought of David recovering all and David's spoil? Is it not a greater matter, in the universal conflict, that we should have our eye on that which is David's spoil, that which is connected with the assembly? In the light of the assembly, there is really nothing that the Lord has not recovered. "David recovered all", 1 Sam. 30 : 18.

G.R.C. So you mean that every feature proper to the assembly is recovered in these last days.

E.A.K. Yes. But do we not tend to be occupied with our side of matters whether it is a local conflict, or what is universal? Do you not think the Spirit would help us to have our eye upon David's spoil, what is for the Lord Jesus, what He gets for Himself out of it?

G.R.C. And how that would lead us, in incorrupt affections, to feed His lambs, shepherd His sheep, and feed His sheep!

E.J.H. What is the difference between feeding and shepherding?

G.R.C. He puts the shepherding first.

—S. Would Psalm 78 help on that point, "he fed them according to the integrity of his heart"—feeding, and "led them by the skilfulness of his hands" v. 72—leading?

E.J.H. Does shepherding suggest what we might speak of as arduous work? When Jacob takes it up he says of the actual shepherding "Thus it was with me: in the day the heat consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep fled from mine eyes" Gen. 31 : 40.

G.R.C. Much work is involved in shepherding—"shepherd the assembly of God". That is the highest level of shepherding, and that is the great end in view in shepherding. Sheep need care and attention all the time, and from that standpoint we all need it. But it is in view of our learning our place in the family, our place in the body, and thus learning to function in the assembly. There is a great deal to be done, if sheep are to be so shepherded that the persons are fully functioning in the assembly.

A.J.G. So that in Ezekiel 34 the Lord speaks to the shepherds of Israel and says "The weak have ye not strengthened, nor have ye healed the sick, and have not bound up what was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought for that which was lost" v. 4. Does not that give some idea of what is involved in shepherding?

G.R.C. It certainly does, and it is all arduous. How much we need help as to it.

A.P.B. Do not all those activities result in the flock being together in one place, where they can be fed?

G.R.C. The shepherding would have in mind that all the flock are together, and happily feeding in peace. And this is the proof of our love for Christ. Peter said he would lay down his life for Him, but having in mind that he would do more than others would do; but that motive is to go completely; the proof of love for Christ is feeding the lambs, shepherding the sheep, and feeding the sheep—incorruptible affection for Christ.

E.I. David, the shepherd king, showed these features. At the end he said "I have sinned . . . but these sheep, what have they done?" 2 Sam. 24 : 17.

L.L. True affection for the saints would only be

realised when we think of how far the Lord has been for us—"Until he find it".

G.R.C. And so the Lord goes on and we need to make way for the full probing. The Lord would probe us all as to whether we love Him in incorruption, that is Ephesian love. It was soon corrupted at Ephesus. Our affections can soon be corrupted. The probing brings out just that point, Do I love the Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption? Is there any mixture of self in it, anywhere? If so, I am not a fully purified man. And so how deep this probing goes with Peter, until there is this cry, this anguished cry, from his heart, "Lord, thou knowest all things; *thou* knowest that I am attached to thee". He is not going to display it before anybody else again, so long as the Lord knows. "*Thou* knowest that I am attached to thee"—I will never say anything about it to anyone else again, but thou knowest it. And then the Lord goes on to speak of the death by which he would glorify God, that he would have his desire, he would die for the Lord, and he would glorify God in it. There would be no corruption in it. And having said this, He brings in this final word, "Follow me".

F.P.S. What is the weakness seen in Peter asking about John?

G.R.C. I think it shows the fickleness of the human heart even to the last moment. We cannot trust our own hearts. After all this, and after being told how he would glorify God in his death, then it says "Peter turning round". What was he turning round for? The Lord had just said "Follow me". His eye should have been on the Lord. "Peter turning round, sees the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also leaned at supper on his breast, and said, Lord, who is it that delivers thee up?" John was already following, the Lord had not had to tell him. Even though Peter turned round, why should he have raised the question? I believe it shows the fickleness of our hearts, and how we get our eyes on one another. Before we know where

we are, we get occupied with one another, and what somebody else is doing, instead of just with a single eye and a pure heart following the Lord, and doing our part. He turns round to look at his brother. Now who of us cannot say that that is just what is natural to our hearts. But then, when he looks round he sees a man doing what the Lord had told *him* to do, "he sees the disciple whom Jesus loved following". Well, that should have settled the matter anyway.

G.R.D. In the assembly there is a great danger of our getting our eyes on one another because we are so near one another, whereas this section of the chapter stresses that the Lord retains direct links with each one of His own.

G.R.C. Yes, with every sheep. And it is specially important for those who, in any way, are influencing the brethren or giving a lead.

G.R.D. Would you say that probing is particularly the Lord's prerogative?

G.R.C. It is the Lord's prerogative, and He has His own way of doing it. I would think He may do it sometimes mediately now. He may use others to do it. I have been very much searched at times by words certain brothers have said to me; they have not known how much they searched me.

P.H.H. Do you see any reference to the breast-plate here? According to Numbers the names and stones in the breast-plate are according to their setting in the testimony. Is there a danger, perhaps unrecognised by us, to quarrel with where another man has been placed?

G.R.C. How many have gone astray on that account. They have turned round to see what someone else was doing. But then, he sees John following. I mean, John, at this time, was fully recovered, and he was already following. That should have been sufficient for Peter; the Lord had said to him "Follow me", and he sees John following. How gladly he should have taken his place alongside John; we follow with those who call



on the Lord out of a pure heart. And of course, in Acts, Peter did take his place alongside of John, we see them following together. But here, it is a turn aside, he turned round, and then even though he sees John following he says "What of this man?"

A.P.B. In what way is the Lord moving? Peter followed the Lord right through His earthly pathway. Now the Lord really was the ascending One, and how would he now follow Him? It would not be the few days the Lord would still be with them, would it?

G.R.C. I think it was the whole of Peter's path in testimony.

A.P.B. And how can we follow the Lord in that sense? How does it apply to us?

G.R.C. He says "Follow thou me". They are the Lord's last words in this gospel. "Follow *thou* me". And that should come home to every one of us. I think it means that we maintain a single eye, and a pure heart. I believe a person who answers to this is a purified person; he has the Lord alone as Object and Motive, and he finds others the same, calling on the Lord out of a pure heart, and he walks along with them. But not as occupied with what they are doing exactly; if we get occupied with what one another are doing, all sorts of rivalries may come in. But we are moving on together as calling on the Lord out of a pure heart, as I understand it.

A.J.G. And is the leading of the Lord discerned in the ministry that He gives?

G.R.C. I think it is. Does not the movement of the cloud enter into it?

E.A.K. Would the word in John 12 : 26 fit in here, "If any one serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall be my servant". Do we get the relationship of the servant with the Lord in the testimonial path, and then the intimacy that goes with it?

G.R.C. That is very good. And He adds "him shall the Father honour".

## GOD AS PRESENTED IN THE GOSPELS

MATTHEW 1: 21-23; MARK 1: 1; LUKE 1: 32;  
JOHN 1: 1; PSALM 150: 1, 6

I wish to say a word about God, particularly in the way He is referred to at the commencement of each gospel. Matthew brings in what I suppose is the greatest *title* of God; "they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, 'God with us'." I think it may be right to say that 'El' is the greatest title of God. I am speaking of title now in contrast to name. A title may be attached to a false God; the Old Testament makes clear that Jehovah is the only true 'El', the only One who has a right to that title. When the name is proclaimed it says "Jehovah, Jehovah El merciful and gracious", Ex. 34: 6, and in v. 14 it says "For thou shalt worship no other El; for Jehovah—Jealous is his name—is a jealous El". It is important to understand the titles of God, and therefore, in a special way, this title, El. It refers to God as the One in whom alone is strength. God stands in His own strength, and no strength exists anywhere apart from Him. All other strength is derived. Whether we think of animate or inanimate bodies, whatever power or strength there is in the universe, it is all derived from El, who alone has strength in Himself, the Mighty God. We can understand that title being introduced in Matthew, because in Matthew it is a question of the testimony going through, and of persons going through with the testimony; and the persons who will go through with the testimony are those who can say "Emmanuel", "El, with us". For if El is the source of all strength and He is with us, it means nothing can stand against us. Paul enumerates at the end of Romans 8 the things that might be against us, and that might be against the

testimony, but they are all creatures, they have no strength in themselves, no inherent strength. "Death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any *other creature*," everything in the universe is a creature. The greatest powers against us are only creature, but *God* is with us. Therefore the testimony *must* go through; and those who learn to call Jesus by this name, Emmanuel, will go through with it, because they are the ones who can say "God is with *us*".

When we think of strength, we must not limit the idea to physical strength. When we speak of a strong man, we do not always mean physical strength, we more often mean a man with strength of character. That is the great and glorious feature which stands out in all its excellence in God. God stands in the strength of His own nature and character, immovable and unchanging. Nothing ever turned Him aside. His nature and character in the past were unknown. A certain amount of light was given, as when the name was proclaimed, in Exodus 34. But full light as to the nature and character of God was not disclosed. It necessitated One coming whose name would be called Emmanuel, to disclose in all its radiance, the nature and character of God. God is now in the light, there is no doubt now as to what He is in His nature and character; all is in display, and where is it in display? In Jesus! Jesus is the effulgence of God's glory, and the expression of his substance, (Heb. 1 : 3). It is a most amazing thing—the radiance of it. If only our spiritual eye-sight could take in the radiance of what is in display now, God shining forth in a Man, in the effulgence of His glory. I am not suggesting that any creature could take it all in, but it is *there*, in that glorious and glorified Man. The holiest means, if we know what it is to enter there, that we are in the contemplation of that glorious and glorified Man, who is the effulgence of God's glory, the expression of His substance. And so scripture speaks of being "strengthened

with all power according to the *might* of his glory ” Col. 1 : 11. If we are to become strong in the testimony, if we are to develop strength in a right sense (I am speaking now of strength of character to stand against allcomers) we must derive it from El. And we derive it in a particular way in the holiest. That verse refers to those who enter the holiest, “ strengthened with all power according to the might of his glory ”. The Psalmist says in Psalm 63 : 2, “ To see thy power and thy glory, as I have beheld thee in the sanctuary ”, and in Psalm 68 “ They have seen thy goings, O God, the goings of my God, my king, in the sanctuary ”, and again in v. 35, “ He it is that giveth strength and might unto the people ”. How little we know of this, and yet we see it illustrated in a man like Stephen, strengthened with all power according to the might of God’s glory; nothing could overthrow him. All the power of the world and Satan combined could not overthrow Stephen, who was completely victorious in the darkest hour. That is how the testimony works out, *Emmanuel*, God with us.

So this gospel shows the resource we have in God in the testimony, how complete it is. At the end the name of the only true El is declared, the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. There is no need to be in any doubt as to who the true El is. The Jehovah of the Old Testament is now known by this great and glorious name. The meaning of Jehovah still attaches to Him, a great name in itself, but we have this greater name, the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And the title El attaches equally to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. We have spoken of the Son, the effulgence of God’s glory. Think of the might of glory that shines in Him, who also upholds all things by the word of His power. We have the Son, in a peculiar way, as our resource, “ there am I in the midst of them ” Matt. 18 : 20, and, “ behold, I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age ” Matt. 28 : 20. But this gospel shows also that we

have the Father as our resource. The Lord uses that name about forty times in Matthew. And the Father is brought in in connection with needs down here, whether our personal needs, or the needs of the testimony; the Father is the great ultimate resource. The Lord says in Matthew 18, where it is a question of assembly administration, “ if two of you shall agree on the earth concerning any matter, *whatsoever it may be that they shall ask*, it shall come to them from my Father who is in the heavens. For where two or three are gathered together to my name, there *am I* ”, and the Father stands committed to support such a position as that. How little we have learned to have faith and confidence in keeping with this name Emmanuel. How little we have made use of the verse, “ if two of you ”—two of the assembly—“ shall agree on the earth ”. Normally it would embrace all of the assembly in a locality, they would all be in the matter. But there might only be two. One feels that if we understood the resource better, we might not be deploring so much the smallness of meetings, because it might be they would not remain small. I would have thought in a small meeting the first thing that would be done would be to ask the Father for more of the great fishes. At the same time, the Lord shows for our comfort, that if there are only two or three, the thing is workable. Matthew has in mind the praise of God, and the heavenly administration of the assembly. The praise of God is in view in chapter 16, in “ my assembly ”, and opposed to that is hades’ gates. Hades is the place of silence; all the operations of the devil are to silence the praise of God in the assembly, but he will never succeed, because El is with us. And so the administration of chapter 18 is supported with all the power of God, so that the gates of hades might never prevail, that the praises might never be brought into silence. On the cross (in this gospel) the Lord uses the words of Psalm 22, “ My El, my El, why hast thou forsaken me?” And the answer is in Psalm 22, “ thou art holy ”.



Now that brings me to another point, and that is, as I have already said, that the title El relates to the nature and character of God, His strength in that way. You will find when that title is used in the Old Testament, it nearly always has reference to some attribute of God, or some feature of His character—The most high El, the Almighty El, the living El, the faithful El, Jehovah El, merciful and gracious, abundant in goodness and truth and so on. And so in many other passages. The answer thus to “My El, my El, why hast thou forsaken me?” is “thou art holy, thou that dwellest amid the praises of Israel”. What a transaction the cross is, when we think of who the Person is who was there! Because of who He is He knew fully, in an absolute way, the nature and character of God, and all that He is against sin, and all that had to be met. That transaction could never have been completed except for such a Person being in the position, who understood it fully. Perfect Man, taking our place, yet knowing fully all that was involved, because He is God.

Now I pass on to the gospel of Mark. It opens in this abrupt way, “Beginning of the glad tidings of Jesus Christ, Son of God”. Now the word God here would correspond with “Elohim” in the Old Testament. That is, it is God in reference to creation—God in His supremacy in relation to the works of His hands. I think you can see the distinction I am drawing; not God now in relation to His inherent strength, whether in what we call a physical way, or in connection with His nature and character; but God in His supremacy relative to the works of His hands—the One to whom all worship is due from the creature. It is from Him the gospel goes out. “Beginning of the glad tidings of Jesus Christ, Son of God”; the Son of God had come with glad tidings, sent from the heart of the Creator, the supreme Elohim. God never forgets His creatures. On man’s side the conscious link is severed, but God never forgets the relationship of creature and Creator. And, as

I say, the gospel goes out from the very heart of the Creator, and that is why at the end of this gospel the Lord's word is "Go into all the world, and preach the glad tidings to all the creation" Ch. 16 : 15. The heart of the Creator goes out to *all* the creation, He never forgets it; though we forget Him He never forgets us. In Isaiah 9 : 6 it is said of Jesus Himself that "his name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace". The very One who, as risen, in Manhood, was saying to them "Go into all the world, and preach the glad tidings to all the creation" was the One by whom the worlds were made. All the feelings of the Creator were fully manifested in that glorious Man. It is important that we should know these feelings, and have feelings about all the creation. The Creator has planned to free the creation from the bondage of corruption. You say, The gospel is for our blessing. So it is. It stands related to eternal purpose, to bring in the family of the firstborn. But then, it says "for the anxious looking out of the creature expects the revelation of the sons of God" Rom. 8 : 19. "The glad tidings of Jesus Christ, Son of God" is to secure sons for God, and to secure sons for God at the present time, with a view to those sons being revealed. When the sons, secured now through the gospel, are revealed, the whole creation will be delivered "from the bondage of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God". All this should encourage us with gospel feelings, and gospel energies. In one way this is the spearhead of the testimony, the glad tidings—"Go into all the world, and preach the glad tidings to all the creation". The witnesses of Luke are behind it, they are supporting the glad tidings, but the glad tidings come as the first impact, as it were, of the testimony upon men in power. They may have been affected by witnesses, as they were in Acts 2, but it was the preaching of Peter that affected them. So you can see, from that standpoint, that Mark precedes Matthew. It is

quite right, I am sure, that Matthew should come first in the New Testament—the gospel that deals with the course of the testimony, the maintenance of what is for God in praise and administration. But then, if we are to have persons such as the Lord speaks of at the end of Matthew, “Go, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”—if we are to have persons available to be made disciples of—they must be secured through the glad tidings. “Go into all the world, and preach the glad tidings to all the creation. He that believes and is baptised shall be saved”. You get material thus, to be discipled, and taught, and brought into the assembly.

In Luke the word is “He shall be great, and shall be called Son of the Highest”. You will see from the note that “Highest” is the same as in Genesis 14 : 18, “the Most High”. It is remarkable how these titles are brought forward into the New Testament, nothing is discarded. And so the Lord Jesus is presented in Luke as Son of the Most High. Later, it says “do good, and lend . . . and ye shall be sons of the Most High”. Ch. 6 : 35. How we need to know God as Most High, and to know the Lord Jesus as Son of the Most High—the true Melchisedec, the true Priest, as He is presented in Luke. His functions are at present Aaronic, but He is Priest after the order of Melchisedec, Son of the Most High. We need this title in order that we may be preserved in moral elevation from all that is around. Luke brings in the service of praise in the temple. It is not to be on the level of anything on earth. And so when the heavenly host praise at the beginning, they say “Glory to God in the highest”; think of the level of it! Praise in Zion will be a great matter in the day to come, but what marks the assembly period is “Glory to God in the highest”. I do not apprehend that the heavenly host themselves were rendering glory to God in the highest; I apprehend it to be a prophetic statement. As

a result of the incarnation, there would be glory to Him in the highest. And where is it found? In the assembly. In Christ, of course, personally; but to be found in that heavenly vessel, "to him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus", Eph. 3 : 21. And while we are still here, in the scene of testimony, we are to be marked by the moral elevation proper to that heavenly vessel. It is a question of the character of our service and praise. "Glory to God in the highest" is what we, as of the assembly, should be capable of rendering. And corresponding with it, our testimony to men, "do ye remain in the city till ye be clothed with power from *on high*", Luke 24 : 49. And so, you see, this title of God is brought forward to maintain us at a true elevation, above the level of current religion; and on the other hand, to enable us to be with God in His government; not submerged and depressed by what is happening down here, but recognising that "the Most High ruleth over the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will". Daniel 4 : 32. And so you find in the early chapters of Luke, how government is stressed. We are told of the various rulers who were reigning in the land of Palestine when the word of God came to John and of the decree of Caesar Augustus; the Most High was ruling in the kingdoms of men. These two features connected with God as Most High should ever be with us. The service of praise should be on the highest level, worthy of our God, and on the other hand, we should be able to confide in Him as to all matters of government. So that we are not depressed, nor over-occupied with earthly things; we have access to the One who rules over the kingdoms of men, and gives them to whomsoever He will; and who may set up over them the basest of men, if it suits Him. He does according to His own will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and we have access to Him. And having access to Him in that way, as to governmental matters, if we really take it up, will mean that



we shall never be deflected in the praise. What is happening here will never unduly disturb us. It is wonderful how we prove His government, that *He is*, the Most High, and that *He is* ruling in the kingdom of men. We prove it day by day! What He is doing in government, even in detail, such as our having this hall tonight, is all setting forward the testimony.

But sometimes things may happen that seem untoward. How untoward it seemed when Caesar Augustus made his decree that a census should be taken. One might have said, 'What an awkward time for Mary to take that journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Has the Most High given up His over-ruling hand?' Such questions are apt to arise in our minds, when things that mean discomfort, and are contrary to natural calculations occur. But we are not to be disturbed. They arrived at Bethlehem, and there was no room for them in the Inn. Again one might have said, 'What an untoward circumstance; surely God has given up control! Surely He is not interested in the matter at all. Things have all gone wrong.' But it was the Son of the Most High who was about to be born. The Most High was ordering every circumstance; indeed, even as to the very birth of Christ, Mary had been told "power of the Most High shall overshadow thee". So what seemed so untoward was all part of God's ways in testimony. And the heavenly hosts were not disturbed. They did not think anything wrong had happened. They said, "Glory to God in the highest". The very birth of Christ in those circumstances was the sign, "And this is the sign to you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger". It was necessary in the ways of God, that the Son of the Most High should be born in the most lowly place; that there should be nothing that men call high attaching to His birth. The title Most High is introduced in scripture when kings were fighting one another; kings are called the High and Mighty Princes of the earth. When He who was



the Son of the Most High, and who later, in Zacharias' theme of praise, is Himself called the Most High, (for he says of John the baptist, "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High; for thou shalt go before the face of Jehovah . . ." Luke 1 : 76) came, it was necessary in God's ways that He should be in the most low place here, with nothing that *men* call 'highness' attaching to Him, so that, *true* highness, *true* moral elevation might come into evidence. Anything connected with man's highness and greatness would have spoiled the lustre of the incarnation. How great Christ is, that He needed nothing that men think great and high, to enhance His greatness. Well, our witness is to be in keeping with this. We are witnesses when we praise, "Whosoever offereth praise glorifieth me" Ps. 50 : 23. The saints engaged in the high praises of God are a great witness, in some ways the greatest witness. But then we are to be witnesses at all times. "Ye are witnesses of these things. . . . ye be clothed with power from on high". Think of the elevation of power from *on high*.

I am saying these things to bring *God* before us. God, the Mighty El, Elohim, the great Creator, whose heart is moved towards His creation, and is acting with a view to its complete liberation; and then the Most High, the One who is ruling in the kingdoms of men so that we can rest under His shadow, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" Ps. 91 : 1. We can be restful there, and, as restful there, maintain the service and the witness on the highest level.

We now come to John, to what is most choice; and if we think of what is brought forward from the Old Testament, what is brought forward in John is the Name, not a title but the Name, the Name of the Old Testament, "I am that I am". That was God's personal name as known in the Old Testament. That name comprises three designations. "I am" is God's own

assertion of His self-existence; “Jah”, is the creature’s answer to it, “whose name is Jah” it says, Ps. 68 : 4. God says “I am”, the creature says “He is”. He is the One who alone has existence in Himself, the great and eternal God. Then “Jehovah”, refers to that great and eternal One coming into time, and into relationship with men—the One who is, and who was, and who is to come. Those three cognate words comprise the name, that is, the name of the Old Testament, and that is what is carried forward into John. It was when God disclosed His personal name in the Old Testament that He spoke of dwelling; and we come to what is most choice then. The choicest thought, as it were, in the heart of God, is to dwell. To bless, yes, to liberate, to give eternal life; all these things are necessary. But the choicest thing is that He would dwell. It is what His nature requires. In human affairs we dwell with those we love, we dwell with those with whom we have personal relations. Think of God entering into personal relations with men! With Israel, as a covenant God, but how wonderful the declaration today. The name was proclaimed then, but declared now. God Himself has declared it. The gospel of John thus opens with the assertion that Jesus is I am, the One who ever was and everything else began to be through Him. God alone has existence in Himself, all other things began to be. God alone ever was. The name carries with it the idea (though it is veiled) of what He is, “I am that I am”. I believe there is an indication in it that God is love, manifested in His desire to dwell, even to dwell in the bush; “the goodwill of him that dwelt in the bush”. What a God He is! And so as we think of this personal name of God in the Old Testament, how wonderful the personal name of God in the New—the full declaration, “the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him”. This gospel is a wonderful gospel, the declaration of God in a personal way, so that we should *know* Him. And when I speak of a

personal way, when you come to Christianity it means knowing three Persons; it is not only knowing God in His nature and character—that is most blessed—shining forth in a Man; but having personal relations with the Persons of the Godhead, and brought into them by One in such a position, “the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father”. He introduces us, as in that position, into these personal loving relations with the Father, and with Himself, and with the Holy Spirit. So this gospel not only speaks about dwelling—and it uses the word abide which is a strong word for dwelling, there is a kind of permanency about it—it not only speaks much about dwelling, but much about knowing. As to the sheep, “I know those that are mine, and am known of those that are mine, as the Father knows me and I know the Father” Ch. 10 : 14. What a knowledge we have of the Son from that standpoint, “as the Father knows me and I know the Father”. And in chapter 14 : 7, “if ye had known me, ye would have known also my Father, and henceforth ye know him and have seen him”. The thing is that we should have a personal knowledge of God, and that means a personal knowledge of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; and in a most intimate way. Because, after all, our links with the Father and the Son and the Spirit are closer than any links we have in nature, and even closer than the links we have with one another, I would suppose, in the one body, and in the family. Surely our links with God Himself are closer than any. God known and loved, and in intimate relationship with us. What a conception this is! And God would dwell as thus known. We know the Son, “I know those that are mine, and am known of those that are mine”. I am not in any way contradicting another saying of the Lord that “No one knows the Son but the Father” Matt. 11 : 27, that is another idea altogether. I am referring to Jesus as having come forth, “the Word became flesh”, and “the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father”;

and He says I know my sheep, and am known of mine, as the Father knows me and I know the Father. ” Then He says as to the Father, “ henceforth ye know him and have seen him ”, and as to the Spirit, “ whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him nor know him; but ye know him ” John 14 : 17. What a knowledge this is, the personal knowledge of God. We know the Father, we know the Son, and we know the Spirit. And how has it all come about? Because the One who is shown so clearly to be the I am in the first three verses of chapter 1, became flesh, “ the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us ”. That is why He came—to dwell. That is why God has disclosed Himself in a personal way. We need to know the persons we live with, and love them; and therefore God wants us to know Him, and to love Him. He would dwell where He is thus known and loved. Dwelling is a most exquisite thought, the tabernacle of God with men. The great finality of it is in the book of Revelation; yet it is to be known now. The thought of dwelling and abiding runs right through the gospel. Nothing else would satisfy love. “ My Father will love him, and we will come to him ”. Why? Because of love! Love that could not stay away. Think of the wonder of the love of God, as thus manifested! If there are right conditions, His love is such that there is no question about it, His love requires that He should come, “ 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.” How blessed! We shall live in this economy of love all through eternity. It is our home. In another sense we may perhaps say that it is the home of divine Persons. God is ever dwelling, of course, in light unapproachable, into which we cannot penetrate, although we know it is light. We know that, in His absolute dwelling, God is not dwelling in darkness. It might have been thought so of old, but because of the way He has come out to us, we know that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all, and therefore we know

that, in those unapproachable conditions, He dwells in light. That is a great thing. We worship Him as we think of Him thus. But how wonderful these dwelling conditions among men, and what an appeal to our hearts it is that we should provide such conditions. Can we turn away from such a God as this? Can we be negligent about having the Lord's commandments and keeping them? Can we be so hard-hearted as to fail to keep His word, when love is waiting upon us, yearning to come, and have free dwelling conditions, and free intercourse with us? As was said earlier today, the Spirit will never leave us, however grieved He may be. But if we want to know God dwelling in the proper sense of the word, not only the Spirit, but also the Father and the Son, there must be conditions. And that is what the appeal to us is at a time like this, to provide the conditions.

But all knowledge of God is to lead up to praise. That is why I read in Psalm 150. It is praise to God indeed in the highest, if we bring the light of Christianity into it. "Hallelujah!", that is "Praise ye Jah", "praise El in his sanctuary". Let us lay hold, dear brethren, of those two things as understood in the light of the Christian revelation. The glory of God's name, the great self-existent God, known personally now, and the glory of His nature and character in full display in the sanctuary, "Praise ye Jah, Praise El in his sanctuary". "Let everything that hath breath praise Jah". Beloved brethren, may we get a deeper apprehension, a deeper knowledge of God. Paul prays for the Colossians that they may grow by the true, or full, knowledge of God. How we yearn for the full knowledge of God!

May the Lord use these few words to help us for His Name's sake.



## GREATNESS (I)

HEBREWS 1: 1-14; 2: 9, 10

G.R.C. In looking into this epistle we may consider, in the five readings, the greatness of the Person of Christ, the greatness of His priesthood, the greatness of His high priestly work in the offering of Himself, and then the greatness of the christian approach and service.

In considering these things we shall also be impressed with the greatness of God. The expression 'the greatness' is used in verse three, "... set himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high". Again in chapter 8: 1-2, it says, "We have such a one high priest who has sat down on (the) right hand of the throne of the greatness in the heavens; minister of the holy places," showing that the service of God as established in Christianity proceeds in the presence of the greatness, the Minister of the holy places having sat down there. We need to accustom ourselves to what is great, and indeed to become more accustomed to what is spoken of as 'the greatness'.

In chapter 1 the greatness of the Son is stressed. It is a stabilizing thing for our souls to apprehend the greatness of Christ and, if understood, it would free us from the vauntings of men. We are living in days when the pride of man is very much in evidence, especially in his achievements. But man and his glory fade into complete insignificance in the light of the greatness of the Son. In chapter 2: 9 He is called *Jesus*. Think of how great *Jesus* is! In chapter 1, among other things, it says, "... by whom also he made the worlds ..." and then "... having made (by himself) the purification of sins", and, at the end of the chapter it says: "And, Thou in the beginning, Lord, hast founded the earth,

and works of thy hands are the heavens. They shall perish, but thou continuest still; and they all shall grow old as a garment, and as a covering shalt thou roll them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the Same. . . . ” What an answer to the vauntings and the pride of man! The chapter thus begins with God and then goes on to describe the glorious Person of the Son, who is said to be the One by whom God made the worlds, the One who by and for himself made purification for sins, and the One who is shortly going to roll up as a covering the things that His hands have made, and they shall be changed. So that three great operations are brought forward; the operation of creation, the operation of purification, and finally the rolling up and changing of the present order of things, one view, I suppose, of the bringing in of the new heavens and the new earth. In the light of such operations in which the creature can have no part, man’s pride is put into its proper place in our judgment and we become worshippers not only of God, but of the Lord Jesus.

*Rem.* The Hebrews needed this and we need it today.

G.R.C. We need it very much in order that we may be preserved as true Hebrews, that is as ‘passers-through’, not influenced by man’s world nor by man’s pride. Abraham, the Hebrew, is the father of us all and this epistle would help us to be just passers-through. We seek not here a continuing city, we seek the one to come. We are not detained by occupation with men’s achievements. They do not disturb us nor, in one way, concern us. The things that men discover about creation magnify the One we know as Creator, but to unregenerate man they bolster up his pride. But we are passers-through, we do not belong to this world, we are in the world but not of it, our anchor is within the veil. “. . . which we have as anchor of the soul, both secure and firm, and entering into that within the

veil, where Jesus is entered as forerunner for us ”.

J.P. Would you distinguish more clearly between what is great and *the* greatness?

A.N.W. Is the idea of ‘ the greatness ’ incomparable? There is a comparison as to the Name, it is *more* excellent, but the greatness on high seems to be incomparable.

G.R.C. I am sure that is right. It is superlative. As regards what is great, you have, as to the Lord, the great high priest in chapter 4, a great priest over the house of God in chapter 10, and then the great shepherd of the sheep in chapter 13. These are offices that He occupies. But we have to understand that the Lord is greater than any office He holds. We delight in His offices, but the services He renders are to help us to discern the greatness of the Person who holds them. He is greater than any position He could occupy. “ Thou art greater, glorious Saviour, than the glory Thou hast won ”, thus He has His own part in the greatness on high. He is said to have “ set himself down on the right hand of the greatness. . . . ” That is, He is the great Operator there. There is the greatness, we cannot define it. It is one of the indefinable expressions of scripture, introduced to produce a state of worship—prostration. “ *The greatness* ”, who can describe what it means? Yet surely the Spirit would give an ever increasing impression of it in our souls. Deity is in mind. In Colossians we have ‘ the fulness ’, but in Hebrews ‘ the greatness ’. And we are called to serve in the presence of the greatness. And our service will take on the quality it should have in the measure in which we by the Spirit have some apprehension of the greatness. But the One who has sat down at the right hand of the greatness has His own part in the greatness, as this chapter indicates, *who* He is, it plainly shows. As at the right hand, He is in manhood, the great Operator in relation to the greatness, everything is done through Him.

C.A.M. Your opening remarks would give great

scope to the word 'spoken'. God has seen fit to express Himself in this most glorious way.

G.R.C. We are brought face to face with God in verse 1. "God having spoken in many parts and in many ways formerly to the fathers in the prophets, at the end of these days has spoken to us in (the person of the) Son. . . ." That is a marvellous thing—God has spoken in Son. If God has spoken in Son, it must be His last word. In the beginning, He spoke and it was done. It was the same Person through whom He spoke. But how much greater this speaking! There was majesty in the speaking at the outset—He spoke and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast. But now God has spoken in Son. The One by whom He made the worlds has become incarnate.

*Rem.* It is wonderful that the Lord has come into manhood in order that He might speak and be tangible and approachable.

G.R.C. The incarnation is a marvellous thing. It is referred to in this chapter "... Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee ..." "And the Word became flesh ..." John 1 : 14. It is the most amazing thing and essential if God was to be declared.

*Ques.* Does His being established heir of all things (verse 2) refer to Christ in manhood?

G.R.C. The first thing that is said as to Him is, "whom he has established heir of all things". It is in manhood that He is the heir.

J.R.H. Would you link up "heir of all things" with His operation in creation? I was thinking of the way it is put, "whom he has established heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds". Is it the all things that He has made that He becomes heir to?

G.R.C. Yes. In Colossians it says: "all things have been created by him and for him" Col. 1 : 16. He was to come into manhood and take up everything He had made as the Heir.

J.B. God has spoken formerly in many parts and

in many ways, but now He has spoken to us (I should suppose the 'us' means Christians) in Son. Is there a difference in the knowledge of God as now revealed in Son and what was known through the former speakings? Is God in Christianity known differently as being revealed in the Son?

G.R.C. There is a great difference, and all hinges on the incarnation. God had no beginning, as we know, but the economy of God, as resulting from the incarnation, had a beginning. *But it has no end*. When John speaks of that which is from the beginning, he refers to the beginning of the manifestation of God in the Person of the Son. It is not exactly our subject here, but the incarnation has brought out the Father's affections; the Fatherhood of God has become known; the Person of the Father is known. It was not until there was an adequate Object in manhood, the Word become flesh, that the Father's affections could come into display. It says, "the Father loves the Son" John 3 : 35, then the Lord says, "as the Father has loved me, I also have loved you" John 15 : 9, and, "this is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you". The basis of the whole matter is the Father's love for the Son.

J.B. I have often thought that "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1 : 3) is the highest known relationship that we enjoy, because it is by the Spirit of His Son in our hearts and that is greater than what is known in creation.

G.R.C. The relationships we have been brought into exceed any that have gone before or that will come after. It says in this chapter: "... and again, I will be to him for father, and he shall be to me for son ...". Think of that! Think of what it meant for the Father to have such an Object! How it drew out and brought into display the Father's affections! And those affections remain and the economy remains and we are brought into it.



*Ques.* Does that not bring out the greatness of His manhood? We should see that is our link—His manhood.

G.R.C. Exactly.

J.H. Would you see with Abraham the yearnings of God in that relation, anticipatively of the present dispensation in which there is now an Object for the Father's love to express itself upon?

G.R.C. I think so. Genesis begins with God—"In the beginning God . . ." and develops His eternal thoughts in type, as to God and man; but, as the book proceeds, the idea of Father and Son is brought out typically in Abraham and Isaac, because the economy and its relationships are essential if God is to secure His initial thoughts as to man—God and man.

*Ques.* Would the angel's word to Mary in Luke 1 : 32 "He shall be great . . ." indicate that there was something new in the way of greatness about to appear?

G.R.C. Quite so. "He shall be great, and shall be called Son of (the) Highest". It is very instructive to see the way in which titles of God conveying attributes of deity and majesty are carried through into the New Testament. In Luke the title 'Highest' (i.e. Most High) is carried through. We do not lose any of these titles we carry them through.

H.O.E. It has been said that the link between what is absolute and what is relative is love.

G.R.C. That is good, because in the manifestation of God as in the economy wonderful affections are brought into display—the Father's love for the Son, the Son's love for the Father, and the Spirit's love for the Father and the Son. It all turns us back on what God is in His nature. God is love.

*Rem.* "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day and to the ages (to come)." We are reminded of the unchangeable character of the Person of the Son.

G.R.C. We need to keep always in mind that the Lord Jesus has changed His circumstances and condition

but in His Person He is unchanged and unchangeable. This chapter also brings it out: "... *thou* art the Same and thy years shall not fail", Heb. 1:12. It is in manhood that He is being addressed, because it speaks of years. Before the Lord Jesus came into manhood, He had no experience, in that sense, of years. But now He knows what years mean. He is the One who came into time but who does not belong to time.

*Rem.* One is impressed with the love of God as shown in our Lord Jesus Christ, the depth of it, and it is the same today.

G.R.C. Quite so, and so Paul prays to the Father in Ephesians 3 "... that he may give you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power in his Spirit in the inner man; that the Christ may dwell..." The Father would strengthen us in our affections to embrace the One Who is the Centre of His affections. And He loves Him so much that, according to the riches of His glory, He is bringing about a universe adequate for Christ as the Centre; all the families named of the Father are but to form a setting adequate for Christ as the Centre. Christ is the great Object of His affection. And the prayer goes on "... in order that ye may be fully able to apprehend with all the saints what (is) the breadth and length and depth and height;" The Father would have us to understand every dimension. Every dimension speaks of divine love.

J.S. Would you say we need to appreciate the way the moral side has been met, more in relation to Christ's greatness than to our need?

G.R.C. Exactly. I think we have to take account of the fact that God acts by Himself and for Himself. That is the force of the word here—"having made by himself..." The note indicates it is by and for Himself. That is to say, before we can begin to take up service acceptably we have to learn to take account of the work of God in which no creature hand has had

any part. The idea of sabbath is that God rests in what He has done by Himself and for Himself with no creature hand assisting. Genesis 1 records His own actions; no angel assisted, no creature hand assisted. He did all by Himself and for Himself, and then rested from all His work. Similarly redemption is a work done by Himself and for Himself and another great rest is brought in—God's rest in Christ and His finished work. And when His work in new creation is finished He will say: It is done. His eternal rest will commence. We have to learn to take account of God's work in creation, in redemption, and in new creation; to see that all is done by Himself and for Himself, the creature having no part in it; and to rest our souls in that. Until we do so we are not ready for divine service. To be acceptable our service must flow from an apprehension of what God has done by, and for, Himself.

*Rem.* And what God has done by Himself and for Himself is in accord with His own thought as we sometimes sing: O, God, the thought was thine.

G.R.C. Exactly.

A.N.W. In the "by" and "for" we may add "of". Is the Trinity involved? "Of Him and through Him and for Him are all things." Rom. 11 : 36.

G.R.C. Literally those prepositions mean 'out of Him' and 'through Him' and 'unto Him' are all things.

*Ques.* Is the expression "the greatness" a title of God or a feature of Deity?

G.R.C. I had not thought of 'the greatness' as a title. I do not know how to describe it. It is a kind of indescribable expression to give our minds an impression of Deity.

J.McK. Would it be the uncreated sphere as we have in Ephesians? "... ascended up above all the heavens" Eph. 4 : 10.

G.R.C. The Lord Jesus has ascended up above all heavens and it is from that altitude that He gives gifts

That is a remarkable thing. It is from an altitude beyond creature penetration that He has given gifts to men, showing the immense power behind the ministry. I suppose these different expressions do bear on one another; but this expression, 'the greatness' requires contemplation. How incomparable and superlative it is. And the wonderful thing is that according to ch. 8 the service of the sanctuary proceeds in the presence of the greatness.

F.W. In the end of verse 12 we have "but thou art the Same . . .". Has that some connection with the greatness?

G.R.C. "The Same" is a divine title.

F.W. Would the greatness of Christ set us free from all forms which are just a shadow of the things to come?

G.R.C. It would indeed. And in that connection: "But Christ being come high priest of the good things to come by the better and more perfect tabernacle *not made with hand*". (Heb. 9 : 11) speaks of what God has done by and for Himself.

Rem. We have the expression Mighty God and Father of the age in relation to time.

G.R.C. 'Father of the age' refers to the world to come, the place Christ has in that great day. "The habitable world which is to come, of which we speak", as it says in chapter 2 : 5.

Ques. Would the greatness be seen in verse 3: "... the effulgence of his glory and the expression of his substance and upholding all things by the word of his power . . .".

G.R.C. It says in the note as to 'effulgence'. 'That which fully presents the glory that is in something else'. I think 'the greatness' is indescribable, unspeakable; it is Deity really. But then the Son is the effulgence of God's glory and the expression of His substance; so there is the outshining which, in measure, the creature can take account of; but the greatness lies behind it all.

*Rem.* In John's gospel we have frequent reference to, Art thou greater? and I wondered if John would have us formed in an appreciation of the greatness of Christ.

G.R.C. "Art thou greater than our father Abraham?" brings out the great truth. He says, "Before Abraham was, I am . . ." John 8 : 58. It is a truth which would run alongside what we have in this chapter.

A.N.W. The last psalm says: "Praise him according to the abundance of his greatness".

A.B.P. We could know nothing of this greatness except it had been manifested in Christ, whether as Creator or as the One who has made purification for sin. Have you in mind that the demonstration of the greatness of the Person helps us to worship God as God?

G.R.C. Quite so. What has been manifested gives the Spirit scope to give us an impression of "the greatness". While we enjoy, according to our measure, the effulgence of God's glory and the expression of His substance (we cannot compass these things but we enjoy them according to our measure), the Spirit would maintain in our souls the sense of what is behind all—the greatness. It brings about prostration of soul.

A.B.P. I am sure of that.

G.R.C. It is a thing we should know more about—prostration.

*Rem.* "God is greatly to be feared in the council of the saints" Psalm 89 : 7.

G.R.C. That refers to God in the midst of His people here. This epistle goes on to say that we have come to God, Judge of all, another great statement, and we prove Him in that way in the council of His saints. But behind all that is 'the greatness', that which the creature cannot penetrate, but the expression is here in scripture to affect us and the Spirit would so affect us that our worship would end in prostration.

*Rem.* So we can see the work God has accomplished, but behind that work is what is unknowable and unseeable.



G.R.C. Exactly.

A.N.W. What can be said? How can we express ourselves in words in the spirit of prostration?

G.R.C. Revelation is a great book of prostration. At the end of chapter 4: "the twenty four elders shall fall before him that sits upon the throne, and do homage to him that lives to the ages of ages; and cast their crowns before the throne" (v. 10), that is prostration in the presence of the greatness. Then the remarkable thing is in the next chapter where the Lamb comes into view. One of the elders says: "Behold, the lion which (is) of the tribe of Juda, the root of David", that is another allusion not only to the manhood but to the deity of Christ. Then in verse 3: "And when it took the book the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb" (that is prostration) "having each a harp and golden bowls full of incenses, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sing a new song . . .". All this shows that prostration of soul does not prevent an ascription of praise and worship. They fell *before the Lamb*.

Rem. Do you think the Lord is aiming at this with the woman in John 4, "God is a spirit, and they who worship him must worship (him) in spirit and truth". The very word 'prostration' is used, is it not?

G.R.C. It is the same word that is used of the elders, they do homage. There are two words for worship in the New Testament: one involving public priestly service and the other homage or prostration of heart and soul. And the two things should go together. It is essential that God should be served in a public way worthy of Himself. There should be the public expression in song and thanksgiving of that which is due to Him. Before angels and men He should be suitably addressed. But it would be of little value without prostration of soul.

F.C. The woman had to have the moral question solved, and yet it did not hinder this matter from coming

out. The Lord Himself says: "The hour is coming and now is."

G.R.C. It would not hinder if we understood the verse "having by Himself made purification for sins, set Himself down". There is majesty in this. Think of a Man, speaking with all reverence, that could do things by and for Himself and then set Himself down. It was no presumption for He Himself has part in the greatness. So He set Himself down at the right hand of the greatness on high—the great Operator.

*Ques.* Why is it purification here and not redemption?

G.R.C. I have often wondered why the word 'purification' is used. In chapters 3 and 4 of John purification is in mind, although it is the water aspect rather than the blood. There was a discussion going on as to purification in John 3 and the Lord's dealings with the woman show the working out of it. The gift of the Holy Spirit is to bring about practical purification in view of worship. So it says here: "having made by Himself the purification of sins". The Lord does it having in view a system permeated by the Holy Spirit, an anointed system. Purification for sins must take place from the judicial standpoint before a system can exist where the Spirit is all pervading. It is only in such a system that God is worshipped as He should be.

G.A.S. The expression is used as to purification of all things.

G.R.C. In Colossians you have the idea of reconciling "... and by him to reconcile all things to itself, having made peace by the blood of his cross" Col. 1:20. And as Hebrews proceeds things are brought into this matter, as in chapter 9:22, "and almost all things are purified with blood according to the law, and without blood-shedding there is no remission". There is a remarkable combination in that chapter because verses 19 and 20 refer to Exodus 24, the application of the blood to the book and the people, but v. 21 goes on to the day of atonement. "And the tabernacle too and

all the vessels of service he sprinkled with blood; and almost all things are purified with blood according to the law . . . ”. And he goes on to show that the heavenly things, (literally, the heavenlies,) have to be purified by the blood of Christ. Earlier in verse 14, “how much rather shall the blood of the Christ . . . purify your conscience from dead works to worship (the) living God ”.

A.N.W. Is there not a peculiar lustre in regard of the making purification for sins as against the glory of upholding all things by the word of His power. He does not make purification by the word of His power, it is by Himself and the great glory reflects back on Him as the note says.

G.R.C. It is very affecting to think of all that it meant to Him.

A.B.P. Is purification properly in view of approach?

G.R.C. I think all is in view of God being served. The purification of sins here is of the widest scope. The whole system is purified and so becomes an anointed system in which God dwells in the midst of fragrant praise.

A.B.P. And therefore it leads up possibly to Hebrews 10, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness for entering . . . ”.

G.R.C. Yes, exactly.

*Ques.* Does the thought of the Lamb in Revelation carry this thought of being purified in relation to worship?

G.R.C. Yes, “To him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in his blood . . . ”. It is very affecting to consider the distinction our brother has referred to between upholding all things by the word of His power and the work He accomplished where power alone was not adequate. It meant, as this epistle develops, the sacrifice of Himself. Marvellous thing that He should go that way! The One who felt perfectly about sin, because He is Himself God, as Man took up the whole

question sacrificially. It is a stupendous thing to contemplate! The One who offered Himself as the Victim was no less in His eternal Being than the Father and the Spirit. And it was by the eternal Spirit that He did it. It is a great matter for contemplation—the way Jesus went and what He bore. There is much in scripture about it: Leviticus 16, Colossians 1, Hebrews 9, 2 Corinthians 5, and other passages, develop different aspects of the great work of atonement or reconciliation and we ought to acquaint ourselves with them all in a spirit of worship.

*Ques.* The purification being made, the evidence of it will always remain, we will always be affected by the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus and the shedding of His blood.

G.R.C. I think upholding all things by the word of His power is a comprehensive idea. He brought things into being, by Him God made the worlds, but it is linked on with this idea of purification. It says: “who being the effulgence of his glory and (the) expression of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, having made by himself the purification of sins, set himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high”. He is upholding the physical universe in view of all that is coming in, purification having been effected; and He is also upholding, we may say, the spiritual universe, the true tabernacle which the Lord has pitched and not man. He is upholding all things in view of the day when the present heavens and earth will be rolled up as a covering, and changed, and the eternal state brought in. It is a magnificent view of Christ!

J.G.H. Would our appreciation of the greatness of Christ, as presented in these various features, be the measure of our worship? Would it be proportionate to our apprehension of the Person?

G.R.C. Exactly. I believe we will never make much progress in our souls until we learn the habit of prostration before Christ. We can understand the idea of

prostration before God as such, but the elders in Revelation (they refer to ourselves of course) fall down before the Lamb. We need to know more about that. We might be so affected in our private devotions as to prostrate ourselves physically. But that is not the main point, because it might be nothing more than an outward form. It is prostration of soul. One has often been affected in thinking of the Lord's prostration. It says He "fell upon His face" (Matt. 26 : 29) and "he fell upon the earth" (Mark 14 : 35) in Gethsemane.

A.N.W. I am glad to hear you refer to that. You have referred to Revelation 5 several times, but the last touch is "And the four living creatures said, Amen: and the elders fell down and did homage". Say a word as to that.

G.R.C. What would you say, Mr. W.?

A.N.W. I only thought of something further still, possibly unexpressed.

G.R.C. That is good, for, as you say, in verses 8 and 9 they fall down but also express something in song; but I suppose, at the end of the chapter, "Voice by voice in silence fails". The worship becomes inexpressible, you mean?

A.N.W. Yes, I thought that.

J.G.H. We sometimes think that the greatest depth of feeling with us is in relation to help received in some personal crisis or crisis in the testimony, but the greatest feeling comes in when prostrated in worship.

G.R.C. I am sure that is right. If we want to be ready for crises that may arise we need to be constitutionally worshippers, habituated to prostration before the Lord Jesus, as well as before God, in our private devotions. How blessed it would be if we knew more of this!

*Rem.* It is said of the man in John 9, as soon as the Lord mentions the title Son of God, that he did Him homage.

G.R.C. Yes, It is the same word as that used in Revelation. It is the idea of prostration of soul.



*Ques.* Paul fell on the earth when the Lord appeared to him. Would that be in line with this thought of prostration?

G.R.C. Quite so. Paul was prostrated when the Lord appeared to him. He began his career that way. It is a good beginning to fall on the earth before the Lord Jesus. But then think of the Lord Jesus falling upon the earth, not in the way in which we are speaking, but because of what was immediately before him, the question of purification for sins. He was about to pour out His soul unto death and it so affected His soul that it says: "Going forward a little He fell upon the earth," Mark 14 : 35, and according to Matthew, "he fell upon his face.", Matt. 26 : 39. If He, as the Leader of our salvation, has gone to that extent, where do we stand as to prostration before Him? How worthy He is of the unreserved homage of our hearts.

## GREATNESS (2)

HEBREWS 4: 14; 5: 5-10; 7: 1-10; 14-17, 22-28;  
8: 1-2

G.R.C. The greatness of Christ's priesthood appears in chapter 4 : 14. Chapter 5 speaks of the days of His flesh as qualifying Him for the office, even going so far as to say that He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. Chapter 7 presents Melchisedec, " King of Salem, priest of the most high God . . . " showing among other things how kingship and priesthood are ever linked in the divine mind, " first being interpreted King of righteousness and then also King of Salem, which is King of peace . . . ". So we have a glorious presentation of Christ there—the king of righteousness, the king of peace and the priest of the most high God, And the chapter closes with the greatness of the saints. Not that we can attach any importance to ourselves on that account; it is the condescending gentleness of God that has made us great. After bringing out the greatness of the Priest, it says: " Such a high priest became us " (Heb. 7 : 26); this section of the book closes in the first two verses of chapter 8 with a summary of what we have and we may say, what God has. " We have such a one high priest " and God has " the minister of the holy places ".

A.B.P. Does the expression " passed through the heavens " suggest Pauline teaching to you?

G.R.C. What do you understand by the expression, please?

A.B.P. It seems to suggest that things were taken account of as He went higher than the heavens, does it not?

G.R.C. Yes, chapter 7 says: " . . . separated from sinners, and become higher than the heavens ". An

allusion such as that to the greatness of the Person would promote worship in our hearts, would it not?

*Ques.* Would it speak of an uncreated sphere?

G.R.C. I think "higher than the heavens" must mean that, but I think the passing through would refer to the High Priest going through into the holy of holies. We are told in this epistle that the tabernacle of old was a figurative representation of the things in the heavens and the high priest of old passed through into the holy of holies. In chapter 7 it says He has gone higher than the heavens, higher than the creature can go, but I believe this first allusion is to stress that He passed through. And in passing through, He has made the way through for us into the holy of holies.

A.B.P. Does chapter 9 suggest what is there in the spheres He has passed through? We have reference to the golden pot with the manna, Aaron's rod that sprouted and the tables of the covenant, indicating that the whole journey is in mind, all that accrues in the testimony.

G.R.C. It includes, in that way, the days of His flesh and all that He passed through and carried through. And all of that is involved in the fact that He has passed through the heavens. He has entered in, into the very presence of God. And so at the end of chapter 6: "... entering into that within the veil, where Jesus is entered as forerunner for us, become for ever a high priest according to the order of Melchisedec". So we have such a great High Priest, One who has passed through.

A.N.W. How ever far we go *in* with Him, we shall ever recognise that He can go farther. He says in John 6:62, "If then ye see the Son of man ascending up where he was before?" We shall ever have that to engage us, shall we not?

G.R.C. I am sure we shall. In fact, if we truly enter the holiest, we get an impression as no where else, of who the Person is. In the holiest, if we are truly in it,

we are no longer occupied with His offices but Himself. His priesthood and other offices that attach to Him are glorious, and they are to help us. He has passed through and He would help us to take advantage of the new and living way which He has dedicated for us. But once we are within the veil we begin to get impressions of who the Person is and, as you say, if that is so, we realise at once that we cannot limit Him at all. In every way He is beyond us in His Person and yet, in His manhood, He graciously takes us alongside Himself, as He says, "with me where I am".

J.R.H. Please say something as to the Son of God—"Jesus, the Son of God".

G.R.C. That is important as bearing on what we are saying as to our moving in. He has passed through to make a way through for us. That is the force of "Having therefore a great high priest . . .". He is our representative. He has gone through on our account. "Having therefore a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God . . .". This is not stressing so much the greatness of His Person nor that He has gone into the uncreated sphere into which we cannot enter. It is stressing rather that He has gone into a place we *can* enter; we are associated with the Son of God.

F.W. You are suggesting that He passed through in His own right because of His Person.

G.R.C. That would be true, but passing through as the great high priest has involved the offering of Himself. If we think of the type in passing through He would pass the altar of burnt offering. He is the altar, and He is the victim also upon it. He has passed through in such a manner as to make a way through for us—according to the end of chapter 6, He has entered in as forerunner for us. So that the passing through involves all that He did in opening up the way for men.

A.B.P. Would you link 2 Corinthians 3 with this, changed from glory to glory? Is that like the way in?

G.R.C. Looking on the glory of the Lord, F.E.R. said, is another way of speaking of the holiest. This epistle, while it exhorts us to enter the holiest, does not tell us what we do when we are there. We have to go to other scriptures for that. But there are passages in this epistle, for example ch. 1 : 3, which help us as to what we behold there, the scripture you quote is another which helps us much. In the beginning of chapter 3 we have "the apostle and high priest of our confession . . ." and again in chapter 10 : 23 "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope . . .".

*Ques.* Has the passing through a triumphant character?

G.R.C. It has. He passes through triumphantly into the presence of God, as our great high priest. This question of our confession is a great matter.

J.S. Does this give the present moment its wondrous character? We are not yet associated with Christ as coming out, but we are associated with the One who has gone in.

G.R.C. That is very good. The christian confession would involve that. It is not only what we profess with our lips, but our whole manner of life is to bear testimony to the fact that our place is within the veil where Christ is. That is the confession.

W.F.W. That would help us on the line of priesthood?

G.R.C. Well, this is telling us of the High Priest and what He has done. Before we can function as priests properly, we have to go in. We come out from the holiest to function as priests. It is not our functioning as priests that takes us in. We may have that idea that we have to function first at the burnt offering altar and at the incense altar and at last we shall get into the holiest. That is not the truth at all. The truth of the matter is that we go in because we have such a high priest. We go in on the basis of what He is and what He has done. He has made the way and our way is to



go straight into the holiest, then we come out to serve.

J.R.H. When you speak of what He has done, you are referring to the fact that by His own blood He has entered into the holy of holies?

G.R.C. Yes, we may look at that in another reading. One's thought was that in this reading we should contemplate the greatness of His priesthood, and then, perhaps, in our next reading, the greatness of the High Priestly work, the offering of Himself.

A.N.W. The very appellation "the great high priest" means something new. The high priest, we have heard of, but the great high priest is something very distinctive.

G.R.C. Even the expression high priest is not much used in the Old Testament. Here, as you say, the word 'great' is added. "... a great high priest ...".

J.B. Is He great in the eye of God because of the work He has done at Calvary?

G.R.C. It says in chapter 5 : 1, "For every high priest taken from amongst men is established for men in things relating to God ...". And then it says in verse 4, "And no one takes the honour to himself, but as called by God, even as Aaron also". It is a beautiful view of Christ, as taken from amongst men. He grew up before Jehovah as "a root out of dry ground" Isa. 53 : 2. And God called Him into this office.

*Ques.* Does the thought of our confession involve that God has been revealed and we are in the light of God being revealed? The system of Christianity in which we are, involves the revelation of God.

G.R.C. It does. It involves "God having spoken in Son", and all that that means. "... the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared (him)". John 1 : 18. And it involves our calling in relation to that revelation.

*Ques.* Does the greatness of His Person give character to every office He takes on, so He must be a great high priest?

G.R.C. Quite so. He adorns the office, and makes it great.

A.B.P. The verses read in chapter 5 bring in the thought of experience, and of history. "He who had said to him" is the One who says "Thou art . . .", there is a passage of time between those two points. One relates to the incarnation, the other to His installation as Priest; and in between has come His perfecting in manhood. Is that what you have in mind?

G.R.C. Quite so. It is the One who marked Him out as His Son—"thou art my Son, I have today begotten thee", who says, "Thou art priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec". But then in order to be qualified, speaking with reverence, for that office, it was necessary that He should pass through certain experiences. And it is very affecting, when we think of the greatness of His Person, to contemplate Him passing through these experiences in the days of His flesh. Think of the 102nd Psalm where He says: "My God, take me not away in the midst of my days!" Then we have the answer, "And, Thou in the beginning, Lord, hast founded the earth, and works of thy hands are the heavens. They shall perish, but thou continuest still; and they all shall grow old as a garment, and as a covering shalt thou roll them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the Same, and thy years shall not fail". Heb. 1 : 10-12. Think of the experience the Lord Jesus passed through when He cried, "My God, take me not away in the midst of my days!" It links with verses 7-9 of our chapter—"Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up both supplications and entreaties to him who was able to save him out of death, with strong crying and tears; (and having been heard because of his piety;) though he were Son, he learned obedience from the things which he suffered; and having been perfected . . .". That was the way He was perfected for the priestly office.

C.D. The contemplation of that calls out the

adoration of our hearts! And then to be priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec is one of His distinctive glories, is it not? He is alone in that.

G.R.C. He is indeed. But think of Him in the garden of Gethsemane falling upon the earth, falling upon His face! Think of the strong crying and tears!

C.D. The contemplation of this is the kind of food we need for our souls to build us up constitutionally.

G.R.C. It would inculcate in us the principle of obedience. We should love obedience. He is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him. Is it not easy to obey a Person like this? Is it not easy to obey One whose right it ever was to command—who commanded and it stood fast at the beginning—and yet who for our sakes became flesh and, in the days of His flesh, learned? He went through experiences that He had never been through before. It had never been His to obey. But He came into a condition in which He was committed to obey. “Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, thy will”. Heb. 10 : 7. And obedience meant for Him a price that it has meant for no one else. What obedience cost Him! And how He felt the cost! And yet He never turned aside. He learned obedience in the fullest way that it could be learned.

F.C. He said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; take away this cup from me; but not what I will, but what thou (wilt)” Mark 14 : 36. Both J.N.D. and J.T. have called attention to the remarkable fact that the Lord should ask that, as man. And yet He did.

G.R.C. The perfection of His sonship is stressed there, in that He says, Abba, Father.

P.W. “I do always the things that are pleasing to him” John 8 : 29. It is the word from His lips of His Father.

G.R.C. He was truly Son. In Matthew 26 : 39, it says: “And going forward a little he fell upon his

face . . . ". An extraordinary statement " . . . he fell upon his face, praying and saying, My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me . . . ". Think of what obedience cost the Lord! " . . . becoming obedient even unto death, and (that the) death of (the) cross . . . " Phil. 2 : 8. Think of a divine Person, the One by whom the worlds were made, learning obedience in the most costly way that could be conceived. So that the many sons whom God is bringing to glory, love obedience. It is a delight to obey a Person like that. He is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him.

*Rem.* So that He gave the Father fresh cause to love Him, as moving in this way.

G.R.C. He did. What a delight for the Father's heart. " On this account the Father loves me . . . ". John 10 : 17.

*Ques.* And do we not want to come in on that line, to give the Father fresh cause for delight in us, because we obey?

G.R.C. We do, I am sure.

W.T.L. Would you say, it was a voluntary matter on the part of the Lord Jesus to become obedient unto death?

G.R.C. It was a voluntary matter prior to incarnation. He says, " Sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou willedst not, . . . then he said, Lo, I come to do thy will ". Hebrews 10 : 8-9. He does not say: Lo, I am sent, there, but Lo, I come to do thy will. " Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, thy will ". Heb. 10 : 7. That was a committal—to use your word, a voluntary committal. No one could have imposed it on Him. He says, Lo, I come to do thy will. But having come, there could be no drawing back. He was committed to obedience. So, as having come, He was the sent One.

W.T.L. Philippians 2 would have the same bearing that you suggest, would it not? Before the incarnation He had that mind.

G.R.C. Well, I am not sure that it is referring to His mind prior to incarnation. It says, "For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, subsisting in the form of God . . .". "Subsisting in the form of God" implies what we are saying, that no one could have imposed it on Him. But it does not say He left the form of God; it just says: "... who, subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking a bondman's form, taking his place in the likeness of men; and having been found in figure as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death . . ." Phil 2 : 6-8. It is beautiful, it is all put there as what He did Himself, and I think that is what you have in mind. But then the passage ends that He became obedient, because that was the force of His coming in a bondman's form. It was to be obedient "... becoming obedient even unto death, and (that the) death of (the) cross". In manhood here the mind was seen in Him, because in John's gospel, He makes remarks which show that He thought it not an object of rapine to be on equality with God. His enemies realised His remarks implied that He was equal with God. And it was not an object of rapine for Him to assert equality with His Father, because He was and is equal. He says: "Before Abraham was, I am" John 8 : 58. He did not hesitate to say these things, because it was not presumption; and yet He humbled Himself and pursued the way of obedience.

H.O.W. In Psalm 2 : 7 we have "I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son: I this day have begotten thee". Does it mean that He had the right to go in as Son of God?

G.R.C. You mean, that personally He could have gone in without going into death? But then He would never have been our great High Priest, He would never have qualified, speaking with all reverence, for that great office.



A.B.P. Death seems to be the supreme test, does it not? In Philippians “. . . even unto death and that the death of the cross”. The Psalm you quote from, “My God, take me not away in the midst of my days”. Then this chapter 5 of Hebrews: “. . . supplications and entreaties to him who was able to save him out of death . . .”. That seems to be the setting that the greatest test of all was death?

G.R.C. It was, so that the things that He suffered include death. They include the atoning sufferings—that is the supreme test—and apart from the atoning sufferings He could never have been our great high priest. He could never have been the author of eternal salvation. There were other sufferings, sufferings that enable Him to sympathise. They all enter into His being perfected. He knows what every trial is that we can go through, He can sympathise with us. But there is that which He went into which we could never go into, and that is death in all that death meant to Him, bearing the judgment and wrath of God.

A.N.W. So while He is the Centre of the excellent glory on the mount the subject of conversation is His departure which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.

G.R.C. Quite so. That was essential, if He were to be perfected. “. . . he learned obedience from the things which he suffered; and having been perfected . . .” Heb. 5 : 8–9.

*Ques.* Psalm 102 is called “A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before Jehovah”. Expressions like “. . . I am become like the pelican of the wilderness, I am as an owl in desolate places . . .”. Is that typical of the manhood of Jesus and what He went through?

G.R.C. Those experiences enable Him to sympathise and succour those who are in the same path. We were speaking of the word ‘Hebrew’ this morning—those who are passers-through. And the Lord has felt what it is to be a stranger and a sojourner, and like a

sparrow on the housetop and a pelican in the wilderness, and He sympathises with and supports those who are true Hebrews, true passers-through, recognising they have no continuing city here.

*Ques.* Peter uses the expression: "... but gave (himself) over into the hands of him who judges righteously ..." 1 Peter 2 : 23. Does that not show how willing Jesus was to go to any extent to fulfill God's will?

G.R.C. Yes, there again He becomes the model for us.

*Rem.* Hebrews 5 : 7 is 'out of death'.

*Rem.* Could we link it with the Psalm 16 : 10 "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol, neither wilt thou allow thy Holy One to see corruption". This is not *from* death but *out of* death.

G.R.C. You mean that He was not seeking to avoid death, but the entreaties were to Him that was able to save Him out of death, prepared, as He was, to go the whole way. So that although the Lord says, "My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me"; He immediately says: "... but not as I will but as thou (wilt)". Matt. 26 : 39. He immediately accepts the cup, having faced all the consequences in the presence of His Father, with this in mind that God was able to save Him out of death. He would go the whole way into death in all that death meant. And we must remember that what He went into no creature could have gone into. The lost will never taste what Christ tasted, it is impossible. They have not the sensibilities. What Christ endured in the suffering of atonement was His *alone*. So the Spirit of God would help us as to depth. The more we are formed in divine sensibilities, the more we can get some sense of what the depth was. We were speaking this morning of breadth and length and depth and height. We need all four dimensions. The Spirit of God would help us. The Lord Jesus has gone higher than the heavens and, in passing through,

He has taken us to the greatest height to which the creature can go. But in order to take us there, He has gone to the lowest depth, depth to which a creature could never go.

A.B.P. You have spoken of the depth and the height and I am wondering if the breadth and length would be the extent to which He has filled out the will of God in manhood.

G.R.C. And in result, of course, it will fill a universe. "Lo, I come . . . to do, O God, thy will". God indicated even to Abraham, that His will was connected with the filling of heaven and earth with Abraham's seed, and that is enlarged in the New Testament—the filling of heaven and earth with families named of the Father. There is the breadth and length, but there is also the depth and height.

T.S. Intimacy seems to enter into both the thought of the Son and the thought of the Priest—the word 'Thou'.

G.R.C. These remarks are touching for we are let into conversation between the Persons of the Godhead. "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (Heb. 1 : 5), and "Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. 5 : 6), on one side; and then on the other side the words the Lord Jesus used as coming into the world: "Wherefore coming into the world he says", Heb. 10 : 5. It is worthwhile everyone reading J.N.D.'s remarks in the Synopsis on that passage. "Coming into the world he says . . . Lo, I come . . .". His remarks are very affecting, bearing upon what our brother has already mentioned as to the Lord coming of His own volition. No one could have imposed it upon Him. "Lo, I come". But having come to do God's will, He is committed to it. From thenceforward His only path could be unquestioning obedience.

A.B.P. It is interesting to see in Hebrews 5 : 10, how 'addressed by God' is 'saluted of' according to

the footnote; suggesting the feelings that enter into the Father addressing the Son as having gone into heaven.

G.R.C. Psalm 110 is very beautiful, isn't it? Just as in Psalm 102 we get the divine answer to the One who says: "... take me not away in the midst of my days!", so in Psalm 110, having passed through this qualifying experience in the days of His flesh, He is saluted as High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec. "The Lord" in verse 5 is a divine title—Adonai. "... the Lord at thy right hand will smite through kings in the day of his anger". The One who learned obedience by the things that He suffered, and, having been perfected is now installed as High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec, is none other than Adonai. The title 'Adonai' implies lordship in the absolute right of Deity; not that He was *made* Lord, but that He *is* Lord because of who He is.

J.G.H. Would it be right to take account of His experiences in the days of His flesh as being entirely commensurate with His inherent qualifications, which the truth of His Person involves?

G.R.C. It is because of who He is in His Person that He could go through such experiences. It is a most affecting thing to think of such an One coming into a condition where He could have experiences which would not be possible in conditions of Deity. None but He could have gone through them. And so, as having gone through them and having been installed in His high priestly office, He is given His divine title, Adonai, in Psalm 110 : 5. It would link with Ephesians 4 that He has "ascended up above all the heavens". That is really Adonai. Psalm 68 is quoted in that chapter: "Having ascended up on high, he has led captivity captive, and has given gifts to men". (Eph. 4 : 8). And in Psalm 68 the One who ascended on high was Adonai (see verse 17). That is why it could be said that He has ascended up *above* all heavens.

J.G.H. Could we say then, that the truth of His Person, not only gives character to the office, but also to the experiences as Man, which qualify Him for the office?

G.R.C. Well, none but He could have gone through such a path of obedience. It is not only that none but He could *sustain* the work of atonement, but none but He could have taken it up in the sense of having a perfect apprehension and abhorrence of sin as God Himself, because He is God.

*Rem.* So His answer to, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is "... thou art holy, thou that dwellest amid the praises of Israel ". None could understand what that fully meant save the Lord, because of who He is.

G.R.C. Exactly. And that is the secret of why He could undertake the work of atonement. The One who was offering Himself, and whom God made to be sin for us had an *absolute* abhorrence of sin and felt in the fullest measure what it was to be made sin.

*Rem.* "... so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted righteous ". Romans 5 : 19.

G.R.C. And so He becomes the Author of eternal salvation.

A.B.P. I would like to ask about the bearing of these two quotations. You have referred to the psalms where these passages occur, but is it not possible to bring them into current use? When I say current use, I mean, "Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee ". Can we link that on with the Father's voice at the baptism of the Lord? And addressed by God: "Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec ... ". Can we not think of that as actually transpiring after the Lord Jesus had gone into heaven?

G.R.C. Well, the actual installation, I would say, was then. Of course it was foretold long before in the Psalm, so that God had already sworn.



A.B.P. The reason I ask is because Paul seems to link "thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" with the Lord's baptism, when He says: "Having raised up Jesus" Acts 13 : 33. He links it on with his being raised up as a minister, does he not?

G.R.C. As to this actual statement, it is another prophetic one, "... this day have I begotten thee ...". It is touching that we should have it on record that there was this word *to the Lord*, as we may say *privately*. The *public* acknowledgment of Him was later, at His baptism, as you say. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight", Matt. 3 : 17.

F.C. You mean that the actual quotation would be for Christ at that time: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee". I have always linked it with the incarnation itself.

G.R.C. I would think that. Divine Persons can speak to One another in a way that it would not be possible for human beings to do. I mean a human being on the day of birth could not take in a message like that. As to the Lord Jesus, "coming into the world he says, Sacrifice and offering thou wiltedst not; but thou hast prepared me a body", Heb. 10 : 5. Then, we have the word from God, "Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee", Heb. 1 : 5.

A.B.P. We are prone to narrow things down, whereas, when we are dealing with matters relating to divine Persons, we must always leave scope in our minds, do you not think? So that Paul says: "... that God has fulfilled this to us their children, having raised up Jesus; as it is also written in the second psalm; Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee" (Acts 13 : 33), connecting it there with His establishment as minister.

A.N.W. Why does He refer to "the roll of the book"?

G.R.C. I thought it was the book of God's purpose.

J.A.P. Many of us would like help on the subject

of the High Priest. Why does the writer turn from the Aaronic priesthood to the Melchisedec?

G.R.C. I think it is a question of the *order* of the priesthood. He is Priest in the power of an indissoluble life, which involves the truth of His Person. That is what we come to in chapter 7, Melchisedec as a type, as it says: “. . . without father, without mother, without genealogy; having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but assimilated to the Son of God, abides a priest continually”. It maintains the title ‘Son of God’. It does not say ‘the Son’ because it has in mind His priesthood and His associating us with Himself within the veil—but yet it establishes the fact that the One who thus associates us with Himself under the title Son of God, is nevertheless a Person of the Godhead, that he is “without father, without mother, without genealogy; having neither beginning of days nor end of life . . .”. Some have said that this refers to the Lord in resurrection, that He has an indissoluble life in resurrection; but J.T. maintained that the passage refers to His Deity. Although in manhood He is the Son of God and thus our High Priest, yet in His Person, He is God. And that is the qualification for the order of priesthood that is in mind. The Aaronic order was continually changing, because those who filled it out were subject to death. But the great distinction is that He holds the priesthood in the power of an indissoluble life because He is a Person of the Godhead.

J.A.P. Is that where John comes in, “In him was life”? John 1 : 4. Is that the life you are referring to?

G.R.C. “In him was life”, would refer to the life manifested in Him here in manhood. “In him was life, and the life was the light of men”. That is, there was a Man here living wholly in relation to God, living indeed as an only begotten with a father, and that was light for men, as indicating what was in God’s mind for men, although He was unique in it. But I think the indissoluble life here refers to the truth of His Person. The

marvellous thing is that our High Priest though truly Man, *is a Person of the Godhead*. And therefore holds the priesthood unchangeable.

C.A.M. Would it be right to say that when we are thinking of Divine Persons essentially we are outside of anything as to history and sequence? When it comes to Aaronic priesthood and the functioning of it, we come back to happenings in the region of time. I was thinking of the greatness of His Person, indissoluble life and so forth, is a view we are likely to bring into history, whereas it really belongs to an order outside history. The truth of His Person is something greater than happening and history and sequence.

J.S. So that in the Old Testament the priesthood was not great enough to support the system of things that God had in mind in the way of blessing for His people, but now all that is changed.

G.R.C. That is right. So while the function of the priesthood is still Aaronic (that is we have a Priest who can sympathise and succour and support us as we enter in) yet the *order* of priesthood is not Aaronic. The order of the priesthood is that of Melchisedec. The wonderful thing is that our High Priest, with all the tender feelings of a Man, having learned obedience by the things which He suffered and having been perfected, is, in His Person, no less than God. He lives in the power of an indissoluble life. So we should look for a moment at Melchisedec and see how kingship shines, as well as priesthood, in Him. I think that is what is in mind in Psalm 110 "Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put thine enemies (as) footstool of thy feet". And then, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power in holy splendour . . .". This is the day of Christ's power. As we apprehend Him at the right hand of the throne of the greatness in the heavens, we become willing in the day of His power in holy splendour. We come under His authority as King. He is the King of righteousness and the King of peace. You cannot have

peace without righteousness, therefore it must be “ first being interpreted King of righteousness ” as it says here. There is only one King who has ever lived who is a King of righteousness and that is Christ Himself. He is the King of righteousness and therefore King of peace and Priest of the Most High God. I think you can see the order, in that way, because if you have righteousness and peace, then God can have His portion. Thus you need kingship first, which would link with those who obey Him. So this passage says: “ This Melchisedec (the word ‘ Melchisedec means ‘ king of righteousness ’) King of Salem, priest of the most high God ”. They are the titles brought in here. And if we obey Him, we come into righteousness and peace and become available to Him as priest of the most high God.

C.D. Would you link Abraham’s smiting of the kings with Psalm 110? Melchisedec met Abraham returning from smiting the kings, and blessed him.

G.R.C. I think there is a dispensational link with it. Psalm 110 verses 1-4 lead up to His priesthood. It says in verse 3 “ Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power in holy splendour ”, a beautiful expression, the service of God proceeding in holy splendour. Then, in verse 5, “ The Lord at thy right hand will smite through kings in the day of his anger ”. That is future. That is the next step. At present, the Kingly Priest has gone in and there is the company still on earth actually, who belong to Him within the veil, and the service is proceeding in holy splendour. But soon He will assume publicly His kingly power, and He will smite through kings in the day of His anger.

J.R.H. In the meantime He drinks of the brook in the way.

T.S. Does His kingship mean that there is authority in the priesthood?

G.R.C. Yes, He “ shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne ”. (Zech. 6 : 13). So it says farther down: “ For it is



clear that our Lord has sprung out of Juda . . . ". (Heb. 7 : 14). That is, He is the King. But the particular point at the present time is that He is the Priest, He has gone in.

J.B. In John 13 where the Lord is washing His disciples' feet He says: " If I therefore, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet ". John 13 : 14. Is that the effect it should have on us?

G.R.C. I think so. What is in mind there is ' part with me '. He came from God and was going to God (John 13 : 3). It is a question of going in. And as the chapter proceeds here it says (Heb. 7 : 26) " For such a high priest became us ". It is a remarkable statement. We have had His greatness as the High Priest displayed before us in the previous passages, and now there is this remarkable expression as to the saints, that such a High Priest became us. What an impression this gives us of the greatness of the saints, through divine grace.

A.B.P. Might we look at ourselves in this connection as the product of the budding of the rod of Aaron? I wondered if there may be a type in that of the power of an indissoluble life and the product of it in the saints?

G.R.C. It would remind us of the wonderful character of His manhood and that there are those who, through divine grace, are of the same order. They belong to Him within the veil.

*Ques.* Do we need the High Priest in order that the service might be carried on in power? There is so much in us that needs to be displaced, and infirmity may hinder us, but the High Priest takes care of that.

G.R.C. His offering of Himself has made the way in for us; He has entered in as our Forerunner. Our place is within the veil, where He is. But then, as you say, we are encompassed with infirmity, and He has not only endured the atoning sufferings to make the way in for us, but He has been through every form of pressure down here, so as to be able to sympathise with us and



succour and save us completely, so that we might be free at all times to enter the holiest in order that the service of God should go on in power—a people willing in the day of His power in holy splendour.

A.J.D. The greatness of the saints—such a High Priest became us—is there a connection between that and the Sanctifier and sanctified all of one?

G.R.C. “For both he that sanctifies and those sanctified (are) all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren”. The service of God at its highest level is to be carried by the saints of this dispensation. Such a High Priest became us, in order that that service, which is essential for the divine glory and to satisfy the divine affections, should go on in power.

A.J.D. We are sustained on the high level which is proper to us as having such a great High Priest.

G.R.C. So the beginning of the next chapter: “Now a summary of the things of which we are speaking (is), We have such a one high priest . . .” Heb. 8 : 1. He is ours! We have Him. He “has sat down on the right hand of the throne of the greatness in the heavens”. Now think of that! The service of the sanctuary goes on in the presence of the throne of the greatness in the heavens. And we have a great High Priest who has sat down there so that the service might be on a level that is in consonance with the throne of the greatness in the heavens.

*Ques.* Does the truth of His being Priest in the power of an indissoluble life involve that He imparts that life to us?

G.R.C. I do not think I would go so far as that. We do, of course, partake in His life in His glorified manhood, by the Spirit; but I think “indissoluble life” refers to what is intrinsic in Himself because of who He is.

*Rem.* You would confine it to the Lord personally?

G.R.C. Yes. The great point for us to lay hold of

is that we have such a one High Priest. We have One like that! He is ours! He upholds all things, of course, by the word of His power, but then He is in a particular way ours to uphold us in the service. And He is sitting down "on the right hand of the throne of the greatness in the heavens" and He is "minister of the holy places". We have a High Priest, but God has the Minister of the holy places. What He is for us as Priest is to sustain us in view of His service Godward as the Minister of the holy places. But have we apprehended that the Minister of the holy places is *sitting down*? When Jesus came into the midst He was standing. But, have we apprehended that assembly service Godward, when it reaches its full volume, is in a sitting position? The Minister is sitting down, and sitting down at the right hand of the throne of the greatness in the heavens.

*Ques.* Why are you stressing the sitting down?

G.R.C. It suggests the remarkable dignity of the system, that the Minister is sitting down. Aaron never sat down, but now the Minister is sitting down and the saints are sitting down; God "has raised (us) up together, and has made (us) sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2 : 6). Think of the dignity of the whole system. The Minister is sitting down, and the company associated with Him within is privileged to sit down in the presence of the greatness. It is the most marvellous thing that creatures should be brought into such a position. If human majesty appeared in this hall at this moment we should stand, and rightly so; but, in the presence of the infinite majesty of God, God has so ordered things, has so ennobled us in infinite grace, that we can sit.

*Rem.* This Person has brought in completion both for God and for us.

G.R.C. Paul says God has made us sit down. We would not have thought of doing it. God has raised us up together and *made* us sit down together. But one wonders how far we have apprehended the greatness of

all this. The Minister is seated and the saints are seated in the presence of infinite greatness.

A.B.P. Is this what the service of God leads to, or the service itself? "Every priest standing", seems to suggest that engaging in the service of God involves standing. Are you linking the sitting with the service of God or what is reached through the service?

G.R.C. I think it links with the service. We have learned during the last 100 years or so, that the saints are free to sit, in actuality. We sit to sing hymns that involve the highest levels of worship. Of course a brother stands to give thanks, but the general attitude is sitting.

A.N.W. It is the opposite of the prostration attitude you left us with this morning.

G.R.C. It is not far removed, you know, because the elders were sitting around the throne and then they prostrated themselves. It is in this restful attitude that our souls are ready for prostration, I believe.

*Rem.* David went in and sat before Jehovah.

G.R.C. Yes, David was beyond his dispensation.

J.R.H. Would you say sitting implies that we are set free from everything that is natural, for the moment.

G.R.C. I would. We are at rest in the presence of the greatness and it is a marvellous thing to consider.

*Ques.* In the sitting position of great restfulness is there any thought of the service continuing in that restful state before God? The service goes on before God for ever.

G.R.C. Yes, Christ is sitting and as thus seated He maintains the service.

As to our being *physically* seated in the service of praise, we need to remember that a *reverential* attitude is always necessary. It is not right to speak of being in the presence of God and yet to adopt a careless attitude which we would not adopt even in the presence of human greatness.

## GREATNESS (3)

HEBREWS 8: 3 AND 6; 9: 11-14, 21-24; 10: 1-18

G.R.C. We have considered the greatness of the Person of the Son and the greatness of His priesthood. The section from which we have read, which begins at verse 3 of chapter 8, develops the greatness of His offering. It commences: "For every high priest is constituted for the offering both of gifts and sacrifices; whence it is needful that this one also should have something which he may offer". Chapters 9 and 10 in a particular way develop what that offering was. The truth of the matter is that He offered Himself, and the effectuation of eternal counsel depended upon that. In fact the establishment and functioning of the whole divine system depended upon the High Priest having something to offer and that that offering should be nothing less than Himself. Whatever other offerings are offered now, because we are privileged to offer the sacrifice of praise and so on, they all flow out of the offering of Himself. Our burnt offerings and peace offerings and sin offerings are but our appreciation of the one great offering. So that it is not only that this offering laid the basis for the system, but it really has provided, through the Spirit operating in the affections of the saints, the material, as it were, for the whole service of gifts and sacrifices which has continued right through this dispensation and will continue. So chapter 8:6 says, "But now he has got a more excellent ministry . . .". That word, 'ministry' refers back, as the note says, to verse 2, where He is spoken of as 'minister of the holy places'. It is a peculiar word, a word not often used for ministry. He is the minister of the holy places and He has got a more excellent

ministry than ever went before, but it is all founded upon the fact that He offered Himself. And so Chapter 9 develops that He has entered in by His own blood once for all into the holy of holies (ch. 9 : 12). Of old the way into the holy of holies was not made manifest, as it says, but now He has entered in once for all and He has stayed in. The priest of old went in and came out once a year, but the great point for the moment is that Christ has entered in and He is still in. It goes on to show the effect of His blood upon our consciences, showing that the offering of Himself is the basis on which the worshippers are secured: "... purify your conscience from dead works to worship the living God ..." (Heb. 9 : 14). The great system of worship is established, but it is based upon the offering of Himself. Then lower down it shows that the whole system has come under the power of the blood, "the tabernacle, too, and all the vessels of service he sprinkled in like manner with blood". And the apostle applies that to the heavenly things themselves. The expression 'heavenly things' is the same word as 'the heavenlies' in Ephesians. Chapter 10 is very affecting as developing further the offering of Himself and bringing in the thought of the Lord's body. "... the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all ..." (Heb. 10 : 10), because it was the will of God to secure a sanctified company.

A.N.W. Are you intending to say that in our offering our praise and worship, we cannot do it rightly, if we hold ourselves back. We are exhorted to present *our* bodies a living sacrifice.

G.R.C. That would be the normal result of our appreciation of the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.

W.T.L. And would you say too, that it would be in the light of this that Paul says to the Colossians (3 : 17), "And everything, whatever ye may do in word or in deed, (do) all things in (the) name of (the) Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him".

G.R.C. I am sure an apprehension of the offering



of Himself, His great High priestly offering, would secure a continuous response in our hearts and would result in ourselves being set here for the will of God. He says, "Lo, I come . . . to do, O God, thy will" Heb. 10 : 7. Think of what that will involved for Him, but think of what He has established! Think of the results of it, that He has established suitable conditions for God to dwell! The true tabernacle has been pitched and purified and this more excellent ministry, as under His hand as the Minister of the holy places, is proceeding. What an immense thing He came to do, in coming to do God's will.

J.R.H. So that the whole system is permeated by the offering of Himself. It is to characterise us all in our approach in worship.

G.R.C. It is the appreciation of that that will set us free, as we shall see when we come to entrance into the holiest. I believe we need what we have had before us; an apprehension of the greatness of His Person, of the greatness of His priesthood, and, in a special way, of the greatness of His offering, the offering of Himself, if we are to have the liberty that is proper to us as Christians to enter the holy of holies at all times. He has made a way right through for us into the holy of holies.

C.A.M. Would it include, in this great sacrificial system, the daily, weekly, monthly and yearly sacrifices? The whole year was filled out sacrificially in the type.

G.R.C. The continuous nature of the offerings in the types would show, would it not, in its teaching for us, how freshly we should hold in our affections, before God, this great sacrifice.

A.B.P. It was only the blood of sin offerings on the day of atonement that was taken, through the veil, into the holiest.

G.R.C. That is what is *primarily* in mind in the section of the book we are on.

A.B.P. You mentioned that He has gone in and He is still within. The completion of the day of atonement

still awaits His coming out, I suppose, in its broad sense.

G.R.C. Yes, but then the writer of this epistle is concerned that we should know our place inside. Our Forerunner has entered in and, by the sacrifice of Himself, has laid the basis for us to enter in. He has entered in by His own blood. The coming out is referred to at the end of Chapter 9. It is the thing we look for because when He comes out, we know we shall come out with Him. We belong inside. Now that is the great thing to apprehend at the present time. He is inside and we belong inside.

J.G.H. The greatness of His offering is emphasized in chapter 9 : 11, " But Christ being come high priest . . . by his own blood ".

G.R.C. He has entered in by His own blood, which stresses the greatness of His sacrifice. It stands in contrast to the types: "... not by blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, has entered in once for all into the (holy of) holies . . . ".

*Ques.* This is a wonderful dispensation in which we are found. It says at the end of verse 10 that the Jewish system was imposed until the time of setting things right. This dispensation is one in which things have been set right. It is therefore a great matter for worship.

G.R.C. It is. I wonder how far we have really grasped that what was in type of old, that is the tabernacle, *actually exists now*. What was existing then was but a type and a shadow, and yet the position was such that even in that which was only a type, the high priest could only enter once a year, with blood not his own. But now we have come to the real thing, the true tabernacle, which the Lord has pitched and not man. And not only have we come to it, but we form part of it. We may say, (i.e. those who form the assembly) we *are* it. The true tabernacle is existing here, in the assembly, at the present time.

*Ques.* What did you have in mind, in the coming out with Him?

G.R.C. It is an important side, but what will qualify us for coming out is going in. Those who believe in Jesus will God bring with Him, but we shall go in first into our eternal place. Colossians speaks of it also: "When the Christ is manifested who (is) our life, then shall ye also be manifested with him in glory". Col. 3 : 4. Meantime "... your life is hid with the Christ in God ". Col 3 : 3. That is the inside place and that is the thing we need to know more about. Our Forerunner has entered in and, in this dispensation, the great thing for the saints is to learn their place inside. We shall be ready then for coming out. In principle, of course, the thing works now morally. That is, *if we are to come out suitably in testimony even now we need to know our place inside*. It is only those who know their place inside, within the veil, who can rightly testify to Christ at the present time. And only such really, can rightly serve God in worship and priestly service.

J.R.H. So that this entering in by His own blood, is not simply for Himself, is it? It is really for us, the way is cleared for us.

G.R.C. Yes, it is. It says: "But Christ being come high priest of the good things to come . . . ". The note helps, I think, as to that. It says 'Dia here gives the character of his coming. He came in the power of and characterized by these things'. So that Christ came as characterized by "the good things to come, by the better and more perfect tabernacle" and His going in, by His own blood, has brought into living operation, the whole system. That is what I would understand. It has made a way in for us, the heavenly company, and has really brought into operation the whole system.

W.T.L. Has He gone in as High Priest and by His own blood in order that there might be a dwelling place for God, that God may have His place and portion?

G.R.C. Surely. This epistle is largely speaking about what it means for us, because the Hebrews needed that and we need it; but we also need to keep in mind

just what you say, that the great point was that God should have His dwelling place and should dwell undisturbed in a system fragrant and wholly according to Himself, where every stain of sin under His eye is removed, where He can thus dwell complacently and be served by worshippers whose consciences are purified from dead works.

G.A.S. Is there a suggestion in Leviticus that the sons of Aaron are in the appreciation and understanding of that? They present the blood.

G.R.C. In Leviticus 1 : 5, "... and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall present the blood and sprinkle the blood round about on the altar...". That is the blood of the burnt offering. Then as to the peace offering in Lev. 7 : 33, "He of the sons of Aaron that presenteth the blood of the peace-offerings, and the fat, shall have the right shoulder for his part". I think, as you say, that the sons of Aaron characteristically have an appreciation of the blood, not simply in its bearing on us, but in what it means to God. That is, they are with God in His appreciation of the blood. And I think that is an important matter. Those chapters in Leviticus suppose the priests functioning. We have not reached that yet in this series of readings, we are still speaking about the *High Priest* and what *He* did; His unique service in what He offered, which is the basis of everything. But having learned the value of His service, and having entered the holiest, we become qualified, intelligently, to serve. And you can quite understand in Christianity, where we have liberty to go in at all times, that, having gone in and seen the blood on the mercy seat and sprinkled seven times before the mercy seat, what an appreciation we shall have of the blood. I believe it is a great thing with God that His priests should be able to come before Him, as sharing with Him His own appreciation of the blood. I believe that is what the presenting means.

J.R.H. Do you think that should help us in re-

gard to addressing the Lord in relation to the cup?

G.R.C. I think it should. The cup, strictly, would link more with the peace offering, because the peace offering is the view of the offering of Christ in which He loved us and gave Himself for us. He died to establish the christian fellowship with all its blessings. And the blood of the covenant is the witness of that. It is all witness of perfect love and unmixed blessing, founded upon His blood. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood . . ." I Cor. 11 : 25. We have the greatest blessing of any family, but it has secured the blessing of all the families. The tabernacle and all the instruments of service were sprinkled with blood. It involves in its fulness a universe of blessing. But I would not omit the burnt offering side from the cup. We may be equal, at that point in the meeting, to thinking of the other side of the matter, the blood as the witness of a work completed for God. Indeed all depends upon the work completed for God. That is the idea of the priest presenting the blood of the burnt offering. It was customary in the Old Testament for burnt offerings and peace offerings to be offered together (see Ex. 24 : 5 and other passages).

C.D. A deeper appreciation of that would give us more liberty in the service.

G.R.C. It would, because it is by the blood of Jesus that we have boldness.

C.D. "To him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in his blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father . . .", Rev. 1 : 5.

G.R.C. Exactly. But how wonderful to present the blood to God. We are apt to think only of what the blood has done for us, but the priests present it to God. They have an appreciation of God's estimate of the blood.

J.A.P. Did the Lord refer to the burnt offering or the peace offering when He said, "And having taken (the) cup and given thanks, he gave (it) to them, saying



Drink ye all of it. For this is my blood, that of the (new) covenant, that shed for many for remission of sins ", Matt. 26 : 27-28. What was the Lord referring to there?

G.R.C. I think we have to remember that the four offerings of old typify *one* offering: "For by one offering he has perfected in perpetuity the sanctified ". Heb. 10 : 14. And then, "... Sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou willedst not, neither tookest pleasure in ... ". That includes all four offerings. "Sacrifices" refers to peace offerings. The peace offering is habitually called a sacrifice in the Old Testament—a sacrifice of peace offering. Then the meat offerings (or oblations) and then burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin. Now all those offerings are offerings by fire. That should touch our hearts; *they are all offerings by fire*. The Lord came to bear the fire. The most severe is the sin offering, which comes last in that verse. Blood is connected with three of them, the peace offering, the burnt offering and the sin offering. It is in connection with the peace offering and the burnt offering that the sons of Aaron are said to present the blood. I do not think the word 'present' is used in connection with the sin offering. The blood of the sin offering was poured out at the bottom of the altar (Lev. 4 : 7, 18, 25 and 34). On the day of atonement it was also taken in and sprinkled on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. That was done by the High Priest only—He only could take the blood inside. But I would say in Matthew 26 : 28 we should not limit it because all four offerings were necessary to secure our blessing.

J.A.P. That fits in with what a brother said in our area, that the Lord actually gave a word at the taking of the cup, as if He would enlarge on what we are now speaking of.

G.R.C. I believe the Lord would help us in relation to the cup. But there is also scope for expressing our

appreciation of the blood later in the service. When we are thinking of God in His greatness and majesty we can speak to Him as sharing, in our measure, His estimate of the blood and what it has effected for Him.

*Rem.* In speaking of the counsels of God, Paul speaks of "the assembly of God, which he has purchased with the blood of his own", Acts 20 : 28. Is there a link there?

G.R.C. Quite so. What a level that is!

C.D. You feel we really need a deeper appreciation of what the blood means to God.

G.R.C. That is it. That is what the priests should have.

C.D. Instead of our side, what it has done for us, we need to think of what the blood has done for God, its infinite value!

G.R.C. The only gospel that refers to the blood at the cross is the gospel of John: "but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water" John 19 : 34. And that is the gospel where the Lord Jesus says on the cross, "It is finished", John 19 : 30. And it is the gospel where He says to His Father: "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have completed the work which thou gavest me that I should do it". John 17 : 4. We use those scriptures, especially the first one, in the gospel, and it is very good to assure the sinner, but that is not the proper setting. The point in John is that the work is finished *for God*. It is a question of what the blood is *for God*. The blood and water from His side is also a witness to us. That is like the peace offering. It is a witness to us that God has given us eternal life, as it says in the epistle. But the great thing to apprehend, I believe, is the work completed for God. That is the highest view of the matter.

F.W. Is it not remarkable that in the gospel the blood comes first. I think I see something in what you are saying, that this is for God. But when we come to

the epistle the water is first, as though that would be for us.

G.R.C. In the epistle it is certainly the peace offering character. In fact throughout the epistle of John the peace offering character of the death of Christ is stressed. The sin offering comes in in chapter 1: " . . . the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin ", 1 John 1 : 7. That is the basic matter—the foundation, as it were, for the whole system to function. But then, as the epistle proceeds, the apostle is dealing with the death of Christ from the standpoint of the peace offering. " Hereby we have known love, because he has laid down his life for us ", 1 John 3 : 16. And it is the bearing of the peace offering on us, that we should lay down our lives for the brethren. You see, if we appreciate what Christ has done for us, we shall lay down our lives for the brethren, and that is how the peace offering is continued, in the principle of it. It is on that line that the saints remain a wealthy people. The Lord died to make us wealthy, but in a practical way the wealth continuing depends upon the saints following Him in peace offering character, bringing their peace offerings, laying down their lives for the brethren. The main point of that epistle is the peace offering, and therefore you can understand, at the end, it is what the blood is as the witness to us, the Spirit and the water and the blood all agreeing in the witness that God has given to us eternal life. But then, as you say, the Gospel is what the blood is to God and I believe if we see that we shall enjoy John's gospel more. The Lord says, " It is finished ". He was speaking in relation to His God.

A.N.W. Even in the type at the outset in Egypt, the word is, when *I* see the blood.

G.R.C. Quite so, so that even there the blood was for God.

*Rem.* In Cain's offering there was no blood, no remission of sins, and no love for the brethren.

G.R.C. And that is why it speaks of dead works in Hebrews. "... how much rather shall the blood of Christ, who by the eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God, purify your conscience from dead works to worship the living God ". We can only serve God aright and be true worshippers, as we are in the gain of sabbath. The Lord says " It is finished ", the great sabbath is brought in. The sabbath is connected with God finishing His work. He works by Himself and for Himself and finishes it, and He rests. That happened in creation, but was soon spoilt; and then it happened in connection with the work of redemption. There was a great work to be done and the Son did it, by and for Himself, as we have already seen. And He has completed the work. " I have completed the work which thou gavest me that I should do it ", John 17:4. Anticipatively there, but on the cross He says, " It is finished ". That is the next great sabbath. That work is done, and until we approach God in the appreciation that *that* work is done, and are really resting in that, we cannot do any works that are acceptable to Him. They are dead works. Cain began the history of dead works and they are offensive to God.

*Ques.* In verse 12, what is the force of the expression ' once for all '?

G.R.C. "... has entered once for all into the (holy of) holies ... ", is the contrast, I think, to the priest entering in once a year. In that which was type, the priest could go in only once a year, and only the high priest, no other priest, as we know; and he had to come out again. " But Christ being come high priest of the good things to come, by the better and more perfect tabernacle not made with hand ... by his own blood, has entered once for all ... ". There is no coming out and going in again in that sense. He will come out for display. But so far as the work is concerned, He has gone in once for all. It is a completed matter. The matter of sabbath is a very important thing, because

unless we have arrived at sabbath in our souls, we cannot begin to work properly for God, or serve. It will be servile work. When the people were before God there was to be no servile work. We need to be in the sense of sabbath in the way we are speaking now, God's rest in Christ and His completed work, so that we are not bringing anything of man into the matter, anything of ourselves. Only thus are we true worshippers.

H.B. Would that be the order in Leviticus 23 that the sabbath comes in at the beginning of the set feasts?

G.R.C. It is a striking thing that the sabbath comes in at the beginning of the set feasts. It says in that verse that the sabbath was to be observed in all their dwellings. It is a matter that should mark our homes. The sense of resting in Christ and His finished work should govern us in our homes. They will not be proper homes according to God, unless it does. Not only shall we be restful and our homes held for God, but we shall not tolerate anything which Christ's death has put away. We shall not tolerate any feature of the old man if we are in the gain of God's sabbath in Christ. It should govern our homes and if it does not govern our homes, assembly service will be interfered with, and the feasts of Jehovah interfered with.

W.T.L. I was going to ask if that is why in the verse you quoted it is "how much rather shall the blood of the Christ . . . ", Heb. 9 : 14. It is not Jesus, but the Christ. Everything of the old order is shut out and He is the Head of the new order that is coming in. Is that the idea?

G.R.C. That is very good. It really means, I think, that He is the Centre of an anointed system, which all takes character from Him as the Christ. Every activity in the system is to be in the power of the anointing, which shuts out man after the flesh altogether. And the completed work of Christ for God has set God free to anoint us. We know there was the anointing in type, but the actual anointing by the Spirit has come about because Christ's work is done. This offering is com-



pleted. And we are to allow nothing that is outside of the anointing in our activities.

J.P. Would not then these expressions, the better covenant, and the better promises, and the better and more perfect tabernacle and the more excellent ministry; would they not all help us to elevate our thoughts as to the uniqueness of this service and the One who has introduced it?

G.R.C. They would, and our affections will be stirred and maintained in an active state in relation to the offering of Himself. It ought to affect us every time we think of it—that such an One should inaugurate the system by the offering of Himself. I cannot conceive of anything that should move the souls of the saints more.

Dr.C. When the Spirit came down at Pentecost, He filled all the house where they were sitting. I was thinking of what you are speaking of and the import of the sitting.

G.R.C. That is an interesting point and it bears on the thought of sabbath, does it not? As it says in Hebrews 10 : 12 “ But he, having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God ”. The work is done from this standpoint. There is much to be done in new creative work before the final sabbath, when the One on the throne says, It is done, in Revelation. That is final. But we are to be in the sense of sabbath in this respect. Our great High Priest, our Forerunner, has finished the work and He has sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God and that is to characterise the system.

J.H. Is there salvation in the understanding and observing of sabbath in our households?

G.R.C. I believe that if we have an appreciation of God working by and for Himself in creation, in redemption and in new creation, we shall want nothing out of accord with it in our homes. We shall want no feature of the old man there. Any feature of the old man would be out of keeping with God's sabbath.

A.N.W. That is a remarkable reference to sitting, because it speaks, under the old economy, of the priests standing daily. There was no seat in that system.

G.R.C. There was no rest in that system, no finality. The sacrifices were unable to perfect, as to conscience, those who approached. There was no rest for the conscience, no true service towards God.

*Rem.* In order to have true service and proper worship in the assembly, the thing must be worked out at home.

G.R.C. That is how Leviticus 23 begins. It is the great chapter dealing with the convocations. It begins with the home. We need to look after our homes. It is, "in all your dwellings", Lev. 23 : 14. We may have a house, but it may not be a dwelling. God's dwelling is based on what we are saying, the offering of Christ. It is through the offering of Christ that God has secured a dwelling place amongst men and our homes are to be dwellings.

A.J.D. Was it not through the households that the testimony came into Europe?

G.R.C. It shows the importance of households in working out the truth of the assembly to its full level, because that was what was in mind in Europe.

J.R.H. You were going to say something more about the dwellings.

G.R.C. It is interesting that the word 'dwelling' is used. Not every house is a dwelling. I believe it is as we learn to keep sabbath that our houses become true dwellings according to God.

J.R.H. You are attaching the thought of dwelling to rest.

G.R.C. Yes, God dwells in restful conditions.

A.B.P. When Lydia said: "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide (there)". Acts 16 : 15. She seemed to have gotten the idea, do you not think?

G.R.C. "Abide there". What a dwelling it must

have been! When Paul came out of prison, he came to Lydia.

T.S. The contrast of what you are saying as to the houses seems to be set out in Abraham and Lot. Abraham sitting by the tent door is available to the visitors. Lot is not so well set in his house.

G.R.C. Abraham was restful. He was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day.

A.B.P. I would like to ask about the day of atonement not coming in at the beginning of Exodus, and apparently no restrictions upon entering into the holiest at the beginning of the book, but the restrictions coming in as the result of the offering of strange fire. Is all that to be held in background in our souls as we contemplate the glory of our approach? Nothing of the flesh, or of human intellect, should intrude as we enter there.

G.R.C. That is very good. And do you not think that bears on a verse we did not read in Hebrews 9 : 4, "... having a golden censer . . . ". We are not told in the Old Testament that the censer was golden but we are told it here. On the day of atonement when Aaron went in, he went in with the censer. It says in Lev. 16 : 12, "And he shall take the censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before Jehovah "—no strange fire there—"and both his hands full of fragrant incense beaten small, and bring it inside the veil. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before Jehovah, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat which is upon the testimony, that he die not. And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle with his finger upon the front of the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood seven times with his finger ". It seems to me a most beautiful type of the Lord Jesus. He went in in all the fragrance of His Person. It was on the basis of the offering of Himself. It was by His own blood, but He goes in in all the fragrance of His Person, which the very sufferings of atonement had brought out in fulness.

It was the very sufferings He went through in offering Himself that brought the fragrance into full manifestation, and He goes in in this cloud of incense, "that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat"—and earlier in that chapter (verse 2) God says, "for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat". As though as the cloud of incense met the cloud on the mercy-seat, God appeared in the cloud. It drew out the outshining of God. He shone forth from between the cherubim. And that is the present position. Christ has gone in in the power of His own blood, but in all the fragrance of His Person, brought out fully in the very sufferings of atonement, and the result is that God has shone out. "... thou that sittest between the cherubim, shine forth", Psalm 80 : 1. God has appeared and He is shining forth, and the One who has gone in in this cloud of fragrant incense is Himself the shining forth. "... who being the effulgence of his glory and (the) expression of his substance . . . ", Heb. 1 : 3.

*Ques.* You mentioned Aaron's sons having an appreciation of the blood, and that there was room to think of that both at the beginning and end of the service.

G.R.C. When we are worshipping God as God in His glory and majesty we may think of the blood as the witness to the work completed for Him. If we can sing: Thou dwellest now, O God, midst fragrant praise—what is the basis of it? How could it be? Well, what a value He puts upon the blood that has laid the basis for that dwelling.

A.B.P. Would you say something about Hebrews 9 : 14, "... how much rather shall the blood of the Christ, who by the eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God . . . ". Does that link with the fragrance being brought out?

G.R.C. It is a most affecting verse, is it not? "... who by the eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God . . . ". Who can estimate the fragrance of it?

A.B.P. I feel if we understood this verse better there would be more part given to the Spirit in the morning meeting, as we speak of it. One has observed, in having the privilege of being in various places with the brethren, that there still seems to be a lack in relation to the intelligent, worshipful, response to the Spirit.

G.R.C. I am glad you have mentioned that, because if we do not give the Spirit His place from our hearts, if we are not giving the Spirit His place and realising that we cannot do anything without Him, the service cannot be what it should be. We shall not go through the service with that smoothness and ease which should mark it, until we arrive at the highest levels. And if the Spirit is with us all through the service we shall be sustained when we reach the highest levels. It will not be just a touch of it at the end. Is that right Mr. P.?

A.B.P. I am sure it is. And one has felt, with the ministry we have had, it is a question of what it is that is lacking. As to whether it is this matter of the dwellings you are speaking of, our communion with the Spirit in personal history, our sowing to the Spirit, our walking by the Spirit; whether that is the background which makes possible having power for response to the Spirit in the service of praise.

G.R.C. That is a very sobering and good consideration. How we would all long to know the Spirit better in personal intercourse and as practically proving Him in every department of life, in our homes, and our businesses and our personal matters. Let us, from today on, seek to live by the Spirit and walk by the Spirit and sow to the Spirit. You see it perfectly in the Lord. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, He was full of the Spirit, and so on. And therefore when it came to the offering of Himself, it was by the eternal Spirit. When we come to offer our sacrifice of praise, if we have not been on good terms, as it were, with the Spirit in other departments of life, how can we expect to know how to avail ourselves of Him then.



H.O.E. Is that why the later part of the verse follows: "... purify your conscience from dead works to worship (the) living God".

G.R.C. I believe anything done in a religious way in the service of God, that is apart from the Spirit, is dead works. And that is a solemn thing to think about.

*Rem.* There is an interesting word in Heb. 9 : 8, "... the Holy Spirit shewing this ...". Would you not say that if we were nearer to the Spirit in all our relationships we would know more of what the offerings mean to God?

G.R.C. Yes, I am sure. This is an important matter we are on, that the system has been inaugurated by the Lord Jesus offering Himself by the eternal Spirit spotless to God, and if that is how the system was inaugurated, every activity in the system should be by the eternal Spirit.

A.J.D. Is that the burnt-offering?

G.R.C. I think it is all four. There are four types, but in chapter 10, after having enumerated the four types, it says, by one offering He has perfected for ever those that are sanctified.

P.W. Would you help us as to the word 'eternal'.

G.R.C. Well, it is in keeping with the epistle generally. In Hebrews 9 : 12 it speaks of "an eternal redemption"; in verse 14 "by the eternal Spirit ..." and in verse 15, "the eternal inheritance". Of course, the Spirit is eternal, He is God. But I think the word 'eternal' is to emphasize that which marks the whole system. The redemption is eternal, the inheritance is eternal and the Spirit, by whom we serve, is eternal.

E.M. In chapter 8 we get the greatness of the sacrifice: "whence it is needful that this one also should have something which he may offer". Chapter 9 gives us the way in which He offered it.

G.R.C. That is it. It was by the eternal Spirit that He offered Himself spotless to God. We may well pause and think what it meant to the Spirit.

*Ques.* Would you say a word why the living God is brought in in the last clause of that verse?

G.R.C. In contrast to dead works. He is the living God and therefore everything in christianity is living. We belong to the tabernacle or dwelling place of the living God. He lives and moves in it. We ourselves do not remain static in our own houses.

E.C. I would like to ask about your remark yesterday about the love of the Spirit for the Father and for the Son. Does that enter into this matter? The Lord says, I love the Father. But you do not get the Spirit saying that, but it must be so.

G.R.C. The Spirit does not speak much about Himself, you know. He is an example for us.

A.N.W. May I inquire in relation to this profound inquiry this afternoon. Do we have to leave in abeyance the Melchisedec function of the priesthood?

G.R.C. Yes, because that would link more, would it not, with the Lord coming out, in blessing? Although we do taste it, for the Lord comes to us. It is not the coming out publicly, but as we partake of the supper the Lord comes in blessing. So I think, in a kind of way, we anticipate the blessing.

A.N.W. That is very good.

G.R.C. But as to the eternal Spirit, think of the feelings of the Spirit when the Lord Jesus offered Himself. The Spirit brooded over the face of the waters at the beginning; He came down in bodily form as a dove, upon the Lord, and, according to John, abode upon Him. And then think of this moment! What it meant to the Holy Spirit! The Spirit entered into the whole matter of the death of Christ. The Spirit entered into the matter of His birth. "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and power of (the) Highest overshadow thee . . .". Luke 1 : 35. Think of how the Spirit has entered with feeling into all these things. And He would give us feelings.

J.H. Does this verse concentrate our attention on

what divine Persons have done by Themselves and for Themselves?

G.R.C. It does. The idea of sabbath means that we are resting in what God has done by and for Himself.

*Rem.* It speaks of the Lord Jesus having done everything in the power of the Spirit. Is that the eternal Spirit?

G.R.C. Yes. And this was a kind of climax. He had done everything by the Spirit in His life, but now by the eternal Spirit, He offers Himself. Marvellous thing! And the whole service is to be in the Spirit's power. Let us remember that. That is how the service has been inaugurated and it must go on in the same way. The whole service of God must be energised by the eternal Spirit.

A.B.P. And is that strengthened by the record that Luke gives us in the Acts about the Lord in resurrection life, assembling with His own, and then charging them by the Spirit?

G.R.C. It is remarkable that, even in resurrection, He should do that. Do you think it was to bring it home to them that that was how things were to be continued?

A.B.P. I think so. Those forty days are days we should acquaint ourselves with, do you not think? How can we move in the sphere beyond death unless we have come to know something of that set out in Christ personally?

G.R.C. It seems to me if you read the first of Acts and the account of those forty days, you can see that the Lord left the hundred and twenty with great expectation as to who was coming. He says there: "... but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit after now not many days". Acts 1 : 5. Think of their expectation, day by day, He had left them with an impression of the greatness of the Person who was coming. It is evident Peter had apprehended it, because he gets up amongst the brethren and says, "... which the Holy Spirit

spoke before, by the mouth of David . . . ". Acts 1: 16. That is, the Holy Spirit had become a known Person to Peter. Peter recognised the Holy Spirit as a divine Person. And they all were in great expectation as to His coming.

J.A.P. So when Stephen was called home, it says: "But being full of the Holy Spirit, having fixed his eyes on heaven, he saw (the) glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, Lo, I behold the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God ". That is how he went out.

G.R.C. That really links with Hebrews. Stephen's view is the Hebrews view, is it not?

J.A.P. That is helpful, say more about it.

G.R.C. Well, it is the opened heavens. Hebrews has been called the book of the opened heavens. He saw the heavens opened, and he saw the glory of God and Jesus. It was really the holiest.

J.A.P. He was full of the Holy Spirit.

G.R.C. He was full of the Holy Spirit and that is what we need to be. We need to be full of the Holy Spirit to apprehend what we are privileged to contemplate in the holiest. Stephen was physically on earth but actually, in spirit, he was in the holiest.

J.McK. I was wondering about the body in chapter 10, "thou hast prepared me a body . . . ", v. 5. And " . . . through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all ".

G.R.C. As far as I have read, when the Lord's body is referred to, it stands related to the saints of this dispensation. His blood has a wider bearing; it bears on us, of course, in a particular way, but then it bears on the whole universe.

A.B.P. The Hebrew servant entering into that—he came in with his body.

G.R.C. Very good. "I love my master, my wife and my children ", Ex. 21 : 5. And so in speaking of

His body it says: "by which will we have been sanctified." (that is, the present heavenly company), "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all". Heb. 10:10. It is intended to affect us particularly. The Lord says: "My body which is for you".

*Ques.* How do we understand the face of God?

G.R.C. Well, I have often wished I knew. "... now to appear before the face of God for us ...", Heb. 9:24. So far as we are concerned, the face of God, of course, is seen in Jesus. It says: "... and his servants (bondmen) shall serve him, and they shall see his face", Rev. 22:4. "Serve" is priestly service there. It is the face of Jehovah Elohim, and I would say, it is seen in Jesus. But as to the verse you quote, I would like some help on it.

A.B.P. It must relate to expression of feelings in the countenance, do you think?

G.R.C. Very good.



## GREATNESS (4)

HEBREWS 10: 19-25; COL. 1: 19-23

G.R.C. It is in mind to dwell mainly on the passage in Hebrews. The passage in Colossians has only been read as confirmatory and as giving another view. We may be led to refer to other scriptures also, which help as to the holiest, but the main passage before us is in Hebrews 10. Our previous readings have been leading up to this point; we have considered the greatness of the Person of the Son, the greatness of His Priesthood, and the greatness of the offering of Himself, and all this leads up to this exhortation, "let us approach". He has entered in once for all into the holy of holies by His own blood, but now the brethren are exhorted to enter. The exhortation is based on *two things that we have*—"having therefore brethren, boldness . . .", and, ". . . *having* a great priest over the house of God", (Heb. 10: 19-21), which, in a way, summarises our last two readings, although in the reverse order. That is, because of the one great offering of Himself, we have boldness for entering "by the blood of Jesus, the new and living way which he has dedicated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh . . .", and then we have a great Priest. So that, having thus the benefit of His offering and His priesthood, we are exhorted to approach. And *the qualifications on our side* are a true heart and full assurance of faith. This exhortation is to encourage us to enter, to approach, but there is nothing here to indicate what occupies us when we are inside. We have to go to other passages to give us an idea of what occupies us when we are within the veil, but then the order of things here is that, having entered, we come out in testimony. "Let us hold fast the confession of the hope

unwavering ” and then, “ let us consider one another for provoking to love and good works ” and then, “ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together . . . ”, Heb. 10 : 23-25. They are the features that would mark those who have been inside.

J.R.H. Does the passage in Hebrews 7 : 25 show that approach is to be a characteristic matter with us? “ Whence also he is able to save completely those who approach by him to God ”.

G.R.C. Surely, and that is the section of the book which deals with the greatness of His priesthood. “ For such a high priest became us . . . ”. He is “ always living to intercede for them ”, Heb. 7 : 25-26. He is a Priest in the power of an indissoluble life, so that He is able to save completely those who approach to God by Him. And that would bear on this word here: “ and having a great priest . . . ”, Heb. 10 : 21. We need the two things; we need the boldness which springs from an appreciation of the offering of Himself and then we need the present service of the great Priest.

F.C. In Jeremiah 30 : 21 it says, “ For who is this that engageth his heart to draw near unto me? saith Jehovah ”. Would we answer to that?

G.R.C. We would. Our calling is a marvellous thing. Our proper place is within the veil where Jesus has entered as Forerunner for us. Other families have other places in this great system, but our place is within. And the way is open at all times, “ He has dedicated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh . . . ”. And if we realise the wonder of this, we would be entering at all times. It is not once a day, or twice a day, although it is very important to do so *specifically at least twice a day*, but we would be entering at all available times. As Mr. Darby says: His presence is our home.

*Ques.* Why are we so slow to take that truth on and avail ourselves of our privilege to enter?

G.R.C. There may be more than one reason. We may be bound to earth and earthly things, which crowd

out these things so that we do not make opportunities. On the other hand, we may not properly have apprehended the great completed work of Christ, nor appreciated that we have a great Priest over the house of God. I believe if we laid hold of what has already engaged us in our previous readings, and judged earthly tendencies that would hold us down, we would rejoice with joy unspeakable to be able to enter at all times into the holy of holies, and we would seek to be there as often and as much as we can. It is a most blessed thing! If you think of earthly majesty and greatness, it is very difficult to get into the presence of it. You would have to go through many intermediaries to arrive there. But think of the amazing thing that is before us here. The Lord Jesus has sat down on the right hand of the greatness on high. His place is unique, of course, nevertheless He has entered in as Forerunner for us and we have access to the audience chamber, to the very presence of the majesty, at all times.

C.A.M. Will you say something about the veil? It says; "that is his flesh". Would that mean the truth of the incarnation is exceedingly great to us?

G.R.C. It involves the truth of the incarnation and also the truth of His death. We could not enter in apart from His death. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness for entering into the holy of holies by the blood of Jesus"—that involves His death—"the new . . ." (and the note says 'newly or recently made' and I understand a sacrificial meaning attaches to it) "and living way, which he has dedicated . . ." (that word 'dedicate' would indicate that it is a costly matter), "for us through the veil, that is, his flesh". Now there would be no entry for us into the holiest, but for His death. So "through the veil" involves the incarnation and the death and entering in of Christ Himself. If we need confirmation of that we would go to the first of Colossians. That chapter presents what is comparable to the holiest; not what it means from our side, our

privilege, but what it means to the Fulness. It says: "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now has it reconciled in the body of his flesh through death " Col. 1 : 21. The ' it ' refers to the Fulness. That is the way the veil is referred to in Colossians.

J.S. It must mean very much to the heart of the blessed God for His people to desire to be in His presence.

G.R.C. Well, that is another point, and that is more the Colossian view—the delight of the Fulness to have us there, holy, unblamable and irreproachable before It. We can understand the delight of heaven, the delight of God, when Christ entered in. But it gives great joy to God, great joy indeed to the Fulness, to see the saints entering in.

J.R.H. Would that imply the work of the Spirit in the soul being appreciated in heaven?

G.R.C. It is because we are His companions. "For both he that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one ", Heb. 2 : 11. We belong to Him. We belong to the One that has gone in. That would be through the work of God in our souls, of course. But He has sanctified us at such a cost; our going in has involved the offering of His body once for all. So you can understand with what exultation God regards the entering in of the sanctified company. Jude touches it again: "... and to set you with exultation blameless before his glory ... " Jude 24.

J.M. Why did you say we ought to go in twice a day at least?

G.R.C. That would link with the morning and evening oblation. We cannot properly function in connection with the morning and evening oblation unless we go inside.

W.T.L. Are we not inclined to leave it until Lord's day morning?

G.R.C. That is why we do not get on so well as we

might on Lord's day morning. Christianity is a living system. If we learn to take up livingly and vitally the morning and evening oblation we shall find it revolutionises our lives.

W.T.L. Is that why the word 'continually' comes in in chapter 13? "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of the lips confessing his name", Heb. 13 : 15.

G.R.C. Yes, exactly, Hebrews 2 : 12 gives the assembly, but what we are going on with now builds up to that. The second chapter is from our side, I suppose, the greatest point in the epistle where it says: "in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises", (Heb. 2 : 12); but we are building up to that. Of course, we realise the presence of God in the assembly in a greater way than we could individually, but the great thing in this chapter is to recognise that the immediate presence of God—the holy of holies—is open to us at all times.

J.P. Does the lack of our entering in lie in these two qualifications, the true heart, which would be the corrective to any moral defect and the full assurance of faith, as involving a full appreciation of the system and He who is over it?

G.R.C. I think that is a very just remark. What is encouraging about the qualifications is that it does not involve growth. What I mean is that entering the holiest is available to the youngest believer. The qualifications are moral ones; that is, a true heart and full assurance of faith. The simplest believer can have these; he does not have to wait until he becomes a father, according to John's epistle, before he enters the holiest. It is not to be put off at all.

C.D. It does involve state, does it not, "sprinkled as to our hearts from a wicked conscience, and washed as to our body with pure water"?

G.R.C. Those two things are simply the gospel, you know. The scripture read in Colossians confirms



this: "if indeed ye abide in the faith founded and firm, and not moved away from the hope of the glad tidings". Col. 1 : 23. The reception of the gospel secures this great privilege to us. The more there is growth, the better we shall appreciate what we contemplate inside, but do not let us think that the inside place belongs only to those advanced in the truth.

H.O.E. Does our reception in the presence of God, then, have nothing to do with anything we do?

G.R.C. What is needed on our side is what is said here: firstly, a true heart—that is a heart that accepts the truth. I accept the truth as to myself that, as after the flesh, I am completely shut out, but that Christ has vicariously taken my place. I repent, therefore, in dust and ashes. It is remarkable how extensively the work of Christ is referred to in chapter 9 : 13-14. "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and a heifer's ashes, sprinkling the defiled, sanctifies for the purity of the flesh, how much rather shall the blood of the Christ, who by the eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God, purify your conscience from dead works to worship the living God?" That is, the type in question is not only the day of atonement but also the red heifer of Numbers 19, which is the most terrible picture of burning in the types. There is no such severe picture of burning as that: and cedarwood and hyssop and scarlet were cast into the burning; and the heifer's ashes were the basis of the water of purification for sin. I think the true heart is one that accepts the application of those ashes. As to what I am after the flesh, the matter has been dealt with in utmost thoroughness in the One who took my place. My soul is moved as I think of it, what He bore for me—that burning. Then the full assurance of faith would be that I have unbounded confidence in Him and His finished work.

F.W. It is a new and living way.

G.R.C. Quite so. It is new in contrast to the old. The old way of approach to God was under the terms of

the law; it was dead. But now we have a new way and it is a living way. Of course, the word 'living' involves the Holy Spirit, for the power of entry lies in the Spirit.

*Ques.* Does the new and living way indicate the greatness of what there is in verse 3 of Hebrews 8: "that this one also should have something which he may offer ". What had gone before was not sufficient.

G.R.C. No, and yet what had gone before affords remarkable instruction. In one sense there is contrast, but in another sense, typical teaching. The types are written to give us an idea of what our cleansing or purification involved for Christ. And as that enters into our souls, and we accept it, we get a true heart. So there is the true heart, but on the other hand, the full assurance of faith. I have confidence in the Lord Jesus and in His finished work. That is the full assurance of faith. I have unbounded confidence in Him and therefore if I have not boldness for entering the holiest, I am casting a slight on Him and His great work.

*Rem.* All that process in the soul can be gone through quickly.

G.R.C. Normally it is gone through at conversion. You go into it more deeply as times goes on; nevertheless a truly converted man would have a true heart and full assurance of faith. I have no doubt that this marked Paul.

*Rem.* I was only thinking of defilement coming in and my being hindered.

G.R.C. Things may come in to hinder and we will come to that, but the first thing is to see that this is normal christianity—a true heart and full assurance of faith. But Colossians shows that you may get turned aside from that and so it says: "if indeed ye abide in the faith founded and firm, and be not moved away from the hope of the glad tidings . . . ", Col. 1 : 23. The glad tidings would give a man a true heart and full assurance of faith, but we are to abide in the faith founded and firm, and then things, of course, get deeper and deeper

with us. We understand more and more what a true heart means, in self judgment; and we value more and more Christ and His completed work.

A.J.D. So Saul of Tarsus immediately preaches Jesus as Son of God, involving a wholly new world opening up to him, to which he had access.

G.R.C. I would say that the man who preached in the synagogue Jesus that He is Son of God, had a true heart and full assurance of faith and knew what the holiest is.

J.R.H. Would this link with what we have in the following chapter in Hebrews: "But without faith it is impossible to please him. For he that draws near to God must believe that he is"? Heb. 11 : 6.

G.R.C. That would fit with what we are saying. The qualification on our side is a true heart and full assurance of faith. And the glad tidings, rightly accepted, puts us into possession of those two things. They deepen with us and we are to abide in the faith of the glad tidings.

*Ques.* Would it be right to say that the section does not deal with state of soul, but with the unassailable right of every christian?

G.R.C. I think if you come to state of soul it is another matter. We may allow things that hinder communion, but we have to go to other types for that. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness". 1 John 1 : 9. That would link with the bringing of the sin offerings in the early part of Leviticus. We continually have to make confession, but the provision is there. It says time and again in Leviticus 4, It shall be forgiven him; there is no question of the thing remaining. The sacrifice of Christ is available as a remedy for every failure that involves loss of communion. Each such experience would deepen the whole matter of the true heart and the full assurance of faith, if rightly taken up with God. And then there is

the laver where we need to wash our hands and feet. The priests washed their hands and feet at the laver before serving. But this is not the laver here.

J.A.P. Is Romans 5 : 1 confirmatory of what you are saying, in that faith comes first? "Therefore having been justified on the principle of faith, we have peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom we have also access by faith into this favour in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God". Is that a similar thought or does Hebrews 10 go farther than that?

G.R.C. It is a similar idea and helps in showing that the immediate result of accepting the gospel is access, by faith, into favour. That is as far as Romans takes us. Romans generally is not so much occupied with our going in. Romans is occupied with God coming out. And that is why it is justification. Justification is connected with God coming out, sanctification with man going in. Hebrews deals with sanctification, but the same work which justifies us, also sanctifies us. Hebrews is developing the sanctification side to encourage us to go in. Romans just touches it, that we have access by faith, but does not develop it. And so in Romans 3 Christ is set forth a mercy-seat. It is a question of the mercy-seat from the standpoint of God coming out. God has manifested His righteousness as "towards all, and upon all those who believe". It is God coming out to where we were in our sins, with His righteousness, showing forth Christ as a mercy-seat. So we can look into heaven, but it is not a question there of our going in, as Hebrews would suggest, but God coming out. God comes out to justify us, clear us of our guilt, but Hebrews shows us that the same work that justifies us has sanctified us, made us entirely fit to go in.

*Ques.* Is that the meaning of the word 'boldness'?

G.R.C. Yes, it is a question of the apprehension of the work of Christ. We may not know how little we have apprehended it. We do not know much of the

gospel yet, dear brethren, otherwise we would know more of the holiest.

*Ques.* I was wondering why we are so slow to apprehend and go in and see what God has provided for our approach.

G.R.C. We have so little apprehended the gospel—the magnificence of it. The greatness of Christ and the greatness of His offering—how little understood by us!

*Rem.* That has made us fit, if we have accepted it with a true heart.

G.R.C. Well, that gives us boldness. There must, of course, be a work of God in our souls. “For both he that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one”, Heb. 2 : 11. It involves the relationship, the kindred; but it involves also that they were sacrificially before God on the same basis as Aaron. *Aaron and his sons* laid their hands upon the burnt offering and the sin offering and the ram of consecration. That is, Christ has gone in and is before God now on a basis upon which He can take us with Him. So that we are before God on the same footing.

J.B. “For he received from God the Father honour and glory, such a voice being uttered to him by the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight; and this voice we heard uttered from heaven, being with him on the holy mountain”, Peter 1 : 17-18. Such a one as Peter seeing this and being there, would encourage us, even after his departure, to avail ourselves of the same privilege.

G.R.C. Yes, I think so. I think what Peter brings out as to the holy mount, helps us as to what we are to contemplate in the holiest.

J.A.P. You said there was a difference between Romans and Hebrews in the teaching, and I think you said sanctification is brought forward in Hebrews. What do you mean by that, many of us do not understand that.

G.R.C. I think justification relates to our need.



We were guilty and God comes out and justifies us. That is what we need, in the place of our need and guilt, and it is based on the same work, because He has set forth Christ Jesus as a mercy-seat, through faith in His blood. It is the very same work. But Hebrews shows us that that work has not only cleared us of all guilt, but has also cleansed us from all defilement and fitted us in every way for the presence of God, and that is sanctification. Sanctification involves that we are fitted for the sanctuary.

F.W. I would like to ask in relation to our bodies being washed, would that be the same as in John 13: "Ye are clean"? The work has been effected once and for all so that, knowing that we *are* clean in God's sight we would seek to *keep* clean in a practical way.

G.R.C. I think the note here confirms that. The washing here is not the washing of the hands and feet at the laver. It is the washing of the body, the whole man, and that took place once for all, in the sanctification of the priests. The very first act of sanctification was that Moses bathed Aaron and his sons with water. Now that is what is in mind. It bears on what was said to Peter in Acts 10: "What God has cleansed . . .", v. 15. It is an element of the gospel.

*Rem.* I think you said that, in entering the holy of holies, we are not exactly told, in this scripture, what we do there. Sometimes we relegate this thought only to prayer. Do you not think that entering the holy of holies with a purely meditative spirit, just to be there, not necessarily praying for a few moments and then stopping, but just remaining there to get some impressions of divine Persons, is really in mind here? We sometimes praise God for a few moments and then we stop, but I was wondering if being in the presence of God in a spirit of contemplation or meditation is really in mind here.

G.R.C. That is more the thought of it. I do not think the holiest is the place of prayer. Prayer is at the

incense altar, and at the burnt offering altar, too. Service generally is at those altars, we serve at those altars as belonging to the inside place, in the light of the inside place as *in spirit in the inside place*.

I mean, using the type, the service is at the altars, but contemplation, adoration, and so on, belongs to the holiest of all. But for christians, the veil is no barrier. All service should be carried out in the light and joy of the holiest.

J.R.H. Would you say the ark of the covenant is the great Object in view in the holiest?

G.R.C. That is a great matter, the ark of the covenant. But the One who sits between the cherubim and who has shone forth, is perhaps, the greatest, "thou that sittest between the cherubim, shine forth" Psalm 80 : 1. Think of being in the presence of God as shining forth! That is what is in the first chapter of this epistle. The Son is the effulgence of God's glory and the expression of His substance—think of being in the presence of such an One!

*Ques.* Would it be right to say that in the holy of holies no word was ever spoken?

G.R.C. I would not like to think that we do not speak there, although it is not exactly speaking in the way of service. Moses went in to speak with Him, it says. That was in the holiest. What was true of Moses only in the Old Testament, is true of us in a far greater way than Moses ever knew it. He was only dealing with the type, although God was there, of course, in the tabernacle of old. But we have the real thing, the true tabernacle. Moses went in to speak 'with Him' it says, not merely to speak *to* Him. He did not expect it to be a one-way conversation. He went in to speak with Him, but when he went in to speak *with* Him, it says: "he heard the voice speaking to him from off the mercy seat" Num. 7 : 89. The holiest is a marvellous place!

J.R.H. What about David going in and sitting before Jehovah?

G.R.C. I think that bears on it. We can be in the holiest restfully. I believe sitting and prostration both mark the holiest. The elders in Revelation were sitting and at times they were prostrate. I believe that is what marks the holiest; on the one side we are restful in the presence of supreme greatness and glory, but on the other hand, as fresh impressions of glory enter into our souls, we are prostrate.

A.J.D. Just to be there in holiness and without blame. It is a great thing to be restful in such a place, is it not?

G.R.C. We could not be there unless that were so. So in Colossians it says: "to present you holy and unblamable and irreproachable before it". Col. 1 : 22. Think of being in the presence of 'the Fulness'. The Fulness involves the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All the Fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily, and we are there holy and unblamable and irreproachable before the Fulness.

*Ques.* In Psalm 100 : 2: "Serve Jehovah with joy: come before his presence with exultation". Would you tell us the difference between exultation and prostration?

G.R.C. I do not think we could be in such a blessed place without exultation. But it in no wise conflicts with the idea of prostration. In the doxology in Jude, ver. 24, it says, "But to him that is able to keep you without stumbling, and to set you with exultation blameless before his glory". That is the divine side of it, divine exultation, showing the joy God has in having us before Him. "... to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, might, and authority, from before the whole age, and now, and to all the ages. Amen". That is the worship of a man who is in the holiest.

C.D. Would exultation be supported by Psalm 45 : 15. "With joy and gladness shall they be brought; they shall enter into the king's palace"?

G.R.C. That would be a similar idea. There it is

the king's palace. It does not go so far as the holiest. But it is the idea of exultation.

*Ques.* Would it be right to think of the end of Psalm 24, as acclamation: "Lift up your heads, ye gates; yea, lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in".

G.R.C. Oh, yes. That is Christ going in. But then He goes in as Jehovah of hosts, so that hosts are linked with Him.

J.A.P. The verse you refer to in Numbers is very interesting, perhaps it should be read. Numbers 7 : 89: "And when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with Him, then he heard the voice speaking to him from off the mercy-seat which was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubim; and he spoke to Him".

G.R.C. Beautiful, is it not, to think that in such an exalted place, there can be such communications of holy intimacy? He goes in to speak *with* Him. Think of Moses having such a conception, to speak *with* God—not a one-way conversation! And God took the initiative; God spoke to him. Think of how God would take the opportunity to speak to *us* as we enter His presence! And the voice spoke "from between the two cherubim" (Num. 7 : 89). The ark, speaking of the type, is the great piece of furniture in the holiest, referring to Christ as the Centre of the system, the One from whom all the system takes character; He, Himself, being also the mercy-seat, and the cherubim overshadowing, the whole is a type of Christ. And there is the blood upon the mercy-seat. But then what is greater than that is that there is the One who sits between the cherubim, and He shines forth. "For I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat", Lev. 16 : 2. That is what is involved, I think, in "the effulgence of his glory and the expression of his substance". Heb. 1 : 3. You come into the holiest in the appreciation of Him as the ark, supported by Him as the great Priest, but we then

apprehend Him as the effulgence of God's glory and the expression of His substance. We have gone through the veil. In His pathway here, as Mr. Darby says: We see the Godhead glory shine through the human veil. But now, within the veil, there is nothing to bedim His Godhead glory. In His present condition as Man, there is nothing to bedim the Godhead glory. In His humiliation there was. Hebrews speaks of it as "the days of His flesh". There was the veil, that is to say, His flesh. But now there is nothing to bedim the Godhead glory.

T.S. Is there any link with John 17 in all this?

G.R.C. John 17 is a remarkable link, because, I believe, we can see allusions there to both altars and to the holiest. The Lord Jesus says, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have completed the work which thou gavest me that I should do it", John 17:4. That links with the burnt offering altar. But the prayer as a whole is at the incense altar. You can tell that by the way He refers to His own. He does not refer to them as having any natural or sinful origin; "They were thine, and thou gavest them me", verse 6. It is the view you get at the golden altar where all around are the boards covered with gold—the saints according to purpose. Then He says: "Father, as to those whom thou hast given me, I desire that where I am they also may be with me, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me". I would say that is the Lord's way of referring to the holiest and our place within the veil.

*Rem.* He says: "Sanctify them by the truth; thy word is truth". John 17:17.

G.R.C. That, of course, shows how we need the ministry, "Thy word is truth". Sanctification by truth means we have come into the thing intelligently. According to this epistle we are "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all", Heb. 10:10. That is the divine side. Then, as to practical sanctification, we are sanctified in the Spirit as



both Paul and Peter tell us. But to be in the matter intelligently—and that is where growth would come in—we are sanctified by truth.

J.R.H. Would not the truth in John 17 involve Paul's ministry?

G.R.C. That is just what it does involve, and the work of ministry generally—"until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, at the full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ ", Eph. 4 : 13. It is a question of arriving at full growth in regard to that which we are able to contemplate in the holiest; but we do not wait for full growth to go in. The moment we receive the gospel truly, the holiest is open to us.

J.R.H. And that is encouragement for the youngest believer.

J.B. In 2 Corinthians 12 Paul says, " I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I know not, or out of the body I know not, God knows;) such a one caught up to the third heaven ". Would that be like the holiest?

G.R.C. I would not like to speak too definitely, but there may be some link between the holiest and the third heaven. The holy of holies was the third part of the divine system, the innermost part, and the third heaven would refer to the highest elevation to which the creature can go. But, of course, 2 Corinthians 12 refers to Paul being *caught up* there. We are referring to what is more normal to christianity, whereas that is special. He did not know whether he was in the body or not. I am not saying that we should rule out such things, but he only speaks of it as happening fourteen years ago. He does not say that it happened more than once. But he does say, " For whether we are beside ourselves, it is to God ", (2 Cor. 5 : 13), as though he were often beside himself. In fact, whenever he was free from other matters, the burdens of the testimony and the like, he was beside himself to God, which would

link with entering the holiest in the way we are speaking, I think.

F.C. Ecstasy does not seem to be common with us.

G.R.C. The Spirit is dwelling in us and we should leave ourselves open for special things. But what we are speaking of now is normal, every day christianity—the marvellousness of it; and one feels one has only just begun to touch what life is, according to God.

T.S. Would this help in the understanding and consideration of complete and final thoughts?

G.R.C. I doubt whether we ever receive the impress of the divine mind in connection with completed thoughts except in the holiest. We can read them in scripture, and get them into our natural minds, but I believe it is in the holiest that we get impressions from God Himself as to His own thoughts. It says of Moses, as we have been noticing, that he heard a voice from off the mercy-seat speaking to him. Now have we heard that? Have we heard *God* unfolding His thoughts to us?

*Rem.* The truth becomes living to us then!

*Ques.* Moses says: “and we do not know with what we must serve Jehovah, until we come there”, Ex. 10 : 26. I wondered if that referred to what you have been speaking of, the service at the altars, or the holiest?

G.R.C. He is speaking before they left Egypt. He would be referring to the service at the altars. The holiest is not exactly the place of service. We must not separate things too much in christianity because we belong to the holiest and the veil forms no barrier for us. We take up our service in the full light of the holiest. Nevertheless we have to distinguish; and the holiest is not exactly the place of service. You are there to speak with God and to hear what He has to say. It is restful contemplation and adoration.

*Ques.* Is what we are speaking about connected with the individual?

G.R.C. Yes, but we must not *limit* the holiest to the individual side, because whatever we enjoy individually

is enjoyed more in the assembly. But the primary point here is what is *continuous* and he *follows* it by saying, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" Heb. 10 : 25. But one feature of a man who habituates the holiest, is that he will never absent himself from the assembly, because he knows that all he has enjoyed in the holiest will be confirmed and developed in a greater way in his soul when he is in the assembly.

E.B. In 2 Chronicles 5 : 14, we have the reference to the priests not being able to stand to do their service. I wondered if we may reach that point when we are together, that we may have nothing to say.

G.R.C. Yes, Mr. Darby says in his hymn: Voice by voice in silence fails. There may come times in the worship when the prostration of soul is such that for a brief time silence prevails. But then the public service must go on, because it is due to God. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me". Psalm 50 : 23. It is due, before angels and men, that God should be *vocally* praised in the assembly. So that the Spirit would never lead us to lapse into a permanent silence. The very fact that we reach a point where silence must prevail, would only lead to a greater burst of praise.

*Rem.* We have the expression 'Let us' three times in this chapter. Does this indicate the filling out of christianity from the standpoint of the holy of holies?

G.R.C. It shows that while we can take this up in our personal relations, and our household relations, yet no one who takes up this privilege isolates himself. We enter the holiest as having love to all the saints.

*Ques.* Do we take it then, in coming to the morning meeting on Lord's days, we should bring the holiest with us?

G.R.C. I think we should come to the morning meeting as those who have been in the holiest. If it is so, we shall have a remarkable experience of what the holiest is from the collective standpoint, as the service proceeds.

A.J.D. Would we see the expression in the assembly of what was observed in the holiest—God known in the assembly and the glory that belongs to Him?

G.R.C. In the assembly we are privileged to know the immediate presence of God. All that we can touch individually in entering the holiest takes on a greater aspect when we enter the presence of God in assembly service. So you see, Ephesians refers to our being seated. In Hebrews it is the exhortation to enter, “let us approach”, and that is to govern us day by day. But in assembly, it is possible, through the quickening power of God, for persons to experience what it is to be sitting down together there, “and has raised us up together, and has made us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus”, Eph. 2 : 6. Now that brings up another point and that is what is prominent in Hebrews is “the holies”. (You will notice that “holy of” is in brackets—it is not in the original), whereas in Ephesians it is “the heavenlies”. But the term “heavenlies” is used once in Hebrews 9 : 23. “It was necessary then that the figurative representations of the things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with sacrifices better than these”. ‘The heavenly things’ might be translated ‘the heavenlies’, it is the very same word as used in Ephesians—“the heavenlies themselves with sacrifices better than these”. So that the heavenlies and the holies are identical, but Hebrews is stressing the holiness of God’s presence, and bringing out the greatness and sacrifice of Christ, which has fitted us for such a holy place. Ephesians, which is viewing things from the standpoint of purpose, stresses that it is the heavenlies. It does not stress the holiness of it, but the heavenliness of it.

J.S. And yet the same kind of language is brought forward in Ephesians. I was impressed with it. Paul says in chapter 3, verse 12: “in whom we have boldness and access in confidence by the faith of him”.

G.R.C. I would say that is the collective view of the holiest. It is what is our portion in the assembly. That chapter is full of the assembly; God showing to principalities and authorities in the heavenlies, His wisdom, through the assembly. And the climax of the whole matter is "Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access in confidence by the faith of him". It is the assembly as such now, having access to God as God in a most glorious way, and coming into the presence of God in His glory and majesty with a boldness which angels will never know. Angels have no comparable access, and that is how the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies learn.

J.R.H. You said that entrance into the holiest is not a matter of growth, and yet can there be real spiritual growth apart from the entering into the holiest?

G.R.C. No, I believe that is the way of growth. If we habituate ourselves to the holiest and receive divine communications—whether we are thinking of it individually or assemblywise—there is nothing so contributes to our growth.

A.J.D. So this matter of access at all times is a most important matter for us to get thoroughly embedded into our spiritual beings, so that we might frequent that place.

G.R.C. It is the way to begin the day. Do not begin the day asking for your needs to be met. Begin the day by going right into the holiest, where you are immediately set free from every thought of self and your own interests. You are in the presence of God and you begin the day in the presence of God with His outlook on the whole of His interests in heaven and earth.

*Rem.* Do not the Lord's words, as man, "He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed", (Isa. 50 : 4), indicate that, as man, He moved that way Himself.

G.R.C. I believe the way to begin and end the day



is to go straight into the holiest. When I say end the day, I do not mean just before we go to bed.

J.R.H. Making it a matter of habit. You used an expression, in England, as to Judah being married to the sanctuary. You spoke about Paul being married to the sanctuary.

G.R.C. I am sure, if we habituated the holiest, we would be married, in that sense, to nothing else. That is, the sanctuary would be our main concern in life.

J.P. One would like to get clear on these three expressions; the matter of the greatness, the holiest and the reference to the fulness in Colossians. Did I understand you to say that these are related thoughts?

G.R.C. The holiest stresses that it is the most holy place in the universe, it is the very presence of God. But the other two thoughts—the greatness and the fulness—both enter into the matter. Hebrews stresses the greatness and Colossians the fulness. I believe if we enter the holiest our spirits will be impressed by both.

G.H.P. Everything of self, or what is natural, is left outside.

G.R.C. That would be involved in going through the veil. Nothing can enter there that was dealt with in the death of Christ. There were cherubim in the veil. Nothing of the flesh can pass the veil. I may endeavour to enter the holiest, but nothing can pass the veil that was dealt with in the death of Christ. And if I have got a true heart there will not be anything.

J.McK. I wanted to enquire as to the remark you made earlier as to what we see in the holiest—the Godhead glory, outside of the idea of the human veil connected with the Lord here in humiliation. Does that go beyond what we have in Hebrews 2 : 9 “but we see Jesus”?

G.R.C. The second chapter has in view Jesus as the great High Priest, “Crowned with glory and honour”, would be like Aaron clothed in the garments of glory and beauty, with a holy turban upon his head. “. . . But

we see Jesus, who was made some little inferior to angels on account of the suffering of death . . . ". It is a question of the priesthood and the offering of Himself—the suffering of death—and we see that He has gone in. It is not so great as chapter 1, where it says, "who being the effulgence of his glory and the expression of his substance ". That is what is involved in the One who sits between the cherubim, shining forth. It is the shining forth of God. So that, in the holiest, we are not so much occupied with the official glories of Christ, great as they are. We have got the benefit of them. We have got the benefit of His lordship and His priesthood and now we are engaged with Himself—the effulgence of God's glory and the expression of His substance. It is God shining forth, and it is a marvellous thing to be in the presence of God thus. As I understand it, in Christ's present, glorified, bodily condition there is nothing to hinder the glory shining forth. His glorified humanity does not constitute a veil! Not, of course, that we see face to face yet, as Paul says elsewhere. We always have to remember that. Nevertheless what we can behold by the Spirit is marvellous.

*Ques.* Is the access individual or collective?

G.R.C. In Ephesians it is collective, ". . . in whom we have boldness and access in confidence . . . ".

*Ques.* Would being in the holiest be more than apprehending God in the incarnation?

G.R.C. The gospels were written by men who habituated the holiest. And they bring the glories of what they have seen of Christ in the holiest to bear upon what they had seen down here.

G.A.S. So in the holiest you participate in the thoughts of God, do you not? You share His delight in Christ and His thoughts as to the assembly.

G.R.C. Quite so. I think when it speaks of access it is referring to what we have from the divine side. God has given us access, but the word "let us approach " is to encourage us to avail ourselves of it.

*Ques.* How do we encourage one another in this matter?

G.R.C. You are referring to verse 25: "but encouraging one another, and by so much the more as ye see the day drawing near". The best way to encourage the brethren, is to go in yourself, and to tell them how good it is! The first thing however is: "Let us hold fast the confession of the hope"; that is as you come out from the holiest. What you have enjoyed there is still, as to actuality, in hope.

*Rem.* Did not Moses' face shine?

G.R.C. Moses' face shone and ours should shine. That is the point in Corinthians where there is another reference to the holiest. "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image . . .". That is another view of the holiest. There it emphasises its effect on us. Colossians is what it means to the Fulness, Hebrews is what it means to us; but Corinthians gives its transforming effect.

*Ques.* Psalm 73 : 17, "Until I went into the sanctuaries of God; then understood I their end". What is the difference between the sanctuaries and the holiest?

G.R.C. The sanctuaries refer to the whole system, including the holiest. Not that Asaph could go into the holiest, but it is to encourage us in our day of course, for the scriptures were written for our instruction. The sanctuaries of God would refer to the court, and the holy place, and the holiest, and you learn something about God and His ways in all of them, because there it is a question of His ways. In the court you get instruction as to His ways at the burnt offering altar, in the holy place you get further instruction, but the greatest place of instruction is the holiest itself.

F.C. The verse you refer to: "thou that sittest between the cherubim, shine forth", Psalm 80 : 1, is in that very section of the psalms, one of the psalms of Asaph.

G.R.C. Asaph was a remarkably intelligent man.

J.A.P. "If any one speak—as oracles of God",  
1 Peter 4 : 11. Does that involve that he must be in the holiest to get the word?

G.R.C. I would say so. I would say the oracles of God are what one hears in the holiest.

*Ques.* Do the exercises of Romans 7 and 8 enter into this matter of a true heart? Some of us are challenged in fact as to whether we do have a true heart.

G.R.C. They do. That is where we learn ourselves and learn that we are but dust and ashes and come to a proper appreciation of the great offering of Christ. It is that which gives us a true heart.

## GREATNESS (5)

HEBREWS 12: 28-29; 13: 10-17; 2: 11-13

G.R.C. These passages deal with divine service. Until now we have been engaged with the great High Priest and His service, that which He alone could carry out, but these passages contemplate the saints serving. The word 'serve' chapter 12:28, means priestly service. It is one of the words sometimes translated 'worship'. It is translated in chapter 9:14: "... how much rather shall the blood of the Christ, who by the eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God, purify your conscience from dead works to worship the living God". It is worship in the sense of public priestly service. From that standpoint, everything we do in the public service Godward—giving thanks, singing, or whatever we do, is part of the worship. The other word for worship, in John 4, involves adoration or prostration of soul. And, of course, the two should never be separated. The Lord Jesus says in the temptations: "Thou shalt do homage" (that is the word for adoration), "to the Lord thy God, and him alone shalt thou serve" (that is the word for priestly service). Matt. 4:10. Both words, therefore, occur in that verse, and the verse shows that they are inseparably connected. So, as I say, these passages deal with the saints serving as priests. And the order in which they come, that is chapter 12 and 13, following chapter 10, indicates what is the truth, that habitual entrance into the holiest underlies acceptable service. It enables us to take up intelligently the public, priestly service of God. And we are to do so as indicated here, with reverence and godly fear. Then chapter 13 indicates the position of the service of God, that this priestly service is outside



the camp. There is much in the camp that professes to be the service of God, but the true service of God can only proceed outside the camp. After showing that position it goes on: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of the lips confessing his name". This shows that the service is vocal. *The fruit of the lips* conveys what is vocal. And then the "doing good and communicating (of your substance) . . . for with such sacrifices God is well pleased". These activities are continuous. Just as of old, there was the continual burnt offering and the continual incense, so now there is to be the continual service maintained. But in chapter 2 we have the greatest form of the service, that is, in the assembly, the Lord Himself directing everything in it, like the king of old, under whose direction the singers served (1 Chron. 25). So it says "in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises".

F.W. Is the kingdom used for Christ's glory?

G.R.C. The kingdom is a very great matter. Mr. Taylor taught, it goes into eternity. God Himself is the great King and I think in the holiest we get an outlook on a kingdom that cannot be shaken. We have it stated in this chapter in certain words, verses 22 and onward, but when we are in the holiest with God, we have an outlook with Him over this divine realm of which He is the Centre. There we find out what these things really mean—mount Zion, the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, myriads of angels, the universal gathering, the assembly of the firstborn, God judge of all, the spirits of just men made perfect, Jesus, mediator of a new covenant, the blood of sprinkling speaking better than Abel. It implies that we are with God at the Centre, and we are looking out on the vast range of things of which He is the Centre—His kingdom.

J.P. Did you say that true service can only be carried out from impressions received in the holiest?

G.R.C. That is what I believe. What do you think?

J.P. It is a very important matter. Would you say more.

G.R.C. Well, I think there may be a notion in some of our minds, one has had it oneself, that, in our approach, we are to serve at the altar of burnt offering and then to serve at the incense altar and then we reach the holiest. That is not the way the truth is presented. We come by way of those altars, but not as serving. We come by way of those altars which remind us of how *Christ* has served. Entrance into the holiest does not depend on *our* service at all, *it depends on Christ's service, what He alone could do*. So that, the first thing in approach is to pass right through. It is of the utmost importance to understand that our entry into the holiest does not depend upon our service at all. It depends upon Christ and the offering of Himself, and upon His present service of help and intercession. So we are to go right in as having a true heart and full assurance of faith. And having gone in to God, and being before Him, we can take up the service acceptably. We know how to pray, we know how to praise, once we have been in the holiest. We need a fresh touch of the holiest continually to keep our prayers and our praises fresh. Is that right Mr. P.?

J.P. Thank you, it is very affecting. I believe if we understood it more there would be an entirely different tone to our service, not only assemblywise, but, would you say, householdly too?

G.R.C. I would, because what is in mind is this *continual* service. Our personal and household approach to God, if we are right, will always begin with direct entrance into the holiest.

J.H. Do you think that Peter may have received rich impressions as to the kingdom not to be shaken, from his experience on the holy mount?

G.R.C. I am sure that is right. And we receive rich impressions in the holiest.

C.D. You have spoken of the holiest being available

to one as soon as they are converted and I was wondering whether the thief got a sight of it when he says: "Remember me, Lord, when thou comest in thy kingdom". Luke 23 : 42.

G.R.C. It could hardly be the holiest there. But light had dawned upon his soul that there was a kingdom of which the suffering One at his side was the Centre.

*Ques.* Why is the kingdom brought in here? Has it to do with moral order?

G.R.C. In one sense, there is nothing greater than the kingdom. It is eternal. God Himself is the great King. As it says here—the Judge of all. In this passage it does not mean Judge of all, merely as acting against evil. Any true king, even in an earthly sense, is the judge of his kingdom. He is the final arbitrator in all matters of justice; the upholder, in other words, of what is right. And that is the idea, God is the Centre, the Judge of all, which ensures that everything in that kingdom is in perfect equity.

F.C. What about the kingdom in I Corinthians 15? Does that which you have in mind go through to eternity?

G.R.C. Yes. It says, "then the end, when he gives up the kingdom to him who is God and Father", 1 Cor. 15 : 24. Then later it says He is placed in subjection that God may be all in all. Later still in the chapter it says: "flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom", v. 50, shewing that, in its final setting, the kingdom of God is outside of flesh and blood conditions.

J.R.H. Would the reference "receiving a kingdom not to be shaken" show that this kingdom really goes beyond the present heavens and earth?

G.R.C. It is eternal in character and embraces heaven and earth. The Jews looked forward to an earthly kingdom, but the kingdom of God embraces heaven and earth. So the 'once speaking' in verse 26 includes heaven. "Yet once will I shake not only the earth, but also the heaven". So that everything is going to be

shaken in heaven and earth, that God may rule over all.

*Rem.* We are brought into this kingdom that cannot be shaken.

G.R.C. That is right. It will be manifested in the present heaven and the present earth as the vindication of Christ and of God. But it takes its final form in the new heavens and the new earth. The city of the great King is still there. "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband". Rev. 21 : 2.

T.S. Do you think it suggests, too, that we are brought into a realm of great resources, and that we have plenty to carry on with in the service of God?

G.R.C. I am sure that would be one feature of the kingdom. And we have come to it, you see. Some may think, as we read this passage, How have I come to it? I have not much realisation of it. That is because you have not been in the holiest. If you are in the holiest, you are in the presence of the One who is the Centre of this great realm of things. The One who calls the things that be not, as though they were. It is all complete to Him, and if you are with Him, in the holiest, it becomes complete to you. The more we habituate ourselves to being there, the more we shall become accustomed to looking out on this vast realm of glory.

W.T.L. Would it have the effect in that way of stabilizing us as to the service of God?

G.R.C. That is just it—"receiving a kingdom not to be shaken"—we are already receiving it. But we are receiving it vitally as we habituate ourselves to coming into the holiest and being with God, so that we are with Him in His outlook. We realize then that we have come "to mount Zion; and to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of angels, the universal gathering; and to the assembly of the first-born who are registered in heaven; and to God, judge of all". We are in His presence. And then we look out

from the other standpoint: "and to the spirits of just men made perfect." They could not be made perfect without us, it says. We have come to all the Old Testament saints. They are ours. And we have come to "Jesus, mediator of a new covenant"—a covenant that is always fresh (that is the force of the 'new' there)—"and to the blood of sprinkling"—the blood of sprinkling affects the whole system. God looks out on a system which in every way has been purified with blood.

C.A.M. In 1 Timothy 1, after referring to his sinnership, Paul says, "Now to the King of the ages, the incorruptible, invisible, only God, honour and glory to the ages of ages, Amen". 1 Tim. 1 : 17. What a striking way to *begin* that epistle.

G.R.C. It is. He is dealing there with the house of God, which is the same subject we are on. It says in the scripture read this morning: "having a great priest over the house of God . . .", Heb. 10 : 21. The holiest is the innermost part of the house of God. He is dealing in Timothy with the public conduct of those that form the house, and therefore he brings out immediately the greatness of the One who dwells in it. He is "the King of the ages, the incorruptible, invisible, only God". It is the Royal Residence. And the more we get a sense of the greatness and the majesty, the more we are amazed at the fact that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and Paul says, I am the chief. We would all gladly take that place if we understood better the majesty and yet the grace of God.

*Ques.* Would it be right to say that in the holiest you would have an impression of the kingdom, and are the features of the kingdom to be worked out at the present time?

G.R.C. The throne is something we might well think about. Isaiah "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple", Isa. 6 : 1. And the Seraphim were there saying "Holy, holy, holy . . .". The Trinity is in



mind; yet we know the One who occupies the throne. But the point is, it is the throne of *God*. "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" Isa. 6 : 3. That was Isaiah's impression. The idea of heaven and earth had not yet come fully into view and so he says, the whole *earth* is full of His glory. What a view then we should get, if we were thus in the temple, in the holiest—we who know God's will as to heaven and earth.

A.J.D. Peter in his second epistle says "but, according to his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness", 2 Peter 3 : 13. Is that the thought of the eternal kingdom?

G.R.C. It is the kingdom in its eternal setting. Hebrews, no doubt, has the kingdom in its millennial setting primarily in mind; but then the great items mentioned like the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, myriads of angels, the universal gathering, and the assembly of the firstborn registered in heaven all belong to eternity. They are displayed in the world to come, in the millennial reign, but they all belong to eternity and pass into eternity.

F.W. Would such a kingdom involve coming under the influence of such a blessed King?

G.R.C. That is the idea. God is the King, "God, judge of all". He is the Centre. He is viewed here as the One who maintains everything in absolute equity, through the millennium, but also through all eternity. He is the King. David says, "thou art exalted as Head above all". 1 Chron. 29 : 11. The title Head, as applied to God, includes kingship.

G.H.P. Is there any connection in receiving a kingdom and what it says in Rev. 1 : 6 "... made us a kingdom ...".

G.R.C. I believe the verse in Revelation implies that we have part in royalty. It is not simply that we are subjects of the kingdom, but that we have part in royalty. It says "and made us a kingdom, priests to

his God and Father ". We are a royal priesthood, and that bears on what we are engaged with now, that is, the way we are to function as priests, in the light of having received a kingdom that cannot be shaken. If I kneel down to pray and do not enter the holiest, I begin to think of my needs and of the difficulties of the day before me. But prayer for personal need is not priestly service. But if I have been in the holiest with God, and have had an outlook on the kingdom that cannot be shaken, I begin to pray, not in relation to my things at all, but in relation to His interests, which must go through. I pray for all saints and for the whole realm of divine interests, and when I come down to mine, they assume very small proportions. I have a sense when I reach down to my things, that He will readily care for them.

J.P. Is that the force of the verse at the end of these great lists of things? "See that ye refuse not him that speaks ", or, as the footnote reads 'excusing themselves, declined '. Do you think in the holiest, we will be conscious of a divine communication to us?

G.R.C. I think we would. God speaks from off the mercy-seat, from between the cherubim, and it is wonderful to get such communications and they would keep us in movement every day. Earlier in this epistle it says: "Today, if ye will hear his voice . . . ", Heb. 4 : 7. God has got something to say, *today*, not simply something to say to me about my state. He may have something to say about that, but He has something to say to me about *His* great realm of things to keep me in movement. And it is "today, if ye will hear his voice ".

*Ques.* Does the assembly of the firstborn refer to the kind of persons there?

G.R.C. Yes. They are really the nobility, the highest ranking persons in this great kingdom.

*Ques.* In 1 Corinthians 4, Paul says: "I would that ye reigned . . . ", 1 Cor. 4 : 8. Has this in mind the kingdom?

G.R.C. Yes. Those who are marked by royalty now, *suffer*. The imperial colour is purple. The Lord was given a purple robe in the gospel of Mark. It was a purple cloth that covered the altar of burnt offering, which shows that the imperial colour, in testimony, is suffering. A man who is capable of suffering for God now, proves that he is a royal personage. The power and dignity of a king are with him. So it says: "and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father". Rev. 1 : 6. Royalty is involved in that. It is the suffering priesthood.

C.A.M. Is it not remarkable that the Holy Spirit says that Lydia was a seller of purple in the city of Thyatira and she was now in Philippi. I just wondered if that was a reference to the fact that royalty was going to characterise all the happenings of that chapter?

G.R.C. It is remarkable, because Thyatira in Revelation is connected with the system that claims the purple. The pope wears the triple crown, as the king of kings, in place of Christ, assuming to be the Vicar of Christ. It is a terrible assumption. But, as you say, the purple, according to God, belonged to Philippi where Paul was in prison, and the temple service was going on in prison.

*Ques.* Does Psalm 48 help us in that: "Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great king".

G.R.C. The Psalm begins, "Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the hill of his holiness". That is what marks the city of our God.

J.B. I would like you to open up what is meant in 1 Corinthians 15 by the expression "that God may be all in all".

G.R.C. In the millennial reign, Christ's official glories will be in great prominence. The title 'the Christ' means that He fills every office and magnifies every office that God has established, because the anointing covers the prophet, priest and king; and His

official glories will, as I say, be very prominent in the world to come. It is the great day of Christ's vindication. But before the eternal state He gives up the kingdom to Him who is God and Father—that is the mediatorial kingdom. His mediatorship must continue; but the mediatorial kingdom is given up. The idea of the mediatorial kingdom is that it is in the hands of a Man, and a Man, speaking with all reverence, is prominent in His official glories. But in the eternal condition those glories are allowed to recede. I am not saying they are forgotten; but they are no longer in prominence. So in Revelation it says, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it", Rev. 20:11. It does not say who He is. It does not say He is the Christ, no official glory is mentioned. It is just One sitting on it. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled, and place was not found for them". It is *the throne of God*, and although we know who the Sitter on the throne is, it does not tell us. We know who it must be, because it speaks of His face. It *must* be Jesus who is sitting there, but sitting there as representative of God, as we may say. Similarly in Revelation 21:5 we know who the Occupant of the throne is; but He is speaking as *God*. It is a question of God, God known as the great King.

*Ques.* Is that the kingdom that Daniel speaks of, "... and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed"? Dan. 7:14?

G.R.C. The kingdom is a continuous matter from the time of its establishment and has its phases. There is the mediatorial phase in the millennium and then the eternal phase. At the present time it is in mystery. But I would think it is primarily the mediatorial kingdom that is in mind in Daniel. Perhaps you would read the verse.

*Rem.* "And in the days of these kings shall the God of the heavens set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed". Dan. 2:44.

G.R.C. It is a remarkable passage. It is in the days

of the Gentile kings that God sets up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, but which goes on for ever. What would primarily be in mind would be its present form, in mystery, and then the mediatorial kingdom. A stone cut out without hands strikes the feet of the image, and all the metals and materials that compose the image become as chaff in the summer threshing floor and the stone becomes a great mountain and fills the earth. That refers to Christ coming and establishing the direct rule of God in the earth in place of His indirect rule through the Gentile empires. He will come to establish the direct rule, which in the first instance, will be the millennial kingdom. But then He gives up that kingdom in due course and the kingdom takes its final and eternal character.

*Ques.* Does Solomon help us in these verses? I notice that the service is linked on with the kingdom here. The Queen of Sheba comes in and says: Happy are thy men, happy are thy servants.

G.R.C. That would specially bear on our last scriptures as to what goes on in the assembly. She saw, typically, the assembly ordered under King Solomon; and, according to Ephesians 3, the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies see the ordering of God in the assembly, under her glorious Head. The Queen of Sheba, an earthly principality, marvelled at the wisdom of the earthly Solomon, and so at the present time heavenly principalities marvel at God's wisdom, seen in the assembly, under the headship of Christ.

J.A.P. I was wondering whether the receiving of the kingdom brings in responsibility on our part? It says that David received the kingdom, but then he had to learn the lesson about the due order.

G.R.C. So it says here: "Wherefore let us, receiving a kingdom not to be shaken, have grace, by which let us serve God acceptably with reverence and fear. For also our God is a consuming fire". Heb. 12 : 28, 29. God tolerates nothing in His service which is out of



keeping with the holiest. Nothing can go through the veil which has been ended judicially in the cross of Christ, in that great burning. Our God is a consuming fire and we see what that means in the death of Christ. It is not only the burning on the altar. The consuming fire was when the body of the victim was burned outside the camp. A different word is used for burning in these two cases. The burning outside the camp represents the unsparing judgment of God. The victim was reduced to ashes, as is seen in the burning of the red heifer. We should ever keep in mind that God does not spare that which He has brought to an end judicially, at such cost, in the cross of Christ.

J.A.P. So in Leviticus 10, when the two sons of Aaron died, it says, "And Aaron was silent", Lev. 10 : 3. That state should be with us—the rebuke of God against all that is of the flesh in the service.

E.M. It is remarkable that at the end of Matthew, the great kingdom gospel, we have the answer to this, where the veil of the temple was rent and the earth was shaken, and then we have a man that fears greatly.

G.R.C. Very good. And if you think of this continual service, taken up in our private chambers and in our household devotions, it raises the question as to our way in every department of life. We are not priests just on certain occasions; we are priests all the time. So that, as we enter the holiest, and take up divine service in a formal way, morning by morning and evening by evening, (I am using formal in a right sense—we may enter the holiest at any time during the day, when we have a moment to spare, but there are times when we can *allot* time for approach and service), it would surely lead us to see to it that all our appointments and habits—personal and household—are in keeping with our God and in accord with the priesthood.

J.A.P. That is very helpful; and I would like to ask you, Do you think it is right for brethren to come to meetings at night without having been in the presence of

God? We come from our business and household matters and some of us may come to the meetings rather carelessly without having been in the presence of God. What would you say about that?

G.R.C. Well that is the importance of the evening oblation. The continual service that we are speaking about, was maintained by the morning and evening oblation—the continual burnt offering and the continual incense—see Exodus 29 : 38–30 : 10. What you are referring to, at the close of the active day, would answer to the evening oblation. At sundown in Palestine, which did not vary much throughout the year, the active day would cease. And at the close of the active day (between the two evenings) there was to be the oblation. We need to see where we can fit it in, in our arrangements, for, in modern life, the circumstances of persons differ much. I do not know whether any brother or sister gets through the active day without some sense of humbling. We commence the day in the presence of God, and desire to walk all through the day as those who belong to the holiest—it is a wonderful conception, to walk through this world as one who belongs to the holiest, whose place is within the veil. We come to the end of the day and we may feel how many things have happened which are not in keeping. But then, all can be put right before God at that point. The continual burnt offering reminds us of our unchanging acceptance, so that the way is still open into the holiest. And as we enter there, matters of the day are seen according to God, our souls are adjusted, we get fresh impressions of glory and so the divine service goes on. We can take up then, as free from pressure, the intercession for all saints and for all men afresh. And thus we are also prepared to make the most of the meditative part of the day, which is really the beginning of the new day. The day begins in the evening. The day begins with the meditative part, and we cannot make the most of that if we do not observe the evening oblation.

J.H. If we knew more about this, do you think there might be more power to affect one another? I was thinking of Luke 11: "And it came to pass as he was in a certain place praying, when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray". Luke 11:1.

G.R.C. Quite so. We shall indeed affect one another. And I think, as Mr. P. suggests, it will greatly affect our evening meetings. We shall not come there burdened with the matters of the day. They have been settled and we have been with God.

W.T.L. What you are saying would not hinder a brother going straight from his work to the meeting, if compelled by necessity, would it?

G.R.C. I was just thinking of that. If one has to do that, he would look for mercy and grace from God to enable him, even if only for a moment, to enter the holiest on his way. We can be quite sure, that, if we come boldly to the throne of grace, we shall receive mercy and find grace for help in such circumstances. The throne of grace is not simply to help me get through my path here; it is to help me in such a manner that I am not hindered from going into the holiest. "Let us approach therefore with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy, and find grace for seasonable help". Heb. 4:16. It is a time of need if I have to go straight to a meeting—a time of very real need. There is grace to enable me, in my spirit, to enter the holiest. And if I have not much time for it, there are brethren who have, and they are going to help me—their presence and influence—when I get to the meeting. That is why those who have got time, should give time.

A.J.D. So the way into the holiest is always open.

G.R.C. Just so.

*Ques.* How are you going to fit this in with the glad tidings? How much we need to be helped as to the glad tidings of the glory in power.

G.R.C. That is where royalty comes in. We are a

kingly priesthood, as it says, " But ye are a chosen race, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a possession, that ye might set forth the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness to his wonderful light". 1 Peter 2 : 9. The only effective preacher is a priest. Paul served God—and that word is priestly service—he served God in his spirit in the glad tidings of His Son. (Romans 1 : 9). A priest was going forward with the gospel.

H.O.E. Is it not possible to be with God, in the active part of the day, when we are doing our business? We have the Spirit present with us, and we have proved His help in that way.

G.R.C. The Spirit is with us in all these matters. Even in the discharge of our ordinary obligations—" the righteous requirement of the law should be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh but according to Spirit ". Rom 8 : 4. So that we can walk according to Spirit, and be conscious of His presence all through the active day. And that will help us much. Then, of course, if there are spare moments during the active day, the holiest is open.

J.P. " For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit ". Rom. 14 : 17. Does that not give us a sense of the Spirit with us in maintaining us in righteousness throughout the whole day?

G.R.C. Quite so. The Spirit is with us in our things, to enable us to discharge them in righteousness before God and men, so that there may be no hindrance to our entering the holiest and functioning before God as priests.

J.P. So when we approach the service then, it is a matter of knowing that our service is acceptable. Is not this word ' acceptably ' a very important one in our service?

G.R.C. Yes, and it could not be so apart from the Spirit, could it? " their anointing shall be to them an

everlasting priesthood ", Ex. 40 : 15. Everything the priest does is in the power of the anointing.

*Ques.* I was thinking of the sensitiveness of the Spirit. As we get on our knees there may be something that has been overlooked during the day, but He will bring it before our hearts at the close of the day.

G.R.C. He will. But what do you mean by the close of the day?

*Rem.* I fully agree with what you say, but it is just an opportunity when the close of the day comes.

G.R.C. What I am concerned about is that we should not leave the service we are speaking of, until the time we go to bed. That is too late. The idea of it is, that it is the close of the active day, which in the East was sundown. In this country we cannot link it with actual sundown, but it is the principle of the thing which we should observe. "Let not the sun set upon your wrath ", Eph. 4 : 26, bears on what you have said. That time of the day is the time to get all these matters settled. If left until bed-time you miss the evening. You miss the evening of the new day and the profit of the meditative part, because you have not put things right.

A.J.D. So that the evening oblation is at the end of the active day.

G.R.C. The end of the active day is not just bed-time.

*Rem.* It is between the two evenings.

G.R.C. That is the point, it is between the two evenings; that means between the close or evening of the active part of one day and the evening which begins the new day.

F.C. With Daniel it speaks of the time of the evening oblation, " whilst I was yet speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, flying swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation ". Dan. 9 : 21. The whole prophetic calendar was really unfolded in that atmosphere.



G.R.C. It is remarkable, the divine communications at that time, as Daniel was observing the evening oblation.

J.S. You mean, that as soon as we are released from responsible things that hold us, our hearts go to their own home?

G.R.C. That is the idea.

*Ques.* Did not God say: evening and morning?

G.R.C. That is right.

H.B. You remember in Acts 10 Peter went up on the housetop to pray. There is a certain deliberateness about his movements and thus God was free to communicate to him what He was about to do.

G.R.C. Very good. I think sometimes when the word 'pray' is used, it means the whole matter of the service—the whole matter of our communion with God. Undoubtedly, as we are speaking now, Peter would enter the holiest. In fact, it says, "an ecstasy came upon him". Acts. 10 : 10.

J.A.P. In our house we have morning reading together at the beginning of the day; but in the evening we do not have reading together in a collective way.

G.R.C. But, do you have household prayer?

J.A.P. Not in the evening.

G.R.C. I think you would find it profitable. I admit that in households you have to take up things as you find them. Those with young children have to get grace and wisdom from the Lord to do what is best and fit things in when it is best. But as soon as the children are old enough to be brought into these things happily, I think it is good for the whole household to be in it. But until that time it is a question of arranging things as best one can. But I am sure that if we give God His portion in this way, we shall get very great gain. It is not a question of a long reading. In fact there is nothing laid down in scripture about reading at all at the time of the oblation. It is good to read something—even a few verses—because it gives God

an opportunity to speak to us. We are not going to say a lot about it, we are listening to what He would say. And then we speak to Him. We want to hear Him speaking from off the mercy-seat and we want to speak to Him. Then how good it is, having entered His presence, and thus having His outlook, to pray both morning and evening in relation to His interests. The active day is finished, you see, in Westfield, but it is beginning somewhere else, worldwide; and you are thinking too of government worldwide; not only in the morning, but in the evening.

A.J.D. Is the household held on the basis of sanctification, as we proceed on those lines?

G.R.C. Practical sanctification; I am sure that is so. Coming into God's presence so frequently in your own home, if you do it in spirit and truth, will put your house in order. You will begin to see that anything inconsistent with God has got to go out.

J.H. Is there not a remark attributed to Mr. Raven, that if he had his life to live over again he might read less and pray more. It indicates not depreciation of the feature of reading, which is good, but an appreciation of the importance of the matter which we are now considering.

G.R.C. I believe that is so. I cannot help feeling that what we are considering now is one of the most important of matters; otherwise, we tend to make christianity simply the meetings. And then the meetings are not what they ought to be. The meetings will never be what they ought to be if we make our christian lives simply the meetings. Our christian life is every day. "*Today if ye will hear His voice*".

*Ques.* Is it important that our young brothers and sisters, and indeed all the sisters, carry out what we are saying as well as the brothers who have the active responsibility in the meetings? There are many very young in fellowship. Would you not encourage us all to enter the holiest at the end of the active day?

G.R.C. I certainly would. I would greatly encourage the younger brethren to take this up, because some of us have missed many years of it.

*Ques.* I would like to inquire about a household where the husband is away. Can the wife carry on in his absence?

G.R.C. I would say so, what do you think?

*Ques.* I was just inquiring. I wondered about the matter of the wife praying and carrying on the reading.

G.R.C. If the children are young, it is her business to carry on. If she has sons who are committed to the Lord, she would, of course, give them their place as to audible prayer. It depends just how the household is constituted.

*Rem.* I do not think you can lay too much stress on our entering the holiest, that there may be power with us; that we may get real help in our souls and not be just merely theoretical.

G.R.C. It is thus you really live. You are living day by day in relation to God—living by every word of God, and then you can see how assembly service according to chapter 2 : 12, would be enriched.

T.S. Are we always helped in looking at things from the normal standpoint?

G.R.C. That is the way we are helped. We may find at times that we cannot do all that we would like to do, but then let us get the normal idea, and then we will do what we can.

*Ques.* When Peter and John were going into the temple, it says of the man lying there, "seeing Peter and John about to enter into the temple, asked to receive alms. And Peter, looking steadfastly upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed to them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, Silver and gold I have not; but what I have, this give I to thee: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazaraean rise up and walk ". Is that the effect and result of having been in the holiest?

G.R.C. I am sure it is. He could say: Look on us. What men they were! And we should appear in this world as those that belong to the holiest, and who have come from it.

*Rem.* "They recognised them that they were with Jesus ", Acts 4 : 13.

*Ques.* If we resorted more to the holiest, do you think we should have more doxologies—outbursts of praise to God spontaneously?

G.R.C. I am sure we should. You cannot *separate* the holiest from praise and priestly service. As in our spirits in the holiest, conscious of the presence of God, we begin to serve. You cannot make rigid separations as in the type. If we enter the holiest and hear His voice, surely there will be an outburst of praise, whether in our household or personal approach. And that is the idea of service at the altar, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of the lips ", Heb. 10 : 15. It is what is expressed with the lips.

A.J.D. So that in taking up our ordinary business matters in the day, as common people, we are priests at the same time.

G.R.C. Exactly.

*Ques.* When John says: "I became in the Spirit on the Lord's day ", Rev. 1 : 10, is that different from what we have in relation to the holiest?

G.R.C. I think it may be something similar. It is viewed as John's own act. "I became in Spirit . . . ". The Lord says later: I became dead. That was His own act. John says: "I became in the Spirit on the Lord's day ". The Spirit is available for this. It is a question of becoming in Spirit. Of course, it appears that he was completely abstracted, I do not say we could be quite in the state he was, in our ordinary household devotions. But this book shows we can enter the holiest, and it involves, in some measure, being in Spirit. In fact from the divine side, we are not in flesh but in Spirit.

From the divine side, it is the state of the saints. But what do you say about it?

*Rem.* It is a challenging matter to me, to know what it is to be in Spirit.

G.R.C. I think we ought to know more about it. "I became in the Spirit on the Lord's day", surely he would be in the holiest; but he heard a voice behind him. For the moment instead of going on with what he would normally be engaged with in the holiest, he heard a voice behind him, and he had to turn round and look at the assemblies here in responsibility. But he got a remarkable view of the Lord.

J.P. In connection with the holiest and the morning and evening oblation, if some of us were truthful we might have to admit that the position of our service as in chapter 13 : 13, would be the answer to why we are not free in relation to the evening oblation and so on. Perhaps you would say more as to the position of the service—outside the camp.

G.R.C. I believe the true service of God is only carried on outside the camp. It is only there that God is worshipped in spirit and truth. The Lord indicated it to the woman: "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when ye shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father". True worship is outside of all these things. And that is where Jesus is, as far as the world is concerned. In another sense, of course, He is in the presence of God. He has entered in. But the One, who has entered in, as regards this world, is outside, and we go to Him without the camp.

*Ques.* Considering the day in which we are, would you stress there is but one position—outside the camp?

G.R.C. Yes, I would say that.

*Ques.* Are you giving 'outside the camp' a spiritual application?

G.R.C. I want to give it a very practical one.

J.P. Personally, one feels challenged as to the bearing of "outside the camp" on our day to day relations with



men. It affects our whole lives and perhaps has a good deal to do with the sapping of spiritual vitality in carrying out the evening oblation, and our freedom in going into the holiest.

G.R.C. I do not think it is merely a physical separation. We may maintain a physical or formal separation and say: We are the separate people, we have gone outside. But it involves nonconformity to the world in every aspect, in conversation and outlook, dress and everything else. It is useless to talk about having taken a position without the camp, if I am just imitating the world in my manners and deportment.

D.M. Would Daniel be a model for us, "he kneeled on his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime", Dan. 6 : 10. Yet he was a busy man.

G.R.C. All the affairs of the kingdom pressed upon him, but it did not affect the fact that three times a day he prayed and gave thanks with his windows open toward Jerusalem. There was excess there. And some of the sisters are privileged to act likewise. Brothers living in big cities are often away from home all day; they may not have a room to themselves in the factory or office. What can they do at midday? But sisters engaged on domestic duties can get alone with God—even if only for a brief time.

*Rem.* "For it is good that the heart be confirmed with grace, not meats", Heb. 13 : 9. There is a great difference between what worldly persons confirm themselves with and what we do at the end of a day!

F.C. Mr. Raven gave an address on the reproach of Christ and the power of the Spirit; the reproach of Christ governing us outside the camp.

G.R.C. The body of the sin offering was burnt outside the camp, and it says that it was to be burnt in a clean place. Mr. Coates said that the only clean place in this world is with Christ outside the camp. Scripture also makes clear that only clean persons can have part

in the service of God, therefore the service of God is with those who have gone forth to Him, bearing His reproach.

W.T.L. Would you say that outside the camp, would involve a great deal more than not being in Trade Unions or other similar associations?

G.R.C. It involves the reproach of Christ, and in order to escape that reproach we can easily take on the habits and fashions of the world. But if we fail to accept the reproach of Christ we give up one of the greatest privileges that will ever be ours, and forfeit the present joy of approach to God and priestly service.

F.C. In the burning of the red heifer, it says: "And one shall burn the heifer before his eyes; its skin and its flesh, and its blood, with its dung, shall he burn. And the priest shall take cedar-wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer", Num. 19: 5-6. Would that be in line with what you are now speaking of? The cedar-wood, hyssop, scarlet all go into the burning.

G.R.C. That is it. It is a remarkable type and it is mentioned as we have noticed in Hebrews 9: 13, "a heifer's ashes, sprinkling the defiled . . .". It is the only time that the burning is said to be done before someone's eyes. The ordinary sin offerings were burnt outside, but what is stressed as to the heifer is that it was to burnt before Eleazar's eyes. We are to have this terrible burning, which Christ endured, before our very eyes. And we are to see that all we could boast in has gone into it. The cedar and hyssop and scarlet have all gone in the burning, in order to produce the ashes for the water of purification for sin.

*Ques.* We may maintain separation in business, but, if we isolate ourselves from men, we may miss the privilege of bearing reproach.

G.R.C. Quite so. The Lord did not isolate Himself. I know that it is sometimes a temptation to keep out of sight in order to escape reproach. Of course, we would

not run into suffering needlessly, but the testimony requires that we should show ourselves. Elijah is told to show himself to Ahab. We would not do it unnecessarily, but we *are* to testify and that is where the kingliness of the priesthood comes in; you are prepared for the suffering and reproach involved in testimony.

J.R.H. When you speak of Eleazar's eyes, have you before you the spiritual discernment of the saints?

G.R.C. Yes, I think that. It is, therefore, always a present matter to us and it would bear on our bodies being washed with pure water. It is a thing, viewed from God's side, as complete. The word to Peter in Acts 10 is "What God has cleansed ". We accept the gospel and God regards us as completely cleared from the old man; and we profess to be cleared from it in our baptism. We profess to have put off the old man and to have put on the new. But it is a question of the practical working out of it. And the practical working out of it means that we are outside the camp in our conduct as well as in an ecclesiastical way.

G.A.S. And the transforming by the renewing of your mind goes along with that, does it not? Does that take place in the holiest?

G.R.C. That is a good remark, because these meetings are intended for that you know. The Spirit would transform us, by the renewing of our minds. He brings divine thoughts before us with a view to transformation, so that we are no longer conformed to this world; we have something much better.

*Ques.* Daniel's prayer three times a day meant, not only testimony, but being put in the lion's den.

G.R.C. He was not seeking publicity, but he did not shrink from it.

*Ques.* The shepherds in Luke were watching without and received a glorious message. Is that the advantage of being 'without'?

G.R.C. Quite so. So this matter of outside the camp is a very touching thing. Our privilege is inside, but the

corresponding place is outside. Our place is within the veil. Well, the One who secured that place within for us, suffered outside. He is still outside, and we are to go forth to Him without the camp. And there we come into the place where we can carry on this great service. It does not go on according to God, anywhere else.

*Ques.* Do you mean by Him being outside, that He is outside of everything that is of the old man and of the world and that we have to go forth to Him without?

A.J.D. The wording of that verse is very affecting. "Wherefore also Jesus, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate", Heb. 13 : 12.

G.R.C. It is, indeed, very affecting. I am afraid we shall not have time to touch chapter 2 but it really affords the climax of what we are engaged with, because, while there is the continual burnt offering and the continual incense to be maintained, it all bears on assembly service. The *great* response is there. Whatever we may enjoy in our private devotions, everything is enhanced in the assembly. So the word there is, "I will declare thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises", Heb. 2 : 12. That is the great end in view in the service of God.

J.H. Is there some comfort to us, in not having time to touch this section, that if we are right in the section we have been looking at, we shall be unavoidably right, and the service of God greatly enhanced, when we come together?

G.R.C. Just so. There will be great substance, under the hand of Christ, the true Solomon, in the ordering of the service. And we shall reach the highest levels of the service under His direction, as He says, "My Father, and your Father, and my God, and your God".

## ADDRESS

### LIVES REGULATED BY THE WILL OF GOD

HEBREWS 10: 5-7; ROMANS 12: 1-2;  
2 TIMOTHY 2: 3-6, 15, 21, 24-26

I was asked some weeks ago, dear brethren, as to the choice of a career. I suppose there are young people here tonight who are thinking about their career. The fact of the matter is there is only one career for the christian, it is the most blessed and glorious career that any of the human race could have. The christian's career is to do the will of God, and, if we accept that, it makes things very simple. God has called us out, He has called us in, He has called us up. It is the will of God that we should pursue our calling with all our might. Mr. Darby's hymn speaks of the calling out. He says: Rise, my soul, thy God directs thee; in another hymn he says: This world is a wilderness wide, we have nothing to seek or to choose. Our path, you see, is the will of God. God has chosen it for us. And we have a great model in the Lord Jesus.

If we take account of Him, our souls would be moved, and our one desire will be to pursue the path of God's will. That is why I began with the tenth of Hebrews: "Wherefore coming into the world he says, Sacrifice and offering thou willedst not; but thou hast prepared me a body. Thou tookest no pleasure in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin. Then I said, Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, thy will ". The Lord Jesus came into the world with only one object—to do God's will. And for that He needed a body. He says, "thou hast prepared me a body ". He took that body with that one object in view, that in that body He would carry out the will of God. And a



tremendous amount devolved upon Him—all that was written in the roll of the book, the book of eternal counsel. All devolved on Him, as to the carrying out of God's will. How much it cost Him! What He uttered shows that He fully understood what it would cost Him. The will of God meant to Him, that He should be the great anti-type of all those offerings by fire, of old. "Sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou willedst not, neither tookest pleasure in ". They were the four offerings by fire. How well He knew what was involved in His coming. He was to endure the fire, not only the fire on the altar, but that all-consuming fire of divine judgment, typified when the victim's body was consumed outside the camp. Jesus knew full well, and He took that body on purpose to offer it as a sacrifice, "by which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all ". Think of Him taking a body, pursuing His path of service here in perfection, but all the time having in view what was coming at the end; that He was to be the great offering by fire; that He was to endure all that that fire meant in all its reality. Mr. Darby says: All that God is, He is against sin. And the Lord Jesus bore it all. "Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us ". 2 Cor. 5 : 21. It is by God's will that we have been sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Surely this leads out our hearts in worship and adoration to the Lord Jesus! What glory attaches to Him as the Sanctifier! He stands alone in His glory. "For both he that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one ", Heb. 2 : 11. What fruit He has secured for God already! By God's will *we* have been sanctified, God has already the sanctified company, perfected as to their conscience. "For by one offering he has perfected in perpetuity the sanctified ". Heb. 10 : 14. God has a company all of one with Christ, who have boldness to enter the holy of holies by His blood, by the new and living way. How

much this means to God! His presence is already filled, as it were, with sanctified men. And how great the full result will be, when the assembly is complete, and the sanctified company is actually in His presence in glorified bodies. What a great result! But then there will be not only the sanctified company, whose place is within the veil, but a universe secured for God as a result of this offering. His body was given for us; yet through the offering of His body and the pouring out of His blood a basis has been laid for a universe to come into blessing.

Now how does this bear upon us? Romans tells us. In chapter 12 the apostle says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the compassions of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your intelligent service". We need bodies to carry out the will of God. The Lord took a body, prepared for Him, but then *we* have bodies. God needs our bodies. You may be able to say, My soul is saved. That is good. God has saved your soul, but what about your body? The bodies of the saints are essential for the carrying out at the present time of God's will. So the word is: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the compassions of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice . . .". And that is what I would beseech my brethren here tonight to do. I would beseech the young people to do it. You say, well, I am breaking bread. I broke bread when I was eleven, or twelve. But, are you really thoroughly in fellowship? Romans 12 is the fellowship chapter. The fellowship we are in is the fellowship, or the communion, of the body of the Christ. It is also the fellowship, or the communion, of the blood of the Christ. You have got the benefit of the blood, it has brought great blessing to your soul, but what about the fellowship of the body of the Christ? Are you in that communion, vitally? If so, it means, according to your capacity, you will be using *your* body, as He used *His*. And every week, as you partake of the

bread, you are committing yourself to it—the communion of the body of the Christ. Every week, there is a challenge to us: How am I holding my body? I am professing to be in the communion of the body of the Christ; am I holding my body as He held His, for one purpose only, the will of God? God has called you into the fellowship of His Son. I have spoken of the way He has called you out, but He has called you in. “God is faithful, by whom ye have been called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord”. 1 Cor. 1 : 9. But while He has called you into it, nobody forces you into it. Paul beseeches you, and we beseech you. We beseech you by the compassions of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice. You will note the way this is put, ‘bodies’ is in the plural and ‘sacrifice’ is in the singular. The typical reference here is to the 25th of Exodus when Jehovah says to Moses: “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me a heave-offering” Ex. 25 : 1. It was material for the tabernacle. It was one great heave-offering, but everyone had part in it. And that is the point here. We present our bodies, one great living sacrifice. Our bodies are all needed. It is not just a question of being here for the will of God as an isolated unit. You are not adequate for the will of God by yourself. That is not the point. The point is you are with your brethren. Paul is beseeching the brethren. We are all in this, we are all presenting our bodies a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, one great living sacrifice—the great heave-offering. And it is our intelligent service. We know what the heave-offering is for. That is the idea. We have no doubt as to what is in God’s mind. Those people who brought the great heave-offering had no doubt as to what was in God’s mind. He said: Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them. And they brought the great heave-offering that God might have His sanctuary, His dwelling place. And that is the point here. God wants dwelling conditions at the present time. And if

He is to have them, the brethren must present their bodies, one great living sacrifice, for the formation, in a practical way, of God's habitation and this is their intelligent service. The only intelligent thing you can do is to surrender yourself fully to the great matter in hand, that God may have His tabernacle, in all its features, in each locality where we are. That is a great thing! Could there be anything greater?

It is remarkable that the presenting of our bodies is a priestly act; "... your intelligent service ..."—that word means priestly service. It is one of the first great acts of priesthood. Until you have done this, you are not much good for anything else. We have spoken of carrying on priestly service day by day, and how things are apt to crowd it out, but, if the body is presented a living sacrifice, it will not be crowded out. God's service will be the first thing, not left until last, when everything else is finished and there is a little time left. In Malachi God says, "I am a great King. . . .", (Mal. 1:14) And the force of what is said in that passage is that nothing but the best is acceptable to Him. It is a question of putting God first—making sure that He gets His portion. But then it begins by the presenting of our bodies. A man who has presented his body puts God's claims first. And so it goes on: "And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . .". Now transformation is a wonderful thing. I believe it has been going on during these three days. God brings ministry before us that we may be transformed. And I hope there *will* be transformation as a result of our being together at this time. I hope there will be a great change with all of us. It is by the renewing of the mind, you see. If a man is thinking aright, he will do aright. "For as he thinketh in his soul, so is he". Prov. 23:7. God brings to us the thoughts of His own mind to govern our minds, and the moment you get persons governed by the mind of God, there is a transformation. The word of God is the great weapon



in conflict and the great transforming power. It is the weapon the Lord uses when He comes out of heaven, the sharp two-edged sword going out of His mouth. If you could get the word of God to govern the minds of men at this present moment, war would cease, fear would go, the conflict between good and evil would be over. The conflict is in men's minds. The moment men think aright there will be a transformation. And that is going on with the saints now, "transformed by the renewing of your mind". The Spirit is operating and, as we give Him place, He brings God's thoughts before us, so that we are thinking God's thoughts. And as we think God's thoughts and let them control us, we are transformed.

And so the word is "be not conformed to this world, but be transformed . . .". As God's word comes to us, as it has done these three days, let it have its effect! We have to think of the negative first, because tomorrow the world will come in to crowd out of our minds what we have been having. Many things will come in. Scripture normally puts the negative first. "Be not conformed to this world". The Spirit gives us power to put things away from us, and to allow the word of God to work out to full result. Perhaps you have largely been conformed to this world up till now. Be not conformed to it any longer, but let the word of God have its place in your mind and you will be transformed. You will take on a different appearance. Maybe your home will take on a different appearance too. That is a wonderful thing—transformation. And there is no place where transformation takes place so remarkably as in the holiest. As we habituate ourselves to going into the holiest, we shall surely be transformed. We shall want to be here in all our ways, manifestly, as those that belong to the holy of holies. It will become the great desire of our hearts to comport ourselves at all times as those who belong within the veil. What a wonderful thing! Transformed! If you want to get the good of these meetings, go into



the presence of God and go over things there. Behold the glory of God in Jesus. And so the transformation goes on, all with a view that "ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God".

Do not be vague about what the will of God is. If you go your own way you will prove just the opposite. You will prove that your will is a bad and miserable thing, which leads you to disaster. But if you are committed to God's will, with your body presented, and yourself transformed by the renewing of your mind, you will prove that which is good and perfect and acceptable. Your path will be like the path of the just, which "is as the shining light, going on and brightening until the day be fully come," Prov. 4 : 18. And so, as I have said, we need our bodies for the will of God. It is a question of *my* body. What am I doing with my body? Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6 : 19-20 "Do ye not know that . . . ye are not your own? for ye have been bought with a price: glorify now then God in your body". Prior to that he asks two pertinent questions which bear on the subject in hand: "Do ye not know that your bodies are members of Christ?" (ver. 15), and, "Do ye not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit", (ver. 19). This bears on the matter of the will of God. The first thing I have to consider, as here for the will of God, is that I am a member of Christ. Scripture says that my body is a member of Christ, I am to function in the one body—that is what is in mind in being a member of Christ. "We being many are one bread, one body", 1 Cor. 10 : 17. "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and each one members one of another", (Rom. 12). You say: I would love to know what God's will is for me. I can tell you what God's will is for you. He has made you a member of the body of Christ and the first element of His will is that you should function as an active member of the body. In our human bodies when they are healthy, no member is inactive. Every member plays its part,

and every member is content with its place. And that is God's will for you. Do you not know that your body is a member of Christ? If you are to fulfill your function in the body of Christ, you need to hold your body in relation to that. The first claim on my body is that it should be used to function in the body of Christ. How are you getting on, on that line? Paul goes on to exhort them in Romans 12, not to have high thoughts above what they should have but to think so as to be wise. It is the wise-hearted who put the material together. You have got the material, the great heave-offering, the bodies presented, but now you need to be wise as to how it has to be put together. That is, we need to learn wisdom in our thoughts in relation to one another as God has dealt to each a measure of faith. Look round on the brethren. All these bodies are available. In my locality there are a certain number of bodies available, and God has dealt to each member a measure of faith. The faith mentioned in that verse, is not justifying faith—it is *faith for action*. God gives to every member of the body of Christ, faith to act in the position in which they are set in the body. It is for you and me to take account of that. I look round on the brethren in my locality and see that God has dealt to each a measure of faith. I can see that each one can do *something* more efficiently than any one else. If we lose a member of our bodies, the other members have to do the best they can, but they cannot do it as well as the member that has gone. And so, as regards the body of Christ, in so far as the members are available, it is not for me to get in their way; it is for me to encourage each to get on with his work. God has dealt to each brother a measure of faith. He has dealt to each sister a measure of faith. I look round and I begin to see how estimable the brethren are. God has had dealings with every one of them and I cannot help respecting them. He has put them in the body of Christ and has dealt to each a measure of faith so that they can carry out their functions

in the body. And as I look around upon my brethren, and see that He has dealt to each a measure of faith, I learn to be wise and not to think too highly of myself. I can see what He has given to others and I want to make way for others and, at the same time, to fit in myself. I want the body to work. It is the will of God. I want you to get on to the line of the will of God, dear young brethren. This is part of your career, to understand what God has given to the brethren and what He has given to you, and to fit together in divine wisdom as the body of Christ.

Then in 1 Corinthians 6 there is the second question: "Do ye not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you"? That is a complementary idea because the Spirit manifests Himself through the members of the body. We as individual believers are to hold our individual bodies as temple of the Holy Spirit, in view of our collective place in the temple of God. Do ye not know, he says, that ye are temple of God—that is the company—and the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1 Cor. 3 : 16). The way we get the gain of the temple is by understanding the truth of the body. If we are in the gain of the truth of the body and each member is functioning and love is operating, according to 1 Cor. 13, so that each one is free and happy to function in his place, then we get the manifestations of the Spirit through the members. The Spirit distributes to each as He pleases—marvellous thing!—and that is how we get the gain of the temple. We come together bodywise, in mutual estimation of one another in love, in holy freedom, and thus the Spirit is free. And the Spirit manifests Himself through whom He will, and light shines in the temple. Bringing it down to each one of us, it all hinges on the way I am holding my body. I am ever to keep in mind that my body is a member of Christ, and temple of the Holy Spirit, in view of what is collective. And while *we* get great benefit from the body and great benefit from the temple,

the great end in view is that God is dwelling. Without the saints set together bodywise, there can be no chaste virgin for Christ, and no suitable conditions for God. The great objective is the dwelling place of God. We are apt to think of the temple only as the place where we get light, but the greatest thing about the temple is that God is dwelling there. God is in His holy temple. It is the place where divine service goes on, where they cease not day and night saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, He who is and who was and who is to come. (see Isaiah 6 and Rev. 4). We get light there, but the great thing is that God is there, and is served there. Well, is not this worth going in for? Is it not a great career to have our part in God's temple and the service proper to it?

Now I pass on to Timothy, because what is precious to God is here and has to be defended. And it is the will of God that *you* should be one of the defenders. We are in a system in which there is compulsory military service—no exemption. When God's rights are at stake you cannot claim exemption on conscience ground. You will get a bad conscience if you do not serve. So he says to Timothy: "Take thy share in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ", or, as the note says, 'Christ Jesus'. I love that expression, Christ Jesus. Who would not desire to be a good soldier of that victorious and glorious Man! After the tabernacle of old was set up and God was dwelling in it and all the service of the priesthood was established, then God ordered the people to be numbered for military service. (See Numbers 1). All were to be available to defend the testimony, to defend His habitation. This is the will of God. Have you accepted your enrolment in the army? Is there any one here, brother or sister, who is not on active service? You are not really in fellowship, if you are not actively in the army. It is not only the old brothers who are in the army. It is all, from 20 years old and upward. Twenty years old, typically, refers to



the time when I confess Jesus as my Lord and commit myself to His fellowship. I may be much younger in actual years, but spiritually, I am twenty years old. I become a member of the 'Armed Forces.' "Take thy share in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ". Never leave your sword behind. Never go about unarmed. Always be ready to defend the truth. It is part of the will of God. You say: I do not like suffering. Nor do I. Alas! I have often avoided it, sad to say. And yet it is one of our greatest privileges to suffer. We prove our moral title to kingship by preparedness to suffer. Let us be always ready, dear brethren, to defend the testimony. That is what he says to Timothy: "Proclaim the word; be urgent in season and out of season". 2 Tim. 4 : 2. That is, be always prepared to use the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Timothy would be a man always ready to lay about him when enemies came into view; always, of course, with a view of saving men. The christian soldier does not inflict suffering, he bears suffering in order to save others. And if you use the word of God, it will bring you into suffering and reproach. So he says: "Take thy share in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ".

Then he says: "And if also any one contend in the games, he is not crowned unless he contend lawfully". Be a good athlete. Lay aside every weight. If you were going in for the games and you wished to win a crown you would lay everything else aside. The soldier lays things aside in order to be available to the One who has enlisted him, he does not entangle himself with the affairs of this life. The athlete too lays things aside because he has got one objective and one only. Paul says: "but one thing—forgetting the things behind, and stretching out to the things before, I pursue, looking towards the goal, for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus", Phil. 3 : 13-14. That is the will of God for *you*. He wishes you to be a man of one purpose. Then he says: "The husbandman must labour



before partaking of the fruits ". One is delighted to see the labour that has gone on these days; young men and women labouring, serving the brethren. I am sure, young people, you will partake of the fruits. God will see to that. You have laboured, and your labours have been appreciated and you will partake of the fruits. But go on with the labour. Be prepared for labour. " Salute Maria, who laboured much for you ", Paul says, Romans 16 : 6. How the sisters labour!

Then he goes on: " Strive diligently to present thyself approved to God, a workman that has not to be ashamed ". Now you are at the university, you see. Many young people here may be at a university, but this is the divine university. You are trying to satisfy your examiners, and it may be a tough job. But in the divine university you have to satisfy *God*, and you have to strive *diligently* to do that. This is not an easy course at all. When you have gone through your course of technical training, your examiners come and look at your work. But this is divine scrutiny. " Strive diligently to present thyself approved to God, a workman that has not to be ashamed ". Think of doing work in such a manner that *God* finds no fault with it. Even under His scrutiny it passes! What a degree to get! " Strive diligently to present thyself approved to God, a workman that has not to be ashamed, cutting in a straight line the word of truth ". Young men and women, you cannot be too young to start on this course. It needs diligence. It needs application. You may say to me, My ordinary studies take up a great deal of my time. Well, God will help you in those, if you are simple, especially if you are prepared to give application to His things. God calls us into His work, not only brothers, but sisters. " Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workmen in Christ Jesus . . . ", Paul says, Rom. 16 : 3. He puts the sister first. It is the highest level of workmanship to be Paul's fellow-workmen in Christ Jesus. Let us all have before us to pass this test, " approved

to God, a workman that has not to be ashamed, cutting in a straight line the word of truth . . . ". Have this before you, young people, whether brothers or sisters. Have an outline of sound words, and learn to cut the truth in a straight line.

Now, as the chapter proceeds, it speaks of a vessel. The matter of separation is brought in, in order that we might be vessels to honour, and that is another test. It is not the military test, nor the examination test. But unless we answer to the test of separation we cannot pass the other tests. We always tend to get contaminated with what is unclean. So he says: "If therefore one shall have purified himself from these, in separating himself from them, he shall be a vessel to honour, sanctified, serviceable to the Master, prepared for every good work ". What an object to have in view, to be ready for every good work, Godward, saintward, manward! The greatest good works are priestly services Godward. They are not dead works, but good works. The Lord said of one "she has wrought a good work toward me ", Matt. 26 : 10. Then there is service to the saints and service to men. And then the whole matter is summed up in the expression "a bondman of the Lord ". You count it the greatest honour to be just a slave of Jesus Christ. "And a bondman of the Lord ought not to contend, but be gentle towards all; apt to teach; forbearing; in meekness setting right those who oppose, if God perhaps may sometime give them repentance to acknowledgment of the truth, and that they may awake up out of the snare of the devil, who are taken by him, for his will ". The footnote shows that "his will " means God's will. So if in meekness you are seeking to set right those who oppose, your only objective is that they should be available for God's will, to bring them into the path you are on.

Now I speak again to the young people here. You may not have been able to take in all I have said, but I trust what I have said is enough to show you that there

is a most glorious career available to you, something worth devoting all your energies upon. But you may say to me; Yes, but I have got my living to get. Dear young believer, if you are set for God's will, your living will be a very simple matter. God knows your needs. Your heavenly Father knows them all. If you are set this way, you can go very simply to Him to ask for guidance as to the incidental things, because your livelihood here is an incidental matter. God's will is the main thing. But as to the incidental things, He will care for those, and do the very best for you. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will make plain thy paths", Prov. 3 : 6. He will give you no doubt as to what kind of work you should do down here. And in ordering for you, you will find, as life goes on, that He has ordered for you in the very best way relative to your carrying out these primary obligations that I have referred to, that He has ordered your circumstances in the very best way, in relation to His. And what could you want better than that? I would, therefore, encourage all the young people here as to the great career which lies before you; and let me implore you not to miss it. If you fail to appreciate the opportunity, the time will come when your heart will be filled with regrets. May God grant, that we may all present our bodies a living sacrifice and prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.