Good Teaching by Scripture

Deuteronomy

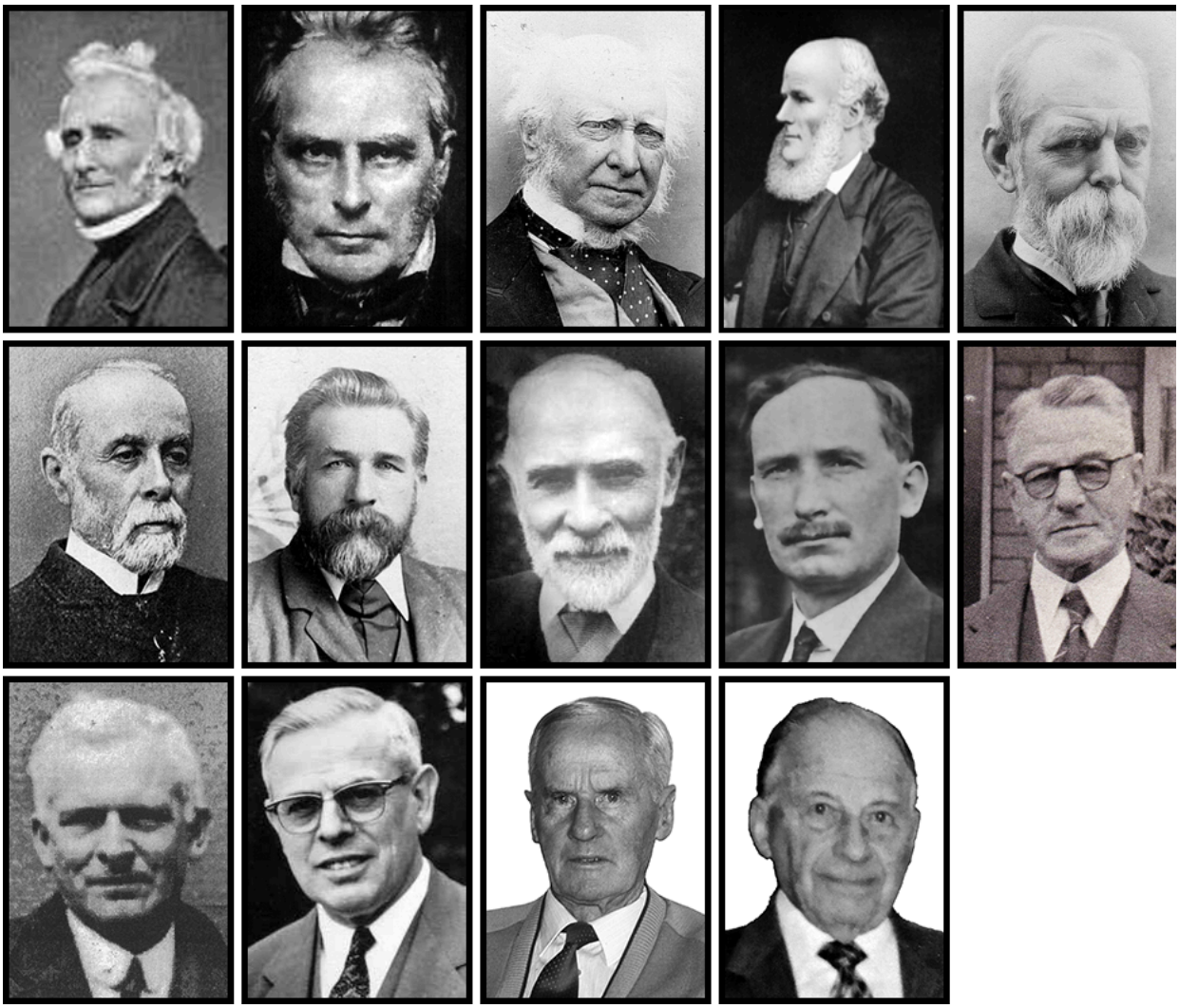
Scriptures read at the outset of the meeting are grouped by Book of the Bible and sorted by Chapter, then Author and Volume

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Good Teaching by Scripture 05 - Deuteronomy



Produced from GoodTeaching.org
on 24-Feb-2026

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DEUTERONOMY 1 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 1

The Old Testament is a great help to us because it presents things in a form which, according to the wisdom of God, is divinely suited to convey the truth to us, while presenting it in a way that exercises our spiritual understanding. I have no doubt that Deuteronomy was written primarily for us and not for Israel When I say primarily I mean that we who are God's people at the present time are the first to get the good of this book. No doubt Israel will get the good of it later on in great measure, but, we take precedence of them in getting the spiritual gain of it. It is the word of God to us. "For as many things as have been written before have been written for our instruction" (Romans 15: 4).

This book contains "the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side the Jordan, in the wilderness ... in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month". How striking, then, that it should be prefaced by the statement, "There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea"! God would impress upon us, at the outset of this book, that there was no necessity on His part for forty years to intervene between Horeb and the land. It was but "eleven days' journey"! Horeb, according to this chapter, was the place where Jehovah spoke to His people of what He had in His heart to give them. What answers to it for us is that God has made known the purpose of His love to give us a wondrous inheritance in Christ. Remission of sins and inheritance are linked together in the glad tidings, as we see in Acts 26: 18. Our first consciousness of the love of God is when that love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). But God's object in shedding abroad His love in our hearts is that we may love Him, and if we love Him we shall be interested in the things which He has prepared for them that love Him, and those things are the inheritance. There is no great distance, morally speaking, between Romans 5:5 and Romans 8 which answers to "the land of Moab" of Deuteronomy 1:5. The love of God would bless His people infinitely, and in a way worthy of Himself, but man is marked naturally by unbelief, and its workings appear even in those who are the subjects of God's mercy and grace. The way was clear on the divine side, and the journey short, but unbelief extended it to forty years. What a warning there is in this!

These opening statements give character to the whole book. It is a book in which the government of God appears from first to last. The blessings and benefits proposed are to be enjoyed conditionally on obedience and faithfulness. A turning away of heart from God will be followed by the most

serious consequences. Hence this book is of great importance in a day when the general tendency is not to think enough either of the blessedness or the seriousness of the government of God in relation to His people.

The early part of Deuteronomy is largely a review of the past history of the people — of God's ways with them, and of their behaviour in connection with those ways.

It suggests what is deeply interesting; namely, that a point is reached in soul-history when the people of God are prepared to review their past, and to take account of it under the instruction of Christ, of whom Moses was undoubtedly a type. We are not capable of taking a spiritual review of God's ways with us, or of our own behaviour relative to those ways, until we reach a position which answers to "the land of Moab". There must be spiritual capacity to receive the instruction of Christ, and that could only be found with those who have availed themselves of the brazen serpent aspect of the death of Christ, and seen in it God's condemnation of sin in the flesh. Israel in "the land of Moab" had also known what it was to sing to the well (Numbers 21: 16 - 18). They were, typically, "according to Spirit" (Romans 8: 5), and had been able to overcome Sihon and Og — two giant-kings who represent the flesh in its desire for self-display or for self-indulgence. It is by the power of the Spirit alone that these giants can be smitten, and those who have overcome them are prepared to sit down at the feet of Christ, and to receive of His words (Deuteronomy 33: 3). As knowing His love we come under His instruction. "In the land of Moab began Moses to unfold (or expound) this law". Moses is here typical of Christ, not as Lord, but as the Teacher or Instructor of His saints. "For one is your instructor, and all ye are brethren ... one is your instructor, the Christ" (Matthew 23: 8, 10). That indicates precisely the Deuteronomic position; the brethren are viewed as under the instruction of Christ. The saints at Ephesus are addressed by Paul as having known this blessed instruction. "But *ye* have not thus learnt the Christ, if ye have heard him and been instructed in him" (Ephesians 4: 20, 21).

It is a very blessed thing to have the thoughts of God brought before us by ONE who loves us, and who is able to give us spiritual understanding in regard to our past history, and to tell us what the mind of God has in view for us, and how His government will act in regard to us, whether as prospering us if faithful and obedient, or as visiting upon us the consequences of departure from Him. The people of God are viewed all through this book as loved by Him — "Yea, he loveth the peoples" (chapter 33: 3) — but it is love that acts governmentally according to the fidelity or the unfaithfulness of those loved. And at the end of the book we are shewn how He will ultimately bring to pass

the full blessing of His people according to His determinate counsel and foreknowledge.

We shall find in this book — if helped of God to do so — much instruction as to the inheritance, and the conditions on which we can enjoy all that the love of God proposes to bring us into. For this book does not contemplate what will be enjoyed in our heavenly future, but what may be enjoyed in a *heavenly present* when suitable and spiritual conditions are found amongst the people of God. It is important to bear in mind that — though it is the privilege of God's called ones to touch spiritually things which are outside responsibility — we ourselves, as long as we are down here, are never outside responsibility, with all the sobering exercise that attaches to it. Therefore the government of God goes on in relation to His people, and the way in which it acts is a prominent feature of this book. We see it plainly, too, in the epistles to Colossians and Ephesians, where the risen and heavenly position of the saints is developed.

But what is peculiarly precious in Deuteronomy is that all these things are presented as being learned under the personal instruction of Christ — the blessed One who loves us, and who knows perfectly all the thoughts of divine love in regard to us, and who delights to impart those thoughts to us. The consideration of this must, surely, awaken the most lively interest in this book on the part of all those who love God, and who love the Lord Jesus Christ.

God would have His people to enter upon the inheritance as imbued with the affections and intelligence of children and sons, and this would include a holy judgment of all that has been displeasing to Him in our past. Under the instruction of Christ we learn what God has proposed to us, and His ways with us consequent upon our unbelief. We learn how we have been hindered in our spiritual progress. This book is not the history of the circumstances we have passed through, and of our behaviour in them but it suggests all being reviewed under the instruction of Christ with a view to our being formed in the spiritual features which are proper to the children — the joint-heirs of Christ. We have all behaved badly, but we learn it in Deuteronomy in the presence of One who loves us, and who instructs us in order to bring every thought of our hearts into correspondence with Himself. It is most blessed.

The review begins by making mention of what Jehovah had spoken in Horeb. He would have had them take their journey, and go straight into the land which He had set before them, and this in its full extent, even "unto the great river, the river Euphrates". Jehovah would have had them to go straight from Horeb into possession of the land. Therefore the long delay had been occasioned entirely from their side.

The secret was that the covenant did not really fill and govern their affections: and this is why Moses later on in the book enlarges so much upon it, and on the favour God had shewn them in it. The secret of long delay as to the possession and enjoyment of the inheritance lies in the fact that the love of God, as known in the glad tidings, does not really govern our affections. This leaves room for the workings of unbelief, which disclose the true character of what we are naturally, even in presence of the most blessed actings of God in love. This turns, in the end, to our learning self more fully, and the unmendable character of our flesh. *That* generation, ever marked by unbelief and rebellion, cannot inherit with Christ.

In reviewing our past history with Christ we learn how we have missed things, and been delayed in reaching what was in God's mind for us. We have not kept in view the blessed proposals of the love of God. All manifestations of the flesh are the fruit of unbelief; they shew that God has not His place with us. So the Holy Spirit appeals to us not to harden our hearts, and speaks of a generation with whom God was wroth as always erring in heart. And we are exhorted to see that there be not in us "a wicked heart of unbelief, in turning away from the living God" (Hebrews 3: 7 - 12).

It came to light "at that time" (verse 9) how much there was in the people which was not in accord with the covenant; and which was, therefore, quite unsuited to the inheritance. Moses had to say, "I am not able to bear you myself alone ... . How can I myself alone sustain your wear, and your burden, and your strife ?" The blessing of God was there, truly, multiplying them as the stars of heaven, but what contrary and hindering elements were there also! On God's side Horeb and the land — the covenant and the inheritance! On their side wear, and burden, and strife! What a terrible contrast!

Is it not serious to reflect that the first item in this review of the past calls attention to the great proneness of the people of God to have difficulties and matters of strife with one another? Such things shew how little we are really governed either by the love of God or by the prospect of the inheritance.

But this condition of things is mentioned here to bring out the fact that divine provision is made for the adjustment of all differences amongst God's people. It is not God's way that differences should go on unsettled. We may be quite sure that the provision for dealing with such things is not less in the assembly than it was in Israel. There are "wise and understanding and known men" who can be set over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. The Lord's administration provides everything that is needed for the adjustment of differences, and — failing everything else — there is always the Lord Himself as the final court of appeal. The assembly at Corinth was not a very spiritual

one, but Paul speaks to them as having amongst them the ability to judge in matters which one might have against another. He even says, "If then ye have judgments as to things of this life, set those to judge who are little esteemed in the assembly. I speak to you to put you to shame. Thus there is not a wise person among you, not even one, who shall be able to decide between his brethren!" Paul would not allow that this was possible. If there was a "wise and understanding and known" man for every ten in Israel we may be sure that such are always within reach. The assembly is always furnished with such as have the confidence of their brethren; their uprightness and freedom from personal bias makes them "known men". "The judgment is God's", but when we are wrong we are very apt to go to unspiritual persons who will take our side, and fall in with our view of the matter. But is it not far better to have a judgment which will be in accord with God and with heaven? For this I must go to one who is spiritually "wise and understanding", and I must submit my case to him.

Nothing could be of greater practical importance than to see that the divine principle on which all differences between the people of God are to be settled is that of *subjection*. On no other principle would this divine arrangement work. Whether it were thousands, hundreds, fifties, or tens, the spirit of subjection was requisite throughout all Israel. "Submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ" (Ephesians 5: 21); I understand that to mean that we recognise Christ in the brethren, and hence we respect their judgment. We have to beware of looking for vindication rather than for divine adjustment. The flesh always wants to be vindicated, but a truly upright soul looks for adjustment. It is well to recognise that ability for judgment is in the assembly, and it is my privilege — if I think I have a grievance — to assume that the brethren are likely to have a more spiritual judgment than mine, and to submit myself to their judgment, as acknowledging the goodness and wisdom of God in providing such a safeguard for me.

The spiritual review of such conditions as are here contemplated would surely lead us to see how much time has been lost through our being marked by self-consideration or self-assertion, and insisting on what is due to us. Even where real wrong has been done, the apostle says, "Why do ye not rather suffer wrong? why are ye not rather defrauded?" A heart governed by the love of God could afford to pass by many personal wrongs. Is it not sad to think of prolonged attention being given to petty differences, which attention might have been fixed on the inheritance? If there are "causes" between brethren which need to be heard, by all means let them be heard and settled. But how many things would silently drop if love worked in the heart!

When "causes" have to be heard what an exercise it is to "judge righteously", not to "respect persons", to "hear the small as well as the great", not to be "afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God's"! Judgment is to be according to a divine standard; it is to be of the same character and impartiality as it will be when "the saints shall judge the world".

It is almost incredible how much distraction and preoccupation of mind is caused amongst the people of God by personal differences, often really of the most trivial nature. How much time has been lost spiritually in this way! How foolish we have been to hold things in our hearts, and allow them to eat up — like the palmer-worm, and the locust, and the canker-worm, and the caterpillar of Joel 1: 4 — our spiritual prosperity! Do we not feel how we have been hindered by such things? Probably ninety per cent of the differences amongst the people of God are caused by things not worth five minutes' consideration. But provision is made for "causes" that really need to be heard; it is for us to subject ourselves to the judgment of the saints, not to waste our time by going on with things unsettled. To do the latter is really an action of unbelief.

The "great and terrible wilderness" was "on the way to the mountain of the Amorites". No doubt it had its place in the ways of God. The more terrible the wilderness was the more desirous should they have been to reach the land. Probably many of the inscrutable ways of God with His people — peculiar trials, intense sorrow — are designed to lead their affections and hopes into the region of His love's purpose. This is the answer to the "tribulations" of Romans 5: 3, endured in the consciousness of the love of God, and intensifying hope that does not make ashamed. If we look at the household of faith we see very many who are under great pressure, but all is designed to produce a divine result. "And not only that, but we also boast in tribulations, knowing that tribulation works endurance; and endurance, experience; and experience, hope; and hope does not make ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which has been given to us" (Romans 5: 3 - 5). Wilderness pressures lead to experience; we prove what God can be to us in pressure.

> "In the desert God will teach thee,
> What the God that thou hast found". (76:6)

At Kadesh-barnea the land was set before them. "And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which Jehovah our God giveth us. Behold, Jehovah thy God hath set the land before thee: go up, take possession, as Jehovah the God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not,

neither be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 1: 20 - 21). The details of the history are not repeated here, because the object is to call attention to what was the great and solemn cause of their being forty years in the wilderness. All other things had, we might say, a secondary place. The people were not governed by what "Jehovah the God of thy fathers hath said unto thee". They did not hearken to His word; they entered not in because of unbelief. It is this which the Holy Spirit dwells on in Hebrews 3, Hebrews 4 as a most salutary warning for us.

Unbelief took the form of sending men to examine the land. God and His word were not enough! It was to God and the word of His grace that Paul committed the Ephesian elders as being able to build them up and give them an inheritance among all the sanctified (Acts 20: 32). But these are not enough for the flesh. Flesh must have flesh to lean upon; it must have something of the natural. If we are faithful to our own hearts we must admit how often it has been so with ourselves. The divine and the spiritual have not been sufficient. The spirit of "We will send men before us" is often present with the people of God. It may be great human prudence, but it is setting God and His word aside. It assumes that the word of men is a safer thing to rely on than the word of God. "Go up, take possession" was what Jehovah said, but they said, "We will send men". It was a human expedient, but it was permitted of God in order that the state of their hearts might be brought out. It secured a further testimony of the goodness of the land, but in result it brought out the state of their hearts in relation to God. God permits much to happen that is the fruit of unbelief in view of the lessons that will be learned by it. "But ye would not go up, and rebelled against the word of Jehovah your God; and ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because Jehovah hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us" (verses 26, 27).

Does not this bring out what a terrible thing the flesh is? It never appreciates God, however good He may have been. All that He had done in Egypt and in the wilderness was of no account. "Jehovah hated us"! His wondrous deliverance, His paternal care, His daily and nightly guardianship and guidance only resulted in "ye did not believe Jehovah your God". All the difficulties which they saw were simply proof of their want of faith — the evidence that they were not characterised by a spirit of sonship. So Moses called their attention to the fact that "Jehovah thy God bore thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went until ye came to this place" (verse 31). They had proved the paternal love of God in all the way, but they believed Him not.

How often it has been like that with us! We have not been at all ready to go in heartily for the spiritual and the eternal. We have seen all kinds of difficulties in that direction, and when things have not fallen in with our thoughts we have been ready to think that God was against us. The most wonderful blessedness that God could bestow on a highly favoured creature is in Christ — every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies is there — but the flesh finds no attraction or delight in Christ, or in what God has given in Him. It takes no interest in the spiritual; it has no desires that way. Then for God and for faith it must be utterly set aside — disowned and disallowed. Hence the solemn sentence went forth, "And Jehovah heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and swore, saying, None among these men, this evil generation, shall in any wise see that good land, which I swore to give unto your fathers" (verses 34, 35). What a spiritual instruction is this! There has been in our history a generation like that; it is our own flesh. Now under the instruction of Christ we have to review it all, and learn to judge it spiritually as God has judged it. How many things in our history have happened because we had not God before us, and His word had not place in our hearts!

Caleb, on the other hand, comes in as representing a new generation — a generation marked by faith and the spirit of sonship. "Except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed Jehovah" (verse 36). Caleb had typically the earnest of the Spirit in his heart. He would see and possess the land. He represents the exercise of faith in contrast to the unbelief of the flesh. The instruction of this chapter is largely to teach us to distinguish between what is of flesh and what is of faith. To be on the faith line we must unsparingly judge the flesh line. Caleb had another spirit; he did not say, "Jehovah hated us", but "If Jehovah delight in us, he will bring us into the land, and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey" (Numbers 14: 8). The mind of the flesh is death and enmity against God. But the spirit of sonship would always preserve in our hearts the sense that God delights in us; and the activity of that spirit sets us free practically from the workings of the flesh. "The earnest of the Spirit" means that the inheritance is in a man's heart before he gets there. Caleb said to Joshua long afterwards, "Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of Jehovah sent me from Kadesh-barnea to search out the land; and I brought him word again *as it was in my heart*" (Joshua 14: 7). He carried the earnest in his heart all through the wilderness. How much better that is than the murmurs of the wilderness! Caleb is a typical overcomer; he was as strong for war at eighty-five as he was at forty; and he dispossessed some of the biggest of the Anakim. Faith, the power, of the Spirit, and the power of the Lord all go together. It is the Caleb generation —

the faith generation — that is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. It would be impossible for the *Holy* Spirit to be connected in any way with the flesh. "In whom also (that is, in Christ), having believed, ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance to the redemption of the acquired possession to the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1: 13, 14).

Then it is very touching that at this point Moses says, "Also Jehovah was angry with me on your account,

saying Thou also shalt not go in thither". It was not historically at that time that Jehovah was angry with Moses, but much later, but it is brought in at this point, I believe, with a spiritual reference to Christ as the One who has come under the anger of God vicariously on account of what has been found in the flesh of God's people. It is Christ reminding us that the flesh and its movements cost Him the suffering of the anger of God. That should have more effect in detaching us from the flesh than anything else. So we read in Romans 8: 3 "God, having sent his own Son, in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh". It was in *God's own Son* that it was condemned. Israel has seen Jehovah angry with their Messiah; they did esteem Him "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted", but they will have to learn that it was *on their account*. And it was *on our account* that Christ came under the darkness and the forsaking of the cross. He bore the judgment due to sinful flesh, and God would bring us to recognise that it was the judgment of *our* sinful flesh that He bore. What a subdued and chastened feeling this would produce in our spirits! What a holy fear of all that is the outcome of the flesh! Then if I see some manifestation of the flesh in a brother or sister do I always remember that in precious and holy love Christ bore the full weight of what is due to it? Am I in sympathy with Christ about it? Or are there feelings of resentment and anger, or a thought that such things are not in me? The flesh has to be condemned; it is impossible that it should be tolerated; but let us judge it in the light of the way in which divine love has dealt with it in the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. How deeply should this affect our hearts! Could anything move us more in the direction of self judgment than to consider that Christ on our account has come under condemnation,

Christ after the flesh has gone in death on our account, bearing the judgment of sinful flesh, and bringing the man after the flesh to an end sacrificially before God. Joshua represents Christ as the risen, living One — the spiritual Leader of His people into the land — and the "little ones" are mentioned as shewing that God would not give up His purpose. If one generation is wholly excluded, He will have another generation to go in and possess the land under

the leadership of the risen Christ. The generation of flesh does not go in, but the faith generation does.

Then the review calls to mind another feature of rebellious flesh. When the solemn sentence had gone forth, immediately the flesh took another character. They would, by a superficial repentance, have set it all right. They refused the solemn government of God under the action of which they had come. They said, "We have sinned against Jehovah, we will go up and fight, according to all that Jehovah our God hath commanded us". But Jehovah had then sworn in His wrath; His governmental action was irreversible. The only divine path now was to accept it, and humbly bow under His mighty hand.

The levity and presumption of the flesh is equal to its unbelieving fears, and the same generation that despised the pleasant land when Jehovah presented it to them as His gift, now despised His solemn act of government. Such levity and presumption may be expected to appear when flesh is active. There is a saying lightly, "We have sinned", and an assuming to go on as if nothing serious had happened, but the result is disastrous. The Amorite became the rod of God for the destruction of the flesh. It was much like what is spoken of in the New Testament as being delivered to Satan (1 Corinthians 5: 5; 1 Timothy 1: 20). We may well pray with David, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me" (Psalm 19: 13).

The people have now the opportunity, nearly forty years after the circumstances occurred, of reviewing all this, and getting a spiritual judgment of it all under the instruction of Moses. One loves to think of the great gain of taking up such exercises from the Deuteronomic standpoint. God would have His people in perfect accord with Himself as to every wilderness exercise before they go over Jordan. Christ will expound it all to us in the plains of Moab; He will review it all to a people spiritually able to listen to Him. I suppose we rarely see how God is set on giving us the land, or how the flesh hinders us, at the time of the wilderness experiences. The truly spiritual estimate of things comes later when we review things under the instruction of Christ. Under His instruction we learn to judge every feature of flesh that may have come out in us — perhaps forty years before. He does not leave us unadjusted in respect of things which may have happened long ago. He would not be satisfied that we should be of a different mind from Him about something that may be long past. He says, as it were, I want you to come into the inheritance as my brethren, joint-heirs with me, having the same mind and judgment of things as I have. It is not that the flesh is adjusted, but we are adjusted in regard to its nature and movements, and brought into accord with

Christ. We have to learn to disentangle what is of the flesh from what is of faith and of the Spirit, and to disallow all that has been of the flesh, so that nothing has value or weight with us but what is of faith and of the Spirit. Under the instruction of Christ we become truly brethren — we acquire family character as children of God. That is what is largely in view in Deuteronomy; the official side is not prominent; the tabernacle system hardly The people have now the opportunity, nearly forty years after the circumstances occurred, of reviewing all this, and getting a spiritual judgment of it all under the instruction of Moses. One loves to think of the great gain of taking up such exercises from the Deuteronomic standpoint. God would have His people in perfect accord with Himself as to every wilderness exercise before they go over Jordan. Christ will expound it all to us in the plains of Moab; He will review it all to a people spiritually able to listen to Him. I suppose we rarely see how God is set on giving us the land, or how the flesh hinders us, at the time of the wilderness experiences. The truly spiritual estimate of things comes later when we review things under the instruction of Christ. Under His instruction we learn to judge every feature of flesh that may have come out in us — perhaps forty years before. He does not leave us unadjusted in respect of things which may have happened long ago. He would not be satisfied that we should be of a different mind from Him about something that may be long past. He says, as it were, I want you to come into the inheritance as my brethren, joint-heirs with me, having the same mind and judgment of things as I have. It is not that the flesh is adjusted, but we are adjusted in regard to its nature and movements, and brought into accord with Christ. We have to learn to disentangle what is of the flesh from what is of faith and of the Spirit, and to disallow all that has been of the flesh, so that nothing has value or weight with us but what is of faith and of the Spirit. Under the instruction of Christ we become truly brethren — we acquire family character as children of God. That is what is largely in view in Deuteronomy; the official side is not prominent; the tabernacle system hardly appears; the subject is chiefly those family features in the people of God which are suited to the inheritance, and which qualify them to enjoy it.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 1 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 1

— 1. *b'e-ver* (on this side); in Numbers 32:19, it is *me-e-ver* (beyond, on yonder side, on this side).

THE BASKET OF FIRSTFRUITS (JT 2)

Deuteronomy 1: 5 - 8; Deuteronomy 26:1 - 11

Perhaps one might say that there are few books in the Bible less understood than the book of Deuteronomy; and I think it is because the assembly is not understood; for, I take it, that Deuteronomy contains regulations for the assembly. You will notice in chapter 1:5, that Moses speaks of a second law. He had given the first one in Exodus 20. The first law was largely intended to regulate the people in the wilderness. There were many regulations for the wilderness the force of which, of necessity, ceased after the wilderness journey was over; but what you find in the book of Deuteronomy are instructions for the people, which were to be permanent; laws which applied to them only as in the land.

Now it is to my mind of great importance that that thought should be laid hold of. You will notice that, after speaking of the law given in the land of Moab, the Spirit proceeds to indicate the character of it; "The Lord our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates. Behold I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them", Deuteronomy 1:6 - 8.

God took account of the people in the wilderness; He knew perfectly what the wilderness was. It was not a land flowing with milk and honey. The people had been there forty years, and in the kindness of His heart God suggested to them to move on. He said, You have been at the mount long enough. It is true that this had been said at Horeb, but the generation to which the first law was given never answered to it, so here it is set at the beginning of the second law, which is spoken to another generation. I allude to it just for a moment, for one is forced to the conclusion that the people of God are more content in the wilderness than in the land, and, if not in the wilderness strictly, at any rate, in the plains of Moab.

Now there was no law for the plains of Moab; the second law, alluded to here, was given there, but it did not apply to the plains of Moab; it applied to the land of Canaan, and it is most touching that God, through Moses, should proceed to suggest to the people that they move on, opening up to them the entire extent of the promised land. That is what the Spirit of God would seek

to do for us. The resurrection and ascension of Christ secures for man at the present moment what answers spiritually to the entire extent of the land of promise, from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates, including the valleys and the hills; Lebanon and the sea-shore; a land flowing with milk and honey; a land watered with the rain from heaven; a land influenced by heaven itself; that land is opened up to the people of God at the present moment, and it is most touching that Jehovah, in opening up His second law, in giving the regulations for the land, should suggest to them to go in.

Well, I would suggest to all here, that, inasmuch as the Lord Jesus Christ has risen from the dead and is ascended as Man, it entitles man to the land of promise. The time will come when God will discriminate; some of His people will remain upon the earth, while others will inhabit heaven. But the Lord Jesus Christ has gone into heaven as a risen Man; He has taken up a place as Man beyond death, and the place He occupies indicates God's mind for man. There is nothing limited; the whole land, from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates, is opened up to man. It opens out a wonderful vista. Moses did not put his feet there, but he *saw* it. It is a wonderful thing to get a glimpse of the land of promise. All these things were spoken in the plains of Moab. Moses saw the land from Moab, but never put his feet there until he appeared with Christ on the mount of transfiguration. That was when Moses got into the land of Canaan.

Now beloved friends, where are we? The plains of Moab is a most desirable place for a certain state of soul in Christians. The Israelite that inhabited the plains of Moab had the Spirit typically, and was an intelligent believer, but he dwelt in the land in which there was no law. Moab was not strictly the wilderness, and the regulations given in relation to the tabernacle did not extend beyond the brazen serpent; and the second law, given subsequently, refers to Canaan. You will get no help from God, no specific directions from God, as dwelling in the plains of Moab. People who dwell there are Christians; they have title to Canaan, but they do not go there, and, inasmuch as they have no regulations from God, they make regulations for themselves, they formulate codes of laws for themselves; these laws are especially fitted for them, but they are not God's laws. Now God begins His law by directing His people to move into Canaan, and He opens up the entire extent of the land of promise to them.

Now, I was saying that Deuteronomy corresponds with the assembly in a sense. One could easily show that from different passages. I refer to one particularly in chapter 15, in which Jehovah enjoins the people, all the males, to appear before Him three times in the year. Now I take it that when the

Spirit of God specifies the males among His people He alludes to the saints viewed as formed in the intelligence of the Spirit, and hence they represent the whole. They were to appear three times in the year. I venture to connect it with the Lord's request in regard to the Lord's supper. It may be inquired, Why three times? I believe that three is an adequate testimony, and in the threefold appearance of all the males of Israel in the presence of Jehovah you have an adequate testimony of their affections, affections formed by the Spirit of God, and they are not on the wane. If they only appeared once or twice one might conclude that their affections were declining; but inasmuch as they were to appear three times in the year it indicates how Jehovah would secure for Himself the affections of His people. As often as they responded there was a positive testimony to sustained affections.

Now I think that it is in that way the Lord maintains us. We do not come three times in the year only; we come on the first day of every week in answer to the request of our Lord. Every Christian who neglects the Supper virtually confesses that he has no affection for Christ. It is impossible for one who really has affection for Christ, and who rightly understands the Supper, to neglect it. Therefore the Supper was to be a continual law, so to say. It was to be permanent during the absence of Christ. It was to afford an opportunity for the saints to attest their affection for the Lord. But what I wish specially to call attention to is that in the assembly there is a witness to resurrection.

I do not say, for the moment, that the assembly itself is that, although that is also true, but what I see in Deuteronomy 26 is that, as the Lord's people appear before God they do not appear in their own nakedness; they appear with that in evidence which is an obvious testimony to Christ in resurrection, the basket of firstfruits. That is what I had specially before my mind, but I would like to encourage you first of all in regard to the assembly. As the resurrection of Christ is realised and laid hold of in the soul one is led to the assembly, and once there, you are under the law that is to regulate the assembly. I would impress you with that, because we are living in a most lawless age; and I would point out again that the law that is to regulate you in your individual conduct is not the law that is to regulate you in the assembly. There are regulations for the assembly that have no reference to the wilderness; and there are regulations for the wilderness which have no reference to the assembly.

It is most important, if we are to walk together, and if we are to maintain the order that belongs to God, and to God's house, that we should recognise that there is a code of laws, so to speak, which regulate the assembly. Those laws are of a unique character; as I have already pointed out, they begin with

directing the saints to go in, and that in itself suggests a great deal. They are of a unique character; in truth, because it is the law of new creation. Who can tell anything about the law of new creation? Certainly none but those who are created anew. The apostle says, "neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but new creation. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace upon them, and mercy", Galatians 6:16. Is that your rule? It is a rule that is altogether outside of the ken of man in the flesh. He may know something of the law given at Sinai, but the law of new creation is outside of him. The law that rules in God's world is altogether and absolutely outside of the knowledge of man in the flesh for "neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision",

Now that is what the assembly presents under the eye of God. It is a company of people here upon the earth risen with Christ, morally outside the present order of things; a people to which the laws of the present world have no application; it is ruled by the law of new creation; in that people there is what is for God, and it is because of that I delight in the book of Deuteronomy. It is the family book. The priest and the Levite officially have little place there. The priest is recognised in chapter 26, but when the man comes and sets his basket of firstfruits before God (verse 10) he is the most conspicuous person; not that he was conspicuous personally, but the basket of firstfruits was conspicuous. You may ask where he got it. We must not be too abstract in dealing with divine things. If that man came in with his basket of firstfruits they cost him something; they were placed down by the altar; they were a sacrifice. You remember David positively declined to offer to God anything that he did not pay for; and the man who can come up on the first day of the week with a basket of firstfruits brings what has cost him something; they may cost him a good deal of self-denial, and a good deal of sacrifice. They are the fruit of the Holy Spirit in his affections; they are the fruit of the Holy Spirit forming a man after Christ; so that, instead of the Syrian, instead of a poor dying, perishing Syrian, you have a man living; for, remember, the man himself is the basket and the firstfruits are in the man; they are not separated from the man, they are in him. The man is formed after Christ by the power of the Spirit of God. That man appears in the presence of God in all the character of Christ risen from the dead. It is the firstfruits. He got them out of the land; he came up to Jehovah with something he had got in the land.

As risen with Christ, "raised with him through faith of the working of God", Colossians 2:12, the Holy Spirit has His way with the believer, and the Syrian is not there; the man himself is the basket; the fruit is in the basket, and the man appears in the presence of God. He does not forget what his father *was*, "a Syrian ready to perish", (Deuteronomy 26:5) but he is not ready to perish.

Viewed as risen with Christ we are not ready to perish; we are living; we are made to live by the power of the Spirit, and we appear before God in all that Christ is. It is not simply Christ objectively, for, I repeat, that the basket was full of firstfruits, and that the basket is the man; it is the affections of the man. The firstfruits are in the man. We appear before God as formed by the Spirit so that what God sees is Christ. He does not see the Syrian; He sees Christ. The assembly is not composed of Syrians ready to perish. It is composed of men risen with Christ, and those men are not only risen with Christ as an objective truth, they are also quickened subjectively, Colossians 2.

The basket is placed down there at the altar of God by the priest, and the man worships. And the Scripture goes on to say, "And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me", Deuteronomy 26:11. The man is in the land, and he recognises that God has brought him there and given it to him, and he says, I have brought the firstfruits; he had brought them to God. It is a great thing for God to find in us the gracious fruit of the Spirit formed in our affections, so that morally Christ appears and not the Syrian. The word says "And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God". Deuteronomy 26:10. Now it seems to me that all these things are found today in the assembly.

Then, "And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you", Deuteronomy 26:11. There is the side of things that God indicates for His people. God receives His portion from us, and there is joy, there is abundance, and there is joy, not only for ourselves, but also for the Levite and the stranger. The Lord's servant is not neglected, neither is the stranger.

Such, beloved friends, is the order of things that God has inaugurated here upon the earth in connection with Christ risen from the dead. His beloved people are formed by the Spirit, and thus all those things come to pass in the assembly.

NOTES OF READINGS ON DEUTERONOMY (1) (JT 7)

Deuteronomy 1

JT A certain difficulty is felt generally in regard to this book for public readings; but I think we might get help as to the bearing of the book. No one who looks at it even casually can fail to see that it has a distinctive character; and above all books of the Old Testament it is important that we should read it with our thoughts on the *New* Testament. Perhaps certain damage accrues to us in reading the Old Testament as though it were not intended for New Testament people. If we have our thoughts in the New Testament when we read the Old Testament we shall understand the latter spiritually. What has specially struck me in this book is that it gives great prominence to what *Moses says*; not as elsewhere what he was *commanded* to say, but what *he* says. In the end of the book of Numbers it is what the Lord commanded him to say; or what the Lord commanded the people through Moses; whereas this book opens, as you will notice, with "These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel". Deuteronomy 1:1. So that Moses, personally, in his own intelligence, and his own affection for the people, is brought before us; all of which suggests to us Christ, but viewed as Head, rather than as Lord, although His authority is to be seen in the type. Unless we understand the books which emphasise the authority of Moses, we shall not understand this book; but if we do understand them, we shall see what this book sets forth, and that is, *the Headship of Christ*; and the sphere into which He as Head would introduce us.

WH Do you mean that in the history of our souls the Lord's authority would come first?

JT Yes, or rather the authority of God through the Lord. It is obvious that unless our souls are subdued, there is no room for the headship of Christ; nor is there any inclination to go into Canaan. The mind of the Spirit in this book is full of Canaan; you have even in the second verse of this first chapter the number of days journey it was from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea. This intimates that the saints should not delay long in their spirits until they come into the light of heaven; it is only "eleven days journey". Deuteronomy 1:2.

The boundaries of the land are indicated in Numbers. In this book the land itself is outlined, and a testimony is given of what it yielded. The book of Numbers prepares us for this, because unless we are within the boundaries of the land there is no appetite for the things that are yielded there. The boundaries refer to principles.

E .M. "Faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" 1 Timothy 1:14 are like boundaries.

JT Yes. Canaan, in the Old Testament, is a type of heaven for Christians; but it is heaven in the sense in which it is known *now*. There will be no need that we should be reminded of the boundaries of heaven when we are there literally; but it is while we are down here as a heavenly people, and walking in the light of heaven, that we are not to go outside the boundaries. Hence we have the boundaries outlined in the book of Numbers; but here in Deuteronomy we have the *land itself*, and the produce of it.

Ques What would answer to Deuteronomy in the New Testament?

JT Well, it includes both Colossians and Ephesians. Colossians in the sense that the headship of Christ is introduced in type; and Ephesians in the sense that the full extent of the territory is outlined, this Colossians does not furnish us with. I think Colossians helps us as to the boundaries, because we are told to set our minds on things above; that is what indicates the boundary, that instead of our minds being set on things below, they are to be set on things above.

JMcF What is the object of the book of Deuteronomy? Is it formative?

JT Yes. I think it is formative in the sense that it prepares us for Canaan. The formative work goes on, because they are on ground which typifies the possession of the Spirit. Moab as a territory typifies the possession of the Spirit. There must be that which prepares us for the land. One great formative principle is what Moses is; his own wisdom and his affection. These are two great principles in regard of Christ as Head; He is wisdom for us, and He has unbounded affection for us. That would lead Him to do all possible for us.

JM Is not that very much like Romans 8:35, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ"?

JT I think so.

PL It is Moses in his affection for the people of God, not exactly Moses in the *official* position.

JT In this book, Deuteronomy 33:1, Moses is said to be "the man of God". It is more what the man was.

PL His love shines for the people there.

JT You cannot read of the blessing of Moses without being struck by the fact that his heart was in it. It is very different from what you get in Balaam. There was light in what Balaam said, but his heart was not in it. One often finds that

in ministry there is light without heart. The interest of Moses in the people is manifested throughout Deuteronomy.

Ques Why is "this side Jordan" emphasised in the first verse?

JT Because of its nearness to Canaan, and it typifies the possession of the Spirit. It is only those who recognise the Spirit that are prepared for this teaching.

JMcF They were not actually in it.

JT They were not actually in the land, but they had the Spirit typically. A great many people do not recognise the Spirit as a principle in the soul, because the will has not given way. I think it is quite possible to have the Spirit, and yet to allow the will to act. There may not be any overt act of evil, but yet man's will may be active, hence there is no progress; headship is not known.

WK That is to say, you would do what you think right yourself.

JT Yes, you do what is right in your own eyes. Before there was a king in Israel they did that.

JM Would Romans 8 help us as to the Spirit on our side?

JT Yes, that is the point in it; and that is the ground upon which Deuteronomy stands; it is all unfolded there. Moses explained all this law, and he goes on to explain Canaan, showing that that is the mind of the Spirit now. It is noticeable how active our wills may be, and yet there may be nothing in the way of gross evil.

WK It is a striking word we get in Titus 2:14; "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all lawlessness, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous for good works".

JT That is it. *Lawlessness* is the law of your own will. There is a sort of unwritten law sometimes recognised, and people may go on doing their own will without going outside of it.

EM Do I understand you to say that this answers to Romans 8?

JT The plains of Moab do; they are really divine territory; an essential stepping stone into Canaan.

WK But with Canaan definitely in view, and with the idea that they are going in to possess the land.

JT Yes. So it says: "after he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Astaroth in Edrei on this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law,

saying, the Lord our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying ye have dwelt long enough in this mount ... behold I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them, and to their seed after them". Deuteronomy 1:4 - 8. That indicates the law referred to in this book.

EM Would you say that the activity of Christ as Head is recognised?

JT This book supposes the activity of the Head so as to get us in.

EM But is it through the Spirit now?

JT I think all activity is through the Spirit. Romans 8 enlarges on what the Spirit is to you; whereas, what is set forth in Colossians is what the Head is to you; and all is with the end in view, to fix the minds of the saints on heavenly things.

FL "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God", Romans 8:14. The leading of the Spirit is with a definite end in view.

JT Yes; and therefore you get in the book of Numbers, from chapter 21, the leading of the Spirit typically.

Rem Deliverance and the Spirit are found in Romans 8.

JT Of course the Deliverer is Christ, always; but subjectively deliverance is effected by the Spirit. The Deliverer is found at the end of Romans 7. "Who shall deliver me out of this body of death I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord". Romans 7:24,25. But then Christ has given me the Spirit that I may be free.

Rem You would scarcely limit the activities of Christ to those who are in the land.

JT If you limit it you would not get any in; Colossians must have its place. The object of Colossians is to lead us into heavenly things. "Seek the things which are above, where the Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God". Colossians 3:1.

WK You must distinguish between the Head, and the sphere.

JT Now, it is the Head that delivers us from all nationalism, and all sectarian feeling. Those things have no place beyond the boundaries. Nationalism and patriotism have their own place on earth, but beyond the heavenly boundary there is no place for them.

WK When you speak of sectarianism, by that we understand you to mean class or party.

JT Yes; Ulsterism for instance.

RL Would you say that in addition to the encouragement Moses gives them to enter the land, there would be instruction also as to how they should conduct themselves there?

JT There can be no doubt that when we are there all our conduct shall be in accord with the place; but the point is to know how to get in. We profess to have the Spirit, and as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God. Now, I take it that the leading of the Spirit is outlined in the previous book; that is, Numbers, from chapter 21. It is what the people did themselves; they did this, and they did that; there was no murmuring; there was failure true enough; they affiliated with the Moabites; but generally speaking, they moved towards Canaan.

EM Do you view the land as the sphere of privilege?

JT It is the sphere of privilege, but as it is known down here.

WH From Numbers 21 onwards it is the Spirit, and the subjective work of the Spirit; and then when we come to this it is a question of headship.

JT Yes; as I was saying, as to Numbers 21, the authority of Christ has done its work, and the believer has given up his will; and instead of the will of the flesh, it is the will of the Spirit; the Spirit is the recognised principle subjectively. Then when you come to Deuteronomy you are prepared for the wisdom that is in the *Head*. It is what Moses says, a man who loves the people. In verse 9, he says: "And I spake unto you at that time saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone; the Lord your God hath multiplied you, and behold ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude". Deuteronomy 1:9,10. Although he under-estimated the power available, yet his interest was in the people. Now, when you look at it from the New Testament point of view, Christ does not say that; He does not say, "I am not able to bear you myself alone". Christ is for us in the wilderness in the way of support. You must leave out for the moment the failure. You get the sympathy of the Priest, the unfailing One, to support you in the wilderness, and that Man is able to speak to you in the way of wisdom.

PL Headship is an eternal thought. The Lord will surrender the kingdom, but headship is eternal; and is it not a position which the Lord has assumed in His affection for the church?

JT Yes, I think it is eternal. I do not think we should care to have it otherwise. We should always delight in the thought that Christ is our Head.

WK In what sense do you use the term headship?

JT In the sense of direction and supply. Have you any other thought about it?

WK No. He is Head to the whole company; and headship would make for unity. If He is your Head, He is my Head; and so we would all come in on that line.

JT Yes. And I think it is the way in which He has endeared Himself to us in heaven that prepares the way for our acknowledgment of His headship.

WK Yes; and we are glad to have it.

JT Yes. So that when Moses says, "I am not able to bear you alone", Deuteronomy 1:9 your mind immediately turns to Christ. He supports us all through the wilderness.

PL If He can be that to you where He is rejected, what can He not be where He is loved.

JT One great point in headship is wisdom. That is important; because the more you see it, the more subject you are to the Lord; and He can do far better for you than you can do for yourself.

JB It is not merely as individuals that He is Head to us, but more as a family.

JT He is Head to every family. He says, "I go to prepare a place for you", John 14:2 and really He prepares us for the place. He has gone before to prepare a place, and then He comes to introduce us into it; so that we are there intelligently.

RL What is the object of Moses in going over the history of the failures, and all that?

JT Well, I think it is to bring in the great interest that had been manifested in the people, both by God, and himself. I suppose in our own experience we are continually reminded of our own path, and what God has been to us. In the book of Deuteronomy you have both the encouraging line and the humiliating line. You are reminded of the past; you have often been on the brink of the precipice, and some unseen hand has protected you from falling over. Then on the other hand, you are reminded of what you are.

RL And you are reminded of the grace of God.

JT Yes. The book of Deuteronomy is very valuable to show what God has been to us all these forty years; and what Christ has been to us because Moses is in this respect Christ typically. You see an allusion to it in Canticles "Who is this coming up out of the wilderness leaning upon her beloved?" Song of Songs 8:5. Moses was typically Christ; and this chapter emphasises the great interest that Moses had in the people, He says, "The Lord God of your fathers make

you a thousand times so many more as ye are". Deuteronomy 1:11. He was utterly unselfish.

Ques What is in your mind when you speak of wisdom?

JT Wisdom cannot be improved upon. The book of Proverbs would set aside the whole fabric of Christendom; because the whole system of Christendom is marked by innovation and human development, and "improvements", whereas, the point in wisdom is that you cannot improve it.

EM Would you say the highest point on our side in this respect is that the Wisdom of God is manifested?

JT Yes; and how shall it become manifested unless each one recognises Christ as Head. So you have here God's testimony in regard to wisdom; that here is something that cannot be added to or improved upon. I think it is very interesting to see, in our humble and obscure way, that when we return to divine principles we find they are perfectly workable. There are no circumstances or difficulties in which saints may find themselves in this world where assembly principles cannot be applied, and made to work. We have seen cases where meetings have been broken up, and the break up has continued for years. It is tantamount to acknowledging that assembly principles are not applicable; whereas they are always applicable. There are no circumstances to which they cannot he applied. Any innovation can only spoil or damage.

JM Yes; and recovery is only brought about when they are recognised and bowed to.

WK The great point with many now is to accumulate knowledge; but if you have not wisdom it will only lead astray.

JT Yes. And then the next thing is, that love is a kind of handmaid to wisdom. Love is the material that wisdom uses in the structure.

JB Would you say that Mary had wisdom in John 20?

JT I think she had affection; she had that which wisdom could use; and the Lord took it up and used it; He sent her to the company with a message. If you have affection for the Lord, wisdom will place your love where it will become useful to the company; because love itself is often quite misguided; whereas wisdom takes it and gives it its place. The presence of the Holy Spirit brings in the material; but the material has to be put in place. It does not say, Love has builded her house; no, "Wisdom has builded her house". Proverbs 9:1. But how does she build it? She builds it with love. We were saying last night that it is a great thing to have a little bit of means. Really it comes to

this, that you *live* if you have that. The Lord takes account of it, and puts it in its place so that it may be useful, and the whole company gets the benefit of it. Wisdom builds her house.

Directly you recognise the Spirit, you come to the thought that you must have the *Head*. The Spirit will not take that place. He has come in wondrous humility to be our servant; and God takes special account of that, but He will not take the place of Head.

THE PRESENT MINISTRY OF CHRIST (JT 14)

Deuteronomy 1:1 - 8; 2 Corinthians 3:1 - 18

What I have in view in reading these scriptures is to speak about the present ministry of Christ. Christians generally have little or no knowledge of the Lord as Minister. Indeed, many of the Lord's dear people could hardly give an account of the Lord at all, if they were questioned; and where ignorance of Him in regard to His present place exists, there is great exposure. Saints in such ignorance are exposed to the enemy in a peculiar way.

You will remember how of old, when Moses was on the mount with the Lord, the Israelites said: "For this Moses, the man that has brought us up out of the land of Egypt — we do not know what has become of him!", Exodus 32:1; and in that state the suggestion was made by the people that Aaron should make gods for them. That is to say, ignorance of or indifference to the Lord, exposes us to the awful sin of idolatry. They said, "We do not know what has become of him!", Exodus 32:1.

One is reminded in that connection, by way of contrast, of a lover of Christ. The Song of Solomon depicts the exercises of such a one. The Lord alone, beloved, knows these exercises. He know the diverse elements in us even though having love for Him, If there be love in us, He has set it there, but He knows, alas! what is there, within us, which accompanies it, and what discipline is necessary in order that that love should come to light in its own brilliancy and purity. Indeed, in reading John's writings, we are impressed with this, that he insists on things being just as they are. Everything must be of its own kind. There must be no admixture. The divine nature must be brought to light and so the discipline is necessary, in order that all contrary to it might go. Hence Peter says to the Lord, "thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee", John 21:17. The Lord did know, but in order that it should come into evidence the process of discipline had to be introduced. The feminine speaker in the Song of Solomon had to go through the discipline, but she was a lover of Christ. It is a love song, and not a one-sided one, thank God! There are two speakers in it.

That is what the Lord is aiming at. He would bring us to join Him, and so, if you read that book, you will see how it is brought about: the bride comes to the point of describing the object of her affections. She knew Him so well that she could delineate His Person in His absence. She presents a perfect picture without the Person being before her eyes. His appearance was so impressed upon her that she could delineate it, and so impress others that they asked

her, “Whither is thy beloved gone?” Can you tell, Christian, where He now is? “Whither is thy beloved gone, ... that we may seek him with thee?”

(Song of Songs 6:1). Do you know, dear brethren, that if we know the Lord and can speak of Him rightly, as she could, that others, with whom we come into contact would like to know Him too, and seek Him with us? She can describe Him, and then tell where He is. “My beloved”, she says, “is gone down into his garden”, Song of Songs 6:2.

Now, it is as apprehending the Lord thus that we come to rightly understand His present ministry, the ministry of His love, and that, I apprehend, is in view in the *glory* of the Lord in the chapter read from 2 Corinthians, which we *behold*.

We read of the glory of Christ in the next chapter. He has varied glories. Indeed, every glory rests on Him in some way. Any glory, or fancied glory, that does not rest there is to be disregarded. So that, if it be the glory of the Lord, it is the glory of One who administers. Do you know, Christian, what that is? Have you discovered in your spiritual history that there is One in heaven who is caring for you constantly? If you are sick, He is the physician. If you are in trouble, He is the sympathiser. No ill can befall you, no sorrow can arise, that He cannot meet.

So you find this: you become acquainted with Him and presently you say, Well, it is the Lord. You trace everything to Him. Not one thing can happen without Him, and as you accustom yourself to connecting everything with Him, you gradually see the wisdom of every move, of every occurrence, and presently you see the love that is in it, for wisdom is but the handmaid of love, and as you see the love you see the glory. The glory of the Lord — the One who on high is watching over every saint on earth.

You say, What place have I to fill? Well, the first thing for you to discover is the place you have in the heart of Christ. The first thing is to know Him — to read the breastplate. Learn to read it. You will find your own name in it, and, as you discover your name there, you begin to see that all the official power vested in Christ is for the moment active on your behalf. Can anything be greater than that? All His official power for the moment active on the behalf of the loved ones.

I never tire of referring to Paul’s words: “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for *me*”, (Galatians 2:20). He knew the place that he had in the breastplate, and never doubted that the love of Christ pursued him from the outset of his spiritual career until he finished it, and was received by the Lord. One is here reminded

of the Rock which followed Israel. Paul says, "That Rock was Christ", 1 Corinthians 10:4. Think of that! He followed them, a mighty Water-Carrier as it were in the wilderness. The blessed Lord thus attends to us in His grace. The Rock which followed them was the Christ, and they all drank of it. Think of the grace in His heart, leading Him to follow us in the wilderness, to refresh us with the abundance of water that He has.

Then the Ark went *before*, the people to seek out a resting place for them. They took three days' journey from the mount of Jehovah, and the Ark went before them in the three days' journey. The Rock was behind and the Ark before; as the Ark moved, Moses said, "Rise up, Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee", Numbers 10:35.

The Lord goes before and follows after, and what is in between beloved? The High Priest! He is capable, it says, of being touched with the feelings of our infirmities — the *feelings* of them. So you see how the Lord takes account of us in His administration, and how ultimately, if not now, we come, through His gracious dealings with us, to behold the glory of the Lord; this is as we come to know Him.

As already indicated, this is something to be proved every day. In every experience, whatever it may be, you may see the Lord. Look for Him! One has often referred to the bow in the cloud; Genesis 9. That is what faith looks for. You see the Lord in the cloud. Directly the cloud arises — the sorrow, or whatever it may be, look for the Lord in it, and as you look for Him, and see Him, you will see the glory.

Stephen looked steadfastly into the heavens. As a Jew, he would have feelings of sorrow as he saw the Sanhedrim of Israel — that which should have stood for what was right — gnashing their teeth upon him.

He would have no thought of himself, but of the glory disappearing from the beloved nation. It was a calamity, a dark cloud for any godly Jew to witness, and Stephen felt it. (The Lord Himself, in contemplating Israel's rejection of Him and the judgment about to fall in consequence, had wept over Jerusalem.) Yet, in the presence of all this, Stephen looked steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus there.

We may be assured, beloved brethren, that whatever the sorrow in our circumstances, it has not come without Him, and His love is behind all His dealings with us.

Well now, I wanted to show from Moses, the nature of the ministry connected with the passage in 2 Corinthians. You see, in Deuteronomy we have the *man*.

In Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, we have the *official* — the apostle, but in Deuteronomy the man himself speaks, and so you will find that in Deuteronomy 10 when Moses was about to go up to the mount the second time, Jehovah says to him, "Make thee an ark of wood", Deuteronomy 10:1. There is nothing said about the gold of the ark. It is no question now of God setting Himself forth in Christ, but of a man who is capable of sympathy for the saints, who knows what the flesh in us is capable of, and that it is useless to cultivate it, or expect anything from it. Hence it is what Moses says, as you will observe, not what he was commanded to say. The man Moses was used but it is what he says according to what Jehovah commanded him, it is not authoritative statements but an exposition. The word 'unfold' is used: "On this side the Jordan ... began Moses to unfold (or expound) this law", Deuteronomy 1: 5. In other words, he is a type of the Lord Jesus as giving effect to the covenant — and therein lies the glory of the One foreshadowed. It is a Man that can sympathise with us, that knows us well, but who, at the same time, knows the heart of God perfectly, who is foreshadowed in the book of Deuteronomy.

The Lord Jesus is still unfolding, one might say. He is unfolding the covenant, making the love of God effective. Paul says here of God: "Who has also made us competent as ministers of the new covenant", or perhaps strictly, "New covenant ministers", 2 Corinthians 3:6. *They* were employed. The ministry is carried on by the Lord Jesus. It is His glory. In this respect, His glory is to make the love of God effective in your heart and in mine!

The Lord Jesus knows the love of God perfectly. He has given the fullest effect to it in dying, but He seeks to give present effect to it *in our hearts*. It is a work delightful to Him, to bring the love of God into my heart and set it there, so that it becomes active Godward and saintward, and *that is His glory*. He garnished the heavens; He upholds all things by the word of His power, but the ministry He is exercising now is peculiarly, "the glory of the Lord". Even that which was done away was introduced with glory, but there is "that which abides". It is not only introduced with glory, it "subsists in glory". Marvellous ministry! The Mediator can lay one hand upon God and the other hand upon us; He knows the heart of God, and then, beloved. He knows our hearts too. And to find a way whereby *He* brings what is in the heart of God into our hearts, calls into activity wonderful grace and wisdom in this His great service.

Paul and his associates were new covenant ministers. That is to say, they were employed by the Lord, but not here as bondmen; they were "ministers". The word is different from bondmen. They had part in the ministry, but the Lord is the Mediator of the new covenant; the ministry of it is carried on by Him. It is

His ministry, and, as I said, Moses at the end of his path foreshadows it. He was at this time one hundred and nineteen years old. His life was divided up into three forties. He had been forty years in Egypt; forty years, as we may say, with God in the desert; and forty years *with God and the people* in the desert. It is one thing to be with God alone in the desert, but another thing to be with God and the people in the desert. Being with God and the people there, he came to know them, and God in relation to them. He says of God, at the end of the third forty years, "Yea, he loved the people", Deuteronomy 33:3. God loved the people; Moses knew that love. In the last year of his life he says virtually, I want to make that love effective in the people insomuch as it lies in me. This corresponds with what the Lord Jesus is doing today.

The book of Deuteronomy is the glory of Moses. "These are the words which Moses spoke", it says, and he spoke them, as before stated in the last year of his life, after he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan; (Deuteronomy 1:1 - 4). You say, What does that mean? Well, it means that the Lord has brought down the flesh in us. He cannot make effective the love of God in us, in our hearts, if the flesh is dominant — that big "I". You know, that Og was a very big man. I believe he represents you and me in our natural estimate of ourselves. I need not remark on the disposition of the flesh to exalt itself. The Corinthians, I believe, entertained Og. The apostle says, "ye are puffed up". (1 Corinthians 5:2) Evil was in their midst and they were not ashamed of it. They were reigning as kings. They were inflated, and so had to be brought down. Og has to be slain, and Sihon, the king of the Amorites. These two kings are not in the land. They refer to you and me, to each of us naturally, before we reach the land, and the work of the Lord is to bring down the corresponding elements in us. Before we get the precious ministry of Moses, contained in Deuteronomy, Sihon and Og were slain. This is an important consideration for us.

It is after that, beloved, that you get this rich unfolding of the covenant. You are now ready for it — ready for the love of God, and so Moses in this wonderful book unfolds the spirituality of the law. What he brings out is that it was the love of God that was behind it, and the great result to be produced was love in the saints. Hence the lawyer asks the Lord, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" and the Lord quotes from Deuteronomy: "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy understanding", Matthew 22:37. That was the law. It was the first and great commandment, showing that God is after the love of our hearts. But how can He get love from our hearts if He does not put it there? The glory of the Lord is to put that love there. He places the love of God in our hearts and that is the ministry of the covenant.

Then the Lord says, "The second is like it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law and the prophets hang", Matthew 22:39,40. In Deuteronomy you have the *unfolding* of the law; that is, what lay behind it. The first thing Moses refers to in the unfolding is that God had said to the people that they should go into the land of Canaan; Deuteronomy 1: 7, 8. He wants you to go into it, but how are you to go into it? In the sense of your own importance? No, it is after the destruction of Og and Sihon. Then you are ready for the love of God. If we go into the land; if we are to be, dear brethren, in family relationships, it must be as having the love of God in our hearts, and so the covenant, as I may say, subserves the family.

The Lord brings love into our hearts. He sets it there and the outcome is that we love God, and we love the brethren. It is in that light we go into the land of Canaan. Family affections belong strictly to Canaan, the sphere of the Father and Son. We go into it as having everything adjusted attaching to our responsibility in regard to us. We love God and our neighbour; we work righteousness; all that is the result of the covenant ministry of Christ, and now we go into Canaan. Hence yon have in this book, "Ye are the sons of Jehovah", Deuteronomy 14:1. You are to go in in the light of family relationships. The covenant subserves this relationship, so that we are in Canaan in the knowledge that we are sons of God and brethren of Christ.

Well, now, dear brethren, that is the burden of what I have to say, but I wish to add a word as to "the Spirit of the Lord". Paul says, God has made us new covenant ministers, not of the letter, but of the spirit. That corresponds with Deuteronomy. The *spirit* of the covenant is Deuteronomy. Then he says, "now the Lord is that Spirit". One might inquire, Why does it not say *Jesus* is that Spirit, or *Christ* is that Spirit? Well, the Holy Spirit is accurate, and is occupying us with one thing in this chapter, the ministry of the Lord and the manner in which it is carried on among the saints. It is carried on in holy liberty. It is what the *Lord* is doing; it is an administration. He is endeavouring to introduce into our hearts the love of God. Paul says, "having this ministry ... we faint not", 2 Corinthians 4:1. He had part in it. Christ was acting through him, so he says, "We faint not", nor do we put a veil, like Moses, on our faces. And then he goes on to say, "We all, looking at the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory".

It is the glory of the Lord we see, let us understand what this means. Let us understand what Christ is doing for us. Begin with yourself, for we may thus learn the truth in this sense. See what the Lord has done for *you*. Trace it back to Him, and in this way you see the glory. It is love that was working all the

time. He is aiming at introducing the love of God into our hearts. Whatever He rolls in upon us: trouble, loss of position, sickness, death or what not — it is the love of God that is behind it. So, *we all*

beholding — every one is the subject of it. "These are the words which Moses spoke", it says, "*to all Israel*", Deuteronomy 1:1. The Lord intends that we all should begin to look with unveiled face at His glory.

It is time, beloved brethren, that we begin to think, and to trace out things, to see why this and that happened. We then learn that all was in view of the love of God being in our hearts. It is the patience and the wisdom of the Lord (His glory is in it), that He has borne with us all this time, for He wants to bring us to Himself, that the love of God may be in your hearts truly, and that there may be the outgoings of it Godward and saintward, and when the Lord effects that in us. He has achieved a triumph that He values. It is His glory, and we are to behold it, and, beholding it, we are changed into the same image.

The word 'same' there implies that we are all alike; indeed, the end in view is that all the saints on earth should be brought into this. As the new covenant is made effective in our hearts we behold the glory of the Lord. Thus there is liberty among the saints. It is the Spirit of the Lord, and where this is there is liberty. May God bless the word to us all!

SPIRITUALITY (6) (JT 48)

Deuteronomy 1:1-5; Deuteronomy 1:35-38; Deuteronomy 31:1-8; Deuteronomy 31:14-19; Deuteronomy 34:9

AEM We would be glad of a word as to how the generative principle, which involves our being of God, stands related to the idea of adoption which is through Jesus Christ to Himself.

JT The generative thought, as far as I understand it, stands related to the saints as *children*. Adoption, or sonship, is *conferred*. We are said to be "God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus", in Galatians 3:26; and in Galatians 4:5,6 we are said to receive it, "that we might receive sonship. But because ye are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba Father", The generative idea is seen in our being born of God. *It is constitutional and underlies our sonship*. We are said to be "born of the Spirit" and "born of water and of Spirit", in John 3:5. Birth by the Spirit involves what is substantive spiritually, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. It is something, as it were, substantive, and hence basic as to our family relations with God. Then we are said to be born of incorruptible seed, the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever: this affecting us as to our intelligence; and finally we are said to be born of God, from whom we take on the family characteristics, which are developed in John's first epistle. The generative thought is obviously connected with what has been before us; for in the types we have considered, there are numerous children, not exactly children of God, but typical of them as a new generation; the principle being there, involving nature and ability to take in and to enjoy what is of God.

AEM Is the thought of children on the same level as sonship?

JT As to family status. Yes. Only sonship is greater,

as that in which Christ has part, and it is the final or eternal family relationship. Sonship is the relation in which we are viewed as capable of sharing the divine thoughts and purposes. In this relation we are viewed as able to share with Christ the affections of the Father, and to respond to them. The *relation* of children corresponds and refers to us as we are down here, and in which we represent God in a moral way as partaking of His characteristics. We are *of* God.

AEM Does that allow for development?

JT It does. There are several words used in the original for the word "children" in English; some diminutive and one covering the whole family, old and young.

AEM I was going to ask if the way in which adoption is brought forward in Ephesians is to make room for the superior position of Christ in relation to it. Fatherhood in God and sonship in Christ were existing perfectly before we were brought into the family.

JT Christ is never viewed as a child in the sense in which we are children of God. In sonship He is spoken of as a child in a *physical* sense, "the child Jesus", but never in the sense in which the term applies to us spiritually. It is always sonship with Him; it is in Him that the *full* thought is seen. We are brought into what He had already inaugurated as a Son, that is as incarnate. We are *brought* into that, not *born* into it.

AMH God having secured through birth what was entirely suitable to Himself and for Himself, adoption is added, to take us and place us in sonship in God's sight.

JT The same persons in another position. It is not bringing many *children* to glory, but *sons* to glory. The full family thought is that we are equal to entering into the divine counsels corresponding with the term "brethren of Christ".

HH Will the idea of the family be eternal, although you say the thought of children applies to us down here?

JT The family thought goes through. The word "children" seems to be applied to us as derived of God generically, fitting in down here in the scene of adversity; we are according to His mind, the Spirit being the link, and witnessing with our spirit that we are children of God, so that we are *now* the children of God. Sonship for us properly refers to heaven, although we have received it and are sons; but really it is a faith state of things now, the Spirit, as the Spirit of adoption, making it a reality to us; but as to our actual condition now, we are not fully equal to it, hence it is said "we await adoption"; in other words, we await sonship, "that is, the redemption of our body (Romans 8:23)". That is not said of us as children.

SEE Is the equality of the two positions in our relation to the inheritance seen in the two passages, Romans 8:17, "And if children, heirs also: heirs of God, and Christ's joint heirs; if indeed we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him", and Galatians 4:7, "So thou art no longer bondman, but son; but if son, heir also through God".

JT These passages show that the two terms are equal in that sense. "Heirship" belongs to us in both relations.

Now to resume our subject, it is needful that we should revert to the second part of Numbers 27, beginning at verse 12; having already enlarged on the

daughters of Zelophehad, and what is conveyed in them spiritually, also Caleb's daughter and her husband; these showing the generative side, that is, those in the relation of children or seed. In Numbers the necessity for the new leader appears, as the "statute of right" is established, arising from the exercises of these women. We have the new leadership introduced immediately and by Jehovah Himself. Moses mentions it, but Jehovah says to Moses, "Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land that I have given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy peoples, as Aaron thy brother was gathered, because ye rebelled against my word in the wilderness of Zin, ... And Moses spoke to Jehovah, saying. Let Jehovah, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the assembly, who may go out before them, and who may come in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in, that the assembly of Jehovah be not as sheep that have no shepherd", Numbers 27:12 - 17. We have the judicial pronouncement as to Moses again alluded to here that he should not go in because of rebellion against God's word. Others had been precluded for the same reason. They fell in the wilderness. Moses is to go up to die and to be buried by Jehovah Himself, according to another scripture, but he is wholly clear in his spirit. He is thoroughly with God as in the discipline, and suggests of himself that there should be another leader, and alludes to God's knowledge of the spirits of all flesh — "Jehovah, the God of the spirits of all flesh,(Numbers 27:16)" the God *of the spirits*. So that Joshua is evidently in Moses' mind as a spiritual leader. Moses' service was that of apostleship, or authority, but now it is a question of spirits, and so Jehovah speaks about Joshua, having the Spirit, not "another spirit", but "a man in whom is *the Spirit"(Numbers 27:18)*. So that I think we are coming here to the climax of the thought entering into our subject. Christ viewed in this way as having the Spirit. He is divine, of course, and gives the Spirit. Acts shows that He charged the apostles by the Spirit, Acts 1:2. Indeed, He went about doing good in the power of the Spirit. We read about Him casting out demons by the Spirit of God. So that we have Christ in type here, Joshua being a man who had the Spirit, characteristically. It is he who is to lead the people into the inheritance.

LDM Does the readiness of the children to enter the inheritance make way for leadership by the man in whom is the Spirit? I was thinking of the daughters of Zelophehad.

JT Yes. It is very significant that Jehovah in answer to Moses says, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit"(Numbers 27:18). Moses had spoken to Jehovah, calling Him "the God of the spirits of all flesh, (Numbers 27:16)" He would therefore know the spirit of Joshua; He would

know the spirit of the one needed to lead; in fact. He was God over them. God Himself is a spirit. The Lord says to the woman of Samaria, "God is a spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth(John 4:24)". Here He is the God of the spirits of all flesh, so that the matter is peculiarly spiritual now.

FJF Does that show that leadership is dependent upon what God knows of the leader?

JT Just so. The whole matter now is between God and the leader who has the Spirit, and believers who are spiritual, for the daughters of Zelophehad had showed that they were spiritual, as also Achsah. So that entering into the inheritance implies *that the Spirit is here*. Those who form the assembly are basically, at least, spiritual, although Paul had to say that the Corinthians were not this *characteristically*, though their status was that. They were in Christ and the Holy Spirit was in them.

The book of Deuteronomy further develops our subject. Moses in the closing period of his life was able to say so much about it; as under discipline, not in spirit under it, but clear of it, yet it still attached to him in the government of God. Moses was not going into the land, but he is able to say much about what is there; and what is needed in those who go in. Hence it is thought well to suggest these Scriptures in Deuteronomy because the aim of the book is that we might go in *spiritually and suitably*. Moses merges, we may say,

in Joshua. It is a gradual matter, but finally they are both together at the door of the tent, and the Lord comes down and they are spoken to as together, and later, according to the last chapter, Moses dies, and Joshua is said to be filled "with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as Jehovah had commanded Moses". So that Moses merges, as it were, with Joshua. That is, they represent two features of Christ: the one authoritative, but more, because in Deuteronomy Moses' position borders on headship. It is what Moses says *himself*, and finally he emerges, as we said, in Joshua, who represents henceforth the leadership that is needed to take the people into the land.

JD "Because ye rebelled against my word in the wilderness of Zin, in the strife of the congregation", Numbers 27:14. Would anything like that happen today to one who had been a leader?

JT Leaders may fall out of the ranks. We remarked yesterday that Moses had to suffer personally. He rises above all this, but nevertheless he has to suffer. So that we should take heed to ourselves. Disregard of the commandment of God on the one hand, and disrespect for the saints on the other, disqualifies a

man for the leadership. That is what the apostle had in mind in the first letter to Corinth, and the second, too, "If any one thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him recognise the things that I write to you, that it is the Lord's commandment", 1 Corinthians 14:37. There were those at Corinth who were aiming at leadership, but were evidently disqualified. We know in the history of the testimony many have fallen out, who had a very definite place in the testimony, so that I believe the records of Moses' failure are to warn us. In Deuteronomy it is generally more that he suffered *vicariously*, that is, instead of the people; that in truth the state of the people required the rebuke — required that he should suffer. He says, "Jehovah was angry with me on your account" Deuteronomy 1:37.

AEM What is the position in relation to priesthood? Eleazar seems to be prominent in connection with Joshua, as though the two are linked up.

JT I think Eleazar represents the spiritual side of priesthood and hence qualified to be linked with Joshua, so that it is again two persons representing Christ, but spirituality stressed in both. Eleazar is said to be "the prince of princes of the Levites,(Numbers 3:32)" a peculiar place he had even before his father died, but now he is in the true position of priesthood. I think, therefore, we have to look at Joshua and Eleazar together as entering into our subject. The priestly side is usually official, but in Eleazar it would take on what is peculiarly spiritual, not only authoritative. It says, "And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him, by the judgment of the Urim before Jehovah: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him, even the whole assembly. And Moses did as Jehovah had commanded him; and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before the whole assembly, and he laid his hands upon him, and gave him commandment, as Jehovah had said through Moses", Numbers 27:21 - 23. The thought of the Urim is introduced. We are now in the presence of peculiar spirituality and stability. What a vista of glory and blessedness opens up as we see all this functioning in Christ, and our having part in it! Joshua is installed before Eleazar and the whole assembly here.

CSS Would it work out as a result of obedience? When we get a man that is filled with the Spirit, it is said that they may "obey him", Numbers 27:20.

JT Obedience and being helped by the Lord into the inheritance go together. In the antitype it is the Spirit being the earnest of the inheritance that enables us to possess. We value the thought of the inheritance, as having already acquired spiritual instincts through the generative work of God, the Spirit taking all that up and developing sonship in us intelligently. We see how God

Himself, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, is bringing many sons to glory, Hebrews 2:10. And in doing so He has made the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings. That is, Christ has reached a point of perfection, meaning a *condition answering to the purpose of God;* and we, too, are brought into that condition, the relation of sonship attaching to it; and then in the acquirement of the purchased possession completed in the redemption of our bodies, we shall be in it as He is in it. So that divine Persons are all helping to bring us in. Hence the importance of what we had this morning of the intelligent desire to be there.

Ques Is that the idea when Moses said, Jehovah "will go over before thee", and then of Joshua, "he shall go over before thee"?

JT And further, as we already noticed, Moses specifies that the new leader should go out before them, and come in before them, and lead them out and bring them in, all this having an answer in Christ as amongst His own. It is said in Acts 1:21, that the needed apostle should be one who had assembled with the brethren "all the time in which the Lord Jesus came in and went out amongst us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day in which he was taken up". His movements were spiritual movements. The two men at the ascension had this in mind: "This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, shall thus come in the manner in which ye have beheld him going into heaven", Acts 1:11. It is a question of manner of movement, how the Lord went into heaven. He went up in their sight. So He was transfigured *before them*. There are peculiar touches which were to react in the disciples. All this, as a type, enters into Joshua's position here, who would lead the people out and in. Moses says, "who may lead them out, and who may bring them in" — *they must not be left outside*.

CAI Does this not involve the intelligent apprehension of the mystery, and our being able to function intelligently in the body under the headship of Christ?

JT We are coming to that. Spirituality is essential to it. Of the spiritual man it is said, as already remarked, he himself is discerned of no one. Persons who are not spiritual are in a practical sense outside the range of the mystery.

LDM Paul laid his glad tidings before those conspicuous at Jerusalem, as we see in Galatians 2. Is that the recognition by them of his measure in spiritual things?

JT They gave him the right hand of fellowship. The apostles there were capable of discerning the grace given to him. Peter understood Paul. His closing words about him showed how thoroughly he understood the apostle Paul. Others did not. As to discernment, Paul gives a peculiar touch in Acts 14.

He looked on the man who was lame, and discerned that he had faith. He discerned that the man had faith to be healed, that is the power of discernment in a spiritual man. The lame man heard Paul *speaking*. Evidently he was affected by it — that *kind* of speaking. Paul, on the other hand, discerned that he had faith, and so said to him with a loud voice, "Rise up straight upon thy feet",(Acts 14:10) and he did so. He had never walked. The man represents the kind of material needed for the assembly The Lord says to Peter, "thou art Peter". Peter had in mind in his ministry to bring out that kind of material, so he calls the saints living stones and a spiritual house. Paul directs Timothy, in his second letter, to commit what he had heard of him in the presence of many witnesses, to "faithful men", 2 Timothy 2:2. Timothy would thus be obligated to *find* them, to discern them. There is thus to be discernment in these administrative matters. The spiritual discerneth all things.

JD Would this be on Paul's mind after he had left Troas on the way up to Jerusalem? He sends for the elders of Ephesus and says that he has not shunned to declare to them the whole counsel of God. Would the continued service of God by the saints as entering into His counsel be on his mind?

JT The counsel of God came out in his service at Ephesus peculiarly. His letter to that assembly further confirms this. It was highly spiritual, and hence it begins with the inquiry, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit?" Acts 19:2. A spiritual structure was in view. His enquiry was prophetic, that is, the work should take on great spiritual proportions; the assembly would grow into a holy temple in the Lord.

Now as regards Deuteronomy, in chapter 1 we have fine spiritual touches, first as to the distance to the land. "These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel", conveying spiritual thoughts, "on this side the Jordan, in the wilderness". Then we are told of the environment, and the names are given. "There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea". There were evidently yet certain brotherly feelings in Edom. This book recognises them, but they were affected by rivalry. Then we are told that it was "in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first of the month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel, according to all that Jehovah had given him in command to them; after he had smitten Sihon the king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who dwelt in Ashtaroth and at Edrei". All this is spiritual, and it is affecting that a man of a hundred and nineteen years and eleven months should furnish us with such a book as this. Whatever the discipline he had gone through, being prohibited from entering the land, he is now at the height of spiritual power and understanding. He is to see the land. He is to see it, as fully appreciating

it, but not yet to enter it. *Dispensationally* he is representative of law and authority, and hence could not enter, but *personally* he is equal to it. He is able to accept the governmental dealing of God upon him. He knows at once that discipline and authority can never by themselves take the people of God into the land of Canaan. There is more than that needed. That is, we must apprehend Christ in the Joshua character; but we are told in effect here, and it is a spiritual touch, that you may get to Canaan in eleven days instead of forty years. It is for *us* to see how that could be.

CSS Is the opening of this book in contrast to the opening of Leviticus?

JT Yes, the latter is approach to God, as in the tabernacle; the former is instruction for the land. We have the thought at the end of the passage read, that he had unfolded this law, that is, the opening up of what was in his mind. Moses began to unfold or expound to them. It is the spiritually instructive side rather than authority.

WJH You base your reference to Paul travelling quickly to the line of the purpose of God, on the fact that in Damascus he preached that Jesus was the Son of God?

JT The Lord says to him, "why persecutest thou me?" Acts 9:4. It was a spiritual word, involving the assembly, for the saints are alluded to as Himself. Paul would appreciate it later. It is a spiritual touch at the very outset, and then he immediately "preached Jesus that he is the Son of God (Acts 9:20)".

I thought we might now look at the second passage read in chapter 1:35 - 38. The exclusion of the evil generation from the land is alluded to. Then it is said, "except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, he shall see it,

and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed Jehovah". And then, "Joshua the son of Nun, who standeth before thee, he shall go in thither; strengthen him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it". Caleb goes in and occupies the land that his feet trod on. Joshua goes in, too, but he goes in in order to cause the people to inherit; Jehovah says, "strengthen him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it". Christ has gone into heaven; He is there in order to cause us to inherit it. Moses then says, "I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that Jehovah your God hath done to these two kings: so will Jehovah do to all the kingdoms to which thou shalt go. Ye shall not fear them; for Jehovah your God, he will fight for you". Deuteronomy 3:21. Stress is laid in this section on the destruction of Sihon and Og; they represent some great obstacle to our entering into the inheritance. It was after he had smitten Sihon and Og that Moses began to write the book of Deuteronomy. I think it is

tantamount to saying, that we have to look to ourselves if we are to understand Deuteronomy; are these two kings really overthrown in the antitypical sense? They allude to our bigness according to our natural valuation of ourselves. So long as I retain a sense of my own importance, I am hindered, in fact I can hardly understand Deuteronomy. It is not a question of authority. So long as I am occupied with myself in any way, I need authority over me. In that sense I need Moses. Paul says, in effect. Shall I come unto you with the rod or in love? (1 Corinthians 4:21). This great man Og has to go down. He seems to stand athwart the path of Israel into Canaan; but *Moses* overcame him. It is after that, we get Deuteronomy, and I believe it is to direct our view to this matter as to whether I have any personal motive as active in the things of God, any thought of personal prominence, to be big, something more than I am now.

If so, I shall never understand the book of Deuteronomy, nor enter Canaan in the history of my soul. These two men were overthrown, and Joshua is told that he would overcome all the others in the same way. The crucial point is to overcome these two men. "Thine eyes have seen all that Jehovah your God hath done to these two kings: so will Jehovah do to all the kingdoms to which thou shalt go (Deuteronomy 3:21)".

HW Does that agree with the apostle Paul in connection with his intelligence in the mystery? He says, "To me, less than the least of all saints, has this grace been given", (Ephesians 3:8).

JT That enters into the overthrow of these two kings. I have often wondered, and have spoken of it to others, how he could say that he was less than the least of all the saints, and yet he does, and significantly in the epistle to the Ephesians. It corresponds with the overthrow of Sihon and Og — the latter shown in Deuteronomy to have been a very big man. If in the attitude of my soul I am less than the least of all the saints, I am able to respect the brethren.

WJH The Psalm referring to the removal of these two men, Sihon and Og, says, "for his mercy endureth for ever", Psalm 136:19,20.

JHF Did Rahab enter into the spirit of this when she referred to these two men on the occasion when she spoke to the spies?

JT She did. She would see that the spies were not like these two men, they were *different*.

AMH The first chapter speaks of God having gained these victories, and in the third chapter it is *we*. Does that correspond to Colossians — to using the

circumcision of Christ, first arriving at it in Christ in the soul and then mortifying our members?

JT Just so. That is the way to victory over them, mortifying the flesh. "Have your mind on the things that are above", (Colossians 3:2). That is a great point as to entering. We follow our minds, and then the passage says, "for ye have died, and your life is hid with the Christ in God (Colossians 3:3)". When Christ comes out we shall appear with Him in glory. All these are great thoughts on the way to the inheritance; and then, "mortify therefore": that is the line of overcoming these two men, and of maintaining the victory in our souls.

Then going on to chapter 31 — Moses now is saying, that he is a hundred and twenty years old. He says "I can no more go out and come in; and Jehovah hath said unto me. Thou shalt not go over this Jordan. Jehovah thy God, he will go over before thee, he will destroy these nations from before thee, that thou mayest take possession of them". Moses, although so old, continues in faith and spiritual power, and at the closing moment of his life he is able to write this remarkable song, Joshua associated with him, evidently, and he *completes* it. So that Moses now is completely identified with Joshua — merges in him, you might say, so that as he dies, "Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as Jehovah had commanded Moses". So that I think in these verses we are in the presence of Christ, as it were, disappearing *as in authority, but in full view as leading us into the spiritual inheritance of God for us*.

AD Do we get that in Solomon, when he asked God for wisdom that he might go out and come in and judge "a great people"?

JT Yes. David and Solomon are a continuation of Joshua in the types. Joshua is Christ bringing us in in spiritual power. It is, in a sense, a hidden matter, expressive of what goes on in the souls of the saints, but shown in their upward way and manner and service. David and Solomon take up the service of God which is linked with the book of Joshua.

Ques Would you say that Joshua influenced the people rather than used authority?

JT That is the idea; the spiritual power needed peculiarly in the assembly; there we need also the wealth of inheritance. He brings us into that wealth, but then, as typified in David and Solomon, Christ orders the service of God, the praises of God. It is another side of our position.

HDT So that what has been before us in spirituality would suggest a state capable of being influenced by what is in Christ.

JT That is what is so needed in assembly service. We thus discern the Lord, for instance, as He comes in a spiritual way. It is not His presence in a corporeal sense. He comes in a spiritual way and the spiritual understand, they know that He is there. They discern Him and say, "It is the Lord".

SEE Would this form of spiritual leadership be expressed in Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of the Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God"?

JT That is more general, not exactly assembly service, but links with the song before us. This song is ordered by God, and Joshua is evidently brought into it; Moses completed and spoke it to Israel. And then we have the blessing of the tribes in the next chapter. These two chapters furnish a magnificent finish to the book; we are introduced into the land, at least into the confines of the land. It is a matter of rich spiritual feelings, and calculated to promote joy and festivity. So that we are entering in gladness of soul into the divine territory. We are received there, too, as equal to it.

Ques Do feelings according to God constitute substance?

JT They do. There is a certain richness in divinely formed and developed feelings. One under control in the assembly knows what feelings there should be at a given time. Priestly intelligence in the believer enables him to know what to do in the assembly.

SEE We are used to various forms of admonition — does this in Colossians 3 need to be taken account of more, "admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs"?

JT You are not likely to provoke resentment if you admonish in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. It conveys good feeling, and yet it may convey the truth. We have had it elsewhere; singers in Israel such as Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were prophets as well, so that prophecy may come to us in spiritual hymns. Many of our hymns are prophetic, bringing God to us.

ESW Would it be right to say that the service of God in its highest sense can only be rightly taken up by persons who are in the enjoyment of the land? We can only serve as we have traversed the way you have indicated as following and being with Joshua; having spiritual substance formed in us?

JT I am sure that is right, so that worship in Deuteronomy is through the wealth that you acquire in the land; you bring the fruit in a basket. It is the wealth of the land that comes into the higher features of worship.

JD Would it connect with 2 Chronicles 5?

JT That is the full thought of it in the types.

Ques Would the land represent the breaking of bread?

JT The breaking of bread is in the wilderness, but when Christ comes in we move on to the land. The land is where we are in association with Him.

JWH In the last chapter we are told "the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as Jehovah had commanded Moses". Would that be the great result of what is cumulative in regard to the great thought of spirituality, worked out as we are found together in the assembly?

JT Yes. The Lord takes up headship in the assembly, involving lead and influence rather than direct authority. *Authority is there*, however, so that we are as reverential at the end, in the family setting, as in the beginning in the dominical setting. We do not take any advantage of the Lord as coming to our side, taking His place with us as His brethren. We are always reverential.

Deuteronomy 2

- DEUTERONOMY 2 AND 3 (CAC 5)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 2 (JND 36)
- THE BROTHERLY COVENANT (JT 10)

DEUTERONOMY 2 AND 3 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 2; Deuteronomy 3

We are told in chapter 2: 14 that the days from Kadesh-barnea to the crossing of the torrent Zered were thirty-eight years, and that during that period "the whole generation of the men of war was consumed from the midst of the camp, as Jehovah had sworn unto them". The end of the generation of flesh and unbelief is thus briefly intimated, and then, in chapters 2 and 3, Moses review takes account of the unfailing goodness and blessing of Jehovah for forty years, and also of the victories and acquisition which had been secured by His power and favour on the eastward side of Jordan.

It is our privilege, in what answers to "the land of Moab", to review under the instruction of Christ, not only manifestations of flesh and unbelief, which may have marked our past, but also the unfailing goodness of our God, and the victories which His grace has vouchsafed in the Spirit. "For Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee in all the work of thy hand. He hath known thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years hath Jehovah thy God been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing" (chapter 2: 7). How blessed to review the wilderness as a place where the blessing and bounty of God have never failed, where His presence has been the sure pledge of the supply of every needed thing! Such an experience of God is surely the greatest possible encouragement to move boldly forward to the land of His purpose. Our Moses would lead us to take account, not only of the naughtiness and unbelief of our flesh, but of an infinite number of encouragements and blessings which have come to us through the faithfulness of our God, and which have evidenced His presence with us, and His care over us. Christ would remind us that we have not taken a step, or passed through a day of our wilderness history, that has not been marked by the care, bounty, and blessing of our God.

Then there were certain "brethren" who were not to be attacked — the children of Esau. They were not in the line of God's testimony, they had not known deliverance from Egypt as Israel had, nor what it was to have the tabernacle in their midst, nor the exercises of a people and priesthood identified with the movements of the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness. But they were to be regarded as "brethren" who had a portion assigned to them by God, and which they had occupied as a result of former conflicts in which Jehovah had destroyed certain enemies before them. This is deeply interesting and instructive, for there are those today who occupy precisely such a position. They are truly in family relationship with the people of God, and have promises of blessing — for "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob *and*

Esau concerning things to come" (Hebrews 11: 20) — and they hold territory which has been given to them by God, and gained through former conflicts and victories. But they have never really known deliverance from the world system, nor what it was to be identified with that divine system which was set forth typically in "the tabernacle of the testimony". The reformation was a great battle, and it resulted in certain territory being possessed. No spiritual person can doubt that the victory in that conflict was given by God, and the ground won from the enemy was an assigned portion given by God. We have to recognise this, and not to "attack" our brethren who hold that ground. "They will be afraid of you; and ye shall be very guarded: attack them not".

This is very instructive as shewing the kind of spirit God would have in His people whom He is preparing to enter into the full thought which is in the purpose of His love for them. He teaches us to regard as "brethren" many who have a portion which comes very far short of what is in His heart for His people. But they have *something*, and what they have is to be recognised as a God-given portion; they are not to be attacked or distressed. Some of the sects no doubt arose in the first place from a genuine desire to resist the enemy, and to hold something that was felt to be of God. There was conflict, and in result something was held, though it was far short of what was in God's mind concerning the inheritance of His people. Whatever can be recognised as God-given is to be respected; there is to be no attempt to dispossess those who hold it. We are to regard them as "brethren" though they may be afraid of us; our great desire, indeed, should be that they might possess and enjoy the full wealth of all that is in God's purpose for His people. It is very striking that such an instruction should come in at this point, just when the conflict for the possession of the land is to be entered on. It shews the kind of spirit God would have to be in His people towards "brethren" who are not walking with them, and who are not really in the line of the heavenly calling or of the divine testimony.

We may recall, however, that these very people who were to be regarded as "brethren", and not to be attacked, shewed a very naughty and hostile spirit towards Israel — see Numbers 20: 14 - 21. And later in the history they became active adversaries (2 Chronicles 20: 10, 11). When God brings His testimony into view,

or causes His land to be possessed in any measure by His Israel, it becomes a test for the brethren who hold a portion which may have been God-given, but which is not the true or full thought of God for His people. And what comes out in the subsequent history shews that neither the children of Esau nor the children of Lot were sympathetic with what Jehovah was doing in and for

Israel. Further movements of God, and especially the bringing out of His "whole counsel", test the "brethren", and, alas! they often awaken positive hostility. But if the "brethren" become hostile to what is of God they no longer have His support in holding what He may have given them in time past. Hence we find that the reformed Churches and the sects who, through past conflicts, did secure and hold something that was God-given, having now become hostile to the further spiritual movements of God, have lost their power to hold what was assigned to them by God in time past. They are being dispossessed by the enemy of all that they did hold from God, and in many cases hardly "so much as a foot-breadth" remains to them of what their fathers gained through conflict. Superstition and tradition on the one hand, and infidelity on the other, are rapidly stealing away from them all that they once had from God. It is the sad result, in the government of God, of an attitude of hostility to His truth and testimony as more fully developed by His Holy Spirit.

But we have to be "very guarded" not to "attack" any who are in possession of what is God-given, even though it may not be the full truth of the divine calling. God would not have us in a spirit of enmity against anything that is of Himself, wherever it may be. We do not want to forbid, or to minimize, anything that is of God. It is a comfort to know that our affections and prayers can go out to everything that is *of God*, even though it be not His full thought for His people. So that we regard as "brethren" the whole company of God's children; they are our spiritual kindred. But the consciousness that we can regard affectionately and sympathetically all that is *of God*, wherever it may be, only intensifies the purpose of spiritual persons to stand wholly apart from what is *of man*.

God would have a spirit in His people which would tend to disarm the hostility of their "brethren", and to make His Israel an attractive people. Our brethren may be afraid of us, but we are to manifest a brotherly spirit towards them. Christians generally are feeling that the brotherly spirit is greatly lacking; family affections and spiritual fellowship are fast dying out of the decadent Christian profession. In the midst of such conditions God would maintain the truth and the brotherly spirit as an attractive rallying point for all the "brethren".

"Ye shall buy of them food for money, that ye may eat; and water shall ye also buy of them for money, that ye may drink; for Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee in all the work of thy hand" (chapter 2: 6, 7). God's people are so wealthy through His blessing that they stand in no need of favours from any. They can move at their own charges; they come under no obligation either to the world, or to "brethren" who do not walk with them. It is sometimes

thought that the "box" has not a spiritual character, and that it is an inferior item in the privilege and service of the saints. But if it speaks, as it surely does, of the love of the Lord's people, and of their practical care for His interests, it is not an inferior item *to Him*. And even on the side of meeting necessary expenses for rent, light, etc., it speaks of the dignity, and independence of the world, which marks the assembly of God. That assembly moves through the present scene as a heavenly stranger, coming under no obligation to anyone, but providing for its own needs at its own cost, out of resources which are the fruit of the blessing of God. It is a sad thing when Christians give the impression, as they often do, that they need the contributions or charity of those around them. It is a poor testimony to the wealth of a people who profess to be blessed by God.

In what answers, spiritually, to "the land of Moab" the true Moses can recall past victories which have been gained by the people of God through His power and grace. Sihon the king of Heshbon and Og the king of Bashan had been overcome, and their land possessed. This was the beginning of the war of conquest; and it was the pledge of what Jehovah would do for His people (see chapter 2: 25; 3: 21,22). The "words of peace" sent to Sihon only brought out deep rooted hostility on his part; he would hold his land against Jehovah who alone had right to it. The flesh would hold territory which really belongs to God so that it shall not be divinely occupied. Sihon would seem to represent that energy of the flesh which would hold natural things and natural relationships for one's own honour and renown. Og would represent, I think, the tendency in the flesh to hold these things in self indulgence; "his bedstead" is the only thing about him specially mentioned; he represents the holding of what we are and have in an easy-going way for our own pleasure.

Our bodies, and all natural relationships — whether that of wives and husbands, children or parents, servants or masters — are really territory which belongs to God, and can only rightly be held for Him. It is territory which has to be taken out of the power of the flesh, and held in the power of the Spirit for God. Indeed all that we possess here is to be held for God. The cattle and the spoil of the cities would speak, perhaps, of material things, or that which in itself is "the mammon of unrighteousness", but which is now to be held under stewardship to God for our own future advantage. These things belong to the eastward side of Jordan; they are not in Canaan, but they indicate territory that has to be taken out of the power of the flesh and held for God. Such victories are a great and divine encouragement to move forward into that spiritual territory which lies on the other side of Jordan — the sphere which God's love and purpose have ever in view as the proper inheritance of His people. The power of the flesh would hold our bodies and all natural and

material things in some way for self, but we have had to get the victory over that power so that they might be held by the Spirit for God. Sihon would represent energetic flesh; the poets celebrated his exploits (Numbers 21: 26 - 30); Og typifies self indulgent flesh. All the cities and towns would speak of the kingdoms of those two giants in detail. But Moses, reviewing the past, could say, "There was not one city too strong for us: Jehovah our God delivered all before us" (chapter 2: 36). It corresponds with Romans 8 where we see a people characterised by the indwelling of the Spirit of God, and who have divine power to overcome and set aside the flesh.

In what answers to "the land of Moab" the Lord can review victories which have been gained over the flesh by His people. He loves to remind us of them, for they are the pledge of victory in conflicts which are yet to come. Have we really proved that "there was not one city too strong for us"? There is not one bit of the power of the flesh that is too strong to be overcome by the Christian walking in the Spirit. But how far have we *proved* it; so that our Moses can remind us of former triumphs as indicating how God has been with us and for us? There are times when the flesh seems to be specially active in its opposition, and this is often when there is a real desire to be pleasing to God. But it is encouraging to know that God intends to give us the victory in the power of His Spirit. "That he might give him into thy hand, as it is this day" (verse 30). Melanchthon had to learn that "old Adam was too strong for young Melanchthon", and I suppose most of us can understand his experience, but we could not say that "old Adam" was too strong to be overcome by one walking in the Spirit.

As these cities "fortified with high walls, gates, and bars", fell one after another, how the people would be encouraged to find that Jehovah was really for them. And as one form of the power of the flesh after another is overcome through the Spirit there is great encouragement with regard to conflicts that are still before us. Everything that has proved to us that God has been with us in the wilderness, and every victory that has enabled us to hold any ground for Him is so much encouragement to pass on into the spiritual sphere of purposed blessing in Christ. Surely there are some spiritual victories and conquests in our past history which the Lord can remind us of, and which He would have us to review with Him! The result of giving place to the Spirit is that the flesh is practically set aside, and the saints come out as sons and children of God. The responsible life is, so to speak, wrested out of the power of the flesh, and held by the Spirit for God. That is territory possessed on the eastward side of Jordan.

We learn from chapter 3: 12 - 22 that Jehovah gave that land to be possessed by the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh. There is no suggestion here that Reuben and Gad were wrong in desiring to have their possession in that land; we are not told here that they said, "Bring us not over the Jordan" (Numbers 32: 5). It is seen here as typical of territory which God would have to be possessed by His people, though not the resurrection or heavenly side. It is the region of natural things and relationships, the sphere of responsible life, and it is the will of God that it should be possessed and held by His people as from Him, and for Him.

The failure of Reuben and Gad did not lie in taking possession "on this side the Jordan eastward", but in being content to have their inheritance *on that side only*. They did not value that which it was the delight of God to give; they thought of what, suited them to receive rather than of what suited Him to give. God would have His people to occupy the ground covered by the epistle to the Romans, but not to be content with that only, but also to pass on to the ground covered by the epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians. How many are content to know the justifying grace of God, and to prove the favour and mercy of God in their circumstances here — in their families, in their businesses, in the whole sphere of natural relationships and things on the earth! God would, indeed, have us to occupy that ground as divinely given territory to be held for Him. He would have us to piously recognise His goodness and favour in that region. But He would have us, above all things, to desire to enter upon the present possession of that wondrous region of spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus which is typified by the land over Jordan. It is the purpose of His love to give us that land for our possession and enjoyment, and it is a very serious matter to stop short of it. We have often been told that those who said, "Bring us not over the Jordan" were the first to be carried into captivity.

At the end of chapter 3 Moses brings before the people how intensely his own desires were set on the "good land". "Let me go over, I pray thee, and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon". Christ would impress us, as we come under His instruction, with what the "good land" was to Him. How *He* cherished every precious thought of the love of God! It is written that "they despised the pleasant land" (Psalm 106: 24), and this is true still of many of the people of God. But to Christ "the pleasant land" was ever in view. Coming into the world what He had before Him was the will of God, and God's precious thoughts man-ward. As Psalm 40 tells us prophetically, His language was, "Behold I come, in the volume of the book it, is written of me — To do thy good pleasure, my God, is my delight". He had before Him the innumerable thoughts of God manward, including all that was

typically set forth in "the pleasant land". All that would be secured in Himself as risen and glorified was ever before His heart, but His own sufferings and death intervened as a divine necessity. The "good land" was "beyond Jordan". He must pass through "the suffering of death" in order to reach "the joy lying before him", and to secure those who should be joint-heirs with Him. And this is intimated in Moses saying, "But Jehovah was wroth with me on your account, and did not hear me" (Chapter 3: 26). Moses does not speak here as one suffering the governmental consequences of his own failure, though we get that later in the book. It is here "on your account" . That is, it is a typical reference to what, Christ suffered vicariously when as the holy Sin-bearer He was not heard (Psalm 22: 1, 2). Moses, as a type of Christ according to flesh, could not enter the land; He must come under wrath on account of the people. Oh! how much has our perversity cost Christ! He would remind us of it to deeply affect, and subdue our hearts.

But if Christ according to flesh has had to undergo "the suffering of death" on our account, He has come forth as the risen, living One to go over before His people, and to put them in possession of the "good land", and Joshua is a type of Him in this blessed character. (See chapter 3: 28.)

Moses being permitted to see the land from "the top of Pisgah" would intimate how the whole range of purposed blessing for man was in the view of Christ before His death. But His own death was a necessity ever present to His thoughts — the Jordan was between Him and the fruition of all the precious and holy purposes of divine love. We cannot read the Gospels without being made conscious of this, or without seeing how little His disciples entered into it. *They* thought that Christ according to flesh could introduce the kingdom and all its blessedness. But this ignored the whole moral state of Israel — their own state according to flesh. *On their account*, and on ours, His death was a necessity.

Hence in the Gospels all is prospective, and thus they answer in a remarkable way to Deuteronomy, where the "good land" is not actually possessed, but is immediately in prospect. The farthest point reached in Deuteronomy, except prophetically at the end of the book, is Moses' view from the top of Pisgah. In the Gospels we see the whole of the "good land" as in the view of Christ — the kingdom of the heavens, the kingdom of God, the presence of the Holy Spirit the Comforter, eternal life, the assembly, the full blessing of men according to the thought and purpose of divine love — but for it to be entered upon by the people of God Moses must be succeeded by Joshua. Christ according to flesh — the holy One of God — must come under what was due to man as in sinful flesh, that as the risen, and even the ascended One, He

might "go over" and put His people "in possession of the land". The presence of the Son of God on earth brought the whole purposed blessing of God for men immediately into view, just as the whole good land came under view when Moses stood on Pisgah, but that blessing required the death and resurrection of Christ, and His glorification at God's right hand, to be accomplished that the Holy Spirit might be given. The death of Christ on man's account was a divine necessity if men were to enter into that blessing as led by Him the risen One.

According to flesh the Shepherd was smitten, and the sheep of the flock scattered abroad (Matthew 26: 31). Messiah was cut off and had nothing (Daniel 9: 26). The things concerning Him had an end (Luke 22: 37). But His surrender of everything here had its answer in all being secured by Him on the resurrection side as the true Joshua. The apprehension of this is of the utmost importance in view of a right understanding of God's ways, and of all that is set forth in "the good land that is beyond the Jordan".

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 2 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 2

— 10 - 12. These three verses are a parenthesis and should be so marked.

— 10 - 12 and 20 - 23, are both of them evidently parenthetical. "The children of Lot for a possession" ... "now rise up" ... "unto the children of Lot for a possession" ... "rise ye up, take your journey". These accounts of the country are graphic notices of great value, not only historically (the surest we have) but of God's ways and men's in peopling the earth, violence, war, etc. The only question is as to "as Israel did unto the land of their possession". To say that "go in and possess the land" proves it means only Canaan west of Jordan is folly; whatever was their possession, they entered into it on dispossessing the inhabitants. Nor is there the least difficulty in supposing Moses wrote it. He had partly entered into possession by casting out the Amorites; and what is stated is the way Israel entered in, not the history of an event. Hence Moses could say, in an Aorist sense, Israel entered in in the same way, but from the way it comes in I am strongly disposed to consider it as added, because we have an exactly analogous passage, I may say word for word without this addition, "destroyed them and dwelt in their stead", only that in verse 22, we have "even unto this day". This may be Moses, as it had long taken place. It is to be noted that the Horims are twice spoken of, verses 12 and 22. My impression is the passages are a divine prophetic addition. I do not think it is simply to encourage the Israelites, though it would do this in showing the ways of God — "the Lord destroyed them". But it showed important history — these giant races, and their pride, and removings, and destructions when God so willed.

The early history of man, found only with certainty in Scripture, is of much importance in judging of what short-lived man is. The characters of men of God may be given by their own mouth by inspiration. Paul does so speak of himself, only when forced to do it, largely; in the more familiar style of the New Testament says they made him a fool in speaking so much of himself. The question is, if it be inspired we should lose immensely if we had not these passages, and God has put them in for our instruction, without consulting the incompetent judgment of man happily for us. A part of the whole picture of truth would be wanting if this were not here.

— 13. "Said I" is wrong, and should be omitted.

THE BROTHERLY COVENANT (JT 10)

Hebrews 13: 1; Deuteronomy 2:1 - 9; Amos 1:9

My thought is to speak a word about the relationship in which the Lord has set us as brethren, a term which is, thank God! now current among us, and the fact that it is current and appreciated shows, that there has been recovery amongst the people of God. The exercise is that what has been recovered may continue; not only the relationship, but that which belongs to it, that is, the love that is suited to it, brotherly love, and so I would wish to enlarge on the subject by the Lord's help, especially as found in the epistle to the Hebrews, which is not a formal, apostolic epistle, but one written on the ground, as one might say, of mutuality. The writer begins by saying, "God having spoken... to the fathers in the prophets, at the end of these days has spoken to *us*". He is not assuming that he had any special official place, but having a message involving an exhortation, he delivered it on the ground of mutuality.

In writing his apostolic letters, Paul usually associated with himself a brother, and this is especially so in corrective letters. You will recall that in writing his first epistle to the Corinthians he associated with himself "Sosthenes the brother", and in the second letter, "the brother Timotheus"; that is, combined with his official position as an apostle, there was the brotherly representative. Those who have to do with military matters know how at the tribunals a military representative is there, representing the claim of the military authorities, and while, of course, this is very different from what a brother suggests, I name it as illustrating the idea of association in acting. Although Paul was a brother, he was also an apostle, and as an apostle he represented the authority of Christ; the authority of Christ was vested in him, as it had been in the twelve.

It is a point of great interest in the opening of the Acts to see how Peter on the day of Pentecost stood up in his official capacity as an apostle not associated with the hundred and twenty; that is, with the brethren as such, but with the eleven; "But, Peter standing up with the eleven", (Acts 2: 14). They were the ones who had been commissioned to announce the glad tidings, and it is said of those who believed through Peter's testimony, that "they continued stedfastly in *the apostles' doctrine and fellowship*"(verse 42); they were brought into a new system which superseded that established by Moses. Instead of Moses' seat, it was Christ's seat, represented in the apostles; that was how matters stood at the beginning. When we come to Paul, we find that he is careful to associate with his authority the brotherly spirit. There was one linked with him in writing the letter to the Corinthians

who had the heart of a brother; that would tone the letter, not that any modification was necessary, for Paul had the heart of a brother, but he would by this means assure the brethren to whom he was writing that what he wrote was not out of keeping with the spirit of a brother; so we read, "Paul, called apostle of Jesus Christ, by God's will, and Sosthenes the brother", (1 Corinthians 1: 1).

You will find this principle of associating others with him common in the different epistles of Paul, but especially in the corrective ones, and it is worthy of special note that when he wrote to the Galatians he mentions not only one brother, but "*all* the brethren with me", (Galatians 1: 2) It was not only the affections of the brethren, but their solemn judgment as to an error that was about to rob the people of God of their liberties. It is a serious thing when all the brethren, or the brethren generally, are of one mind about a matter. That which belongs to Christ, His rights, and the liberty of the saints were threatened and therefore the apostle associates with him in his letter to the Galatians "all the brethren". "Paul, apostle..... and all the brethren with me". I call attention to this, dear brethren, so that we may see how the spirit of the brother is to pervade everything in Christianity, from authority down to the relations in which we stand one toward another.

When we come to the epistle to the Hebrews, it is not the authority of the writer that is in view, but the mutuality that should mark the people of God. When I speak of mutuality, I speak of what we have in common in the way of possession. The early Christians began, according to Acts 2, with holding *everything* in common; "all things" were in common. The principle was so pronounced amongst them that even their material possessions were held in common. Paul distinguishes in that regard in 1 Timothy and elsewhere. In writing this epistle, the writer speaks of the *spiritual* things which Christians have in common, and they are very much greater, I need not remark, than material things, for they are enduring, and they become a binding element amongst the people of God. I suggest for your consideration expressions which recur frequently in this epistle, "*we* have" and "let *us*". We have things in common. It is not that he says, "do you", but "let us", and that leads on to what I may call in the language of Scripture, the "brotherly covenant".

I do not know whether you have noticed the expression, but it occurs in the scripture I have just read from Amos, "Tyre..... remembered not the brotherly covenant". The principle of covenant is very pronounced in the epistle to the Hebrews, and I think that this principle helps greatly in the formation of mutual relations and bonds; indeed, in this as in all else, we have to learn from God. According to Thessalonians, it is God who teaches us to love one

another, ye "yourselves are taught of God to love one another", (1 Thessalonians 4: 9) and so I believe that the brotherly covenant must be the outcome of what God is to us in Christ.

In this epistle you will find the thought of covenant alluded to in different connections. It is said of Jesus that He became Surety of a better covenant; that is, a better one than the first, and it is established on better promises. Let us not shelve these promises for a later day. They are for us in the principle of them, and so also is the "better covenant", (Hebrews 9: 6) of which Jesus is Surety. Primarily it is consummated as regards the house of Israel and as regards the house of Judah, but Jesus is the Surety of it, and, moreover, it is later said, *we* have come to Jesus the Mediator of it, we have come to that Man; and in the last chapter of this epistle we read that the God of peace "brought again from among the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep in the power of the blood of the eternal covenant". (Hebrews 13: 20) Note *eternal* covenant; that is to say, one which is never to be broken, for it is not dependent on us, it is effectuated through the blood of Jesus; it is dependent on God, for Jesus is brought again from the dead in the power of the blood of it, and He is the great Shepherd of the sheep. What a Shepherd for the sheep to be under the care of! We have to take account of the Lord in these various connections.

We have to know Jesus in every connection, and what a study for our hearts to contemplate Him in these varied ways. He is Surety of a better covenant, He is Mediator of a new covenant, He is the One who has made the covenant effective, and then He is the great Shepherd of the sheep whose blood sealed the covenant! How important to know Him too as the One who has come out of the grave in the power of the everlasting covenant! The covenant is a question of the love of God all through, what His love is to this people and what it provides. How every shepherd, as knowing the great Shepherd of the sheep would be concerned that the saints should not miss anything of that love! It is all to be brought to the sheep; they are to be nurtured in it. As Israel in the future will be brought up under the "apple tree", that is, under Christ as the. Mediator of the new covenant, so we now as Christians are brought up under the nurture of Christ, nourished in the love of God. We have to learn Christ in these relations, and as learning Him we come to apprehend the idea of covenant, and in this way we learn to maintain the brotherly covenant.

Now the assembly began with that, but all were not true to it. Tyrus is the figure of such; whatever the covenant relations may have been, Tyrus disregarded them, "and remembered not the brotherly covenant": His

punishment on that account is, that "I will send a fire on the wall of Tyre". Am I aware of the fact that I am in relation to my brethren in a holy covenant? It is from God that I learn what the thing is. At what cost, beloved brethren, has God brought in the thought and made it effective for me in the Mediator! Think of what the life, of Jesus here upon earth was to God! He who grew up, as it is said, as a tender plant, He who was ever green for God, whom He regarded as His "only One", His Elect, in whom His soul delighted! It was that One whom God gave up. The life was in the blood, but what a life was the life of Jesus! God gave that up in order to make His thoughts effective for you and for me, and now, am I not to be according to that? If that precious life was surrendered by God, and that precious One brought up from the dead, in the power of the blood of the eternal covenant, as the great Shepherd of the sheep, what effect has that on me? What about my life? My life after the flesh is of no value surely; it is forfeited by sin. God's word to Adam was "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return". (Genesis 4: 19)

But then I am a Christian and a Christian is born of God; he is born of water and the Spirit, and made to live too in the power of the Spirit in the life of Christ; viewed thus he is not dust; there is in him something for God, something that abides. What am I to do now with that life? Paul tells us: "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". (Romans 12: 1) "The body is dead on account of sin, but the Spirit life on account of righteousness". (Romans 8: 10) The body *in itself* is dust, but it is of great value now in that it is animated by the Spirit of God. See what a Christian is for God, what he is now as emancipated from sin, living in the Spirit; the Spirit being life! There is that which is to be for God. So the body is presented, not a dead sacrifice, but a living sacrifice. That is all the fruit and effect of what I see in God, made good to me in the death of Jesus, who was brought again from the dead in the power of the blood of the everlasting covenant. My life is to be thus devoted to God.

It is in that way I enter on the ground of the brotherly covenant. I have love in my heart. God has placed His love there, and what for? That we should be like Him; as David said, when established in his kingdom, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" (2 Samuel 9: 1) It was a brotherly covenant, for Jonathan had made a covenant with David, "he loved him as he loved his own soul", (1 Samuel 18: 3) and David in his lamentation over the death of Jonathan said: "thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women", (2 Samuel 1: 26) and now he would show kindness to the house of Saul for Jonathan's sake. So with the sense of the love of God in my heart I look at the brethren, and I act to show

the kindness of God, and the love of God for Christ's sake. That was what Christians were at the beginning, but, alas! as with Tyrus, the covenant has been broken; there have been those who have been untrue to the bond in which the Lord has set us. "For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not revoke its sentence", Jehovah said; the punishment is irrevocable. As the Lord says to Thyatira, "I gave her time that she should repent, and she will not repent". (Revelation 2: 21) That is God's way; there has been the transgression; the brotherly covenant has been broken; and then the punishment is fixed. I only cite the case of Tyre as an instance.

The Lord has His eye on everything that is going on down here in the sphere in which His name is publicly owned; He walks "in the midst of the seven lamps". (Revelation 1: 12) When He comes to Philadelphia He finds there the brotherly spirit. I have no doubt that the very name suggests it, and in it He has His place. I make bold to say that the Corner stone is in Philadelphia, for everything is for Christ; it is what is after Christ. He said, "thou hast kept *my* word"; and "thou hast kept the word of *my* patience". The promises to the overcomer are connected with what belongs to Christ, "the temple of *my* God..... the name of *my* God..... the name of the city of *my* God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from *my* God, and *my* new name". Such is what He offers to those who are marked by brotherly love.

Well now, in reading the passage in Deuteronomy, I wanted to show how God has respect to the rights of brethren. I have no doubt in my own mind that mount Seir refers to the place of the brethren. You will remember that it is said in this book that "there are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea". (Deuteronomy 1: 2) I believe it is true spiritually, that the way into privilege is via the brethren; in that sense Colossians precedes Ephesians, for finding the Christian circle leads on experimentally to the heavenly place. The other way is a long way round and involves much exercise, and that may be necessary, but the divinely short way is via mount Seir.

I do not refer to the passage for that reason, but, as I said, to call attention to the fact that God has respect to the rights of the brethren. You may say to me, I did not know we had any rights. If I *claim* any I am in a false position, but *I* must recognise that *you* have rights, and so the word here is "Command the people, saying, Ye are to pass through the border of your brethren the children of Esau, who dwell in Seir ... meddle not with them". I have, therefore, to respect the brethren: they have rights: if I regard them according to God, there are no people who have such rights as the brethren. In the first epistle to the Corinthians "all things" are said to be ours, and amongst them

the servants, the ministers, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas. Must I meddle? must I interfere? In Christendom the thing is reversed; you hear of certain men speaking of *their* flocks, whereas the truth is that the minister belongs to the congregation. If the Lord has graciously supplied a means of help for His people at the present time, let us not meddle, yea; rather let us see to it that the saints get all there is for them; they need it.

Then it goes on to say, "I will not give you of their land". You may say, It refers to Esau; it does, but he is regarded here as representing the brethren, and there must be no interference; their land is given to them according to the counsel of God, and we must not take it away from them. You may say, There is very little in this brother or in that one; but remember this, the Lord is able to make him stand, and the ministry he has received from the Lord he is responsible for, and the Lord will hold him to account for it, and that ministry is the property of the brethren. Then the reason given why God will not give them of their land is "Because I have given mount Seir unto Esau as a possession", and further it adds, "Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink". I do not pursue the passage. I bring it forward in order that we may see that the brethren have divinely given rights, rights granted to them in the sovereignty of love, and no one must meddle with these. Let the Lord have a free hand in His own heritage. Paul could say, "I have planted; Apollos watered; but God has given the increase". (1 Corinthians 3: 6)

And now, dear brethren, I have said to you what I had in my mind, and in conclusion I come back to that one verse, "Let brotherly love *continue*". (Hebrews 13: 1) I believe that that one feature is to mark the last days. There was a wonderful beginning for Christianity, and I believe, morally, there is going to be a wonderful ending, and one of the best evidences of it is that the bride says "Come". The Spirit takes the lead in this, but the bride is with Him. It does not say, The Spirit and the bride *shall* say, Come, nor is it *let* them say, Come, but "the Spirit and the bride *say*, Come". (Revelation 22: 17) It is characteristic. It marked the assembly at the very beginning, and the passage indicates clearly that it will mark her at the end. I believe, that as the conditions in the world become more marked by the features of Antichrist, the saints, as they are exercised to maintain separation from all that bears that character, will be led on more and more in unison with the Spirit to say, "Come, Lord Jesus".

I commend to you the brotherly covenant, the importance of being bound up in the mutual bonds of divine love, so as to be fortified against the covenants of the world; it is in this way that brotherly love is seen to work out, and we

are exhorted to let it continue, and I am encouraged to believe it will. Scripture says "he that has endured to the end" (Matthew 10: 22); it is not how one begins, it is how one finishes. If I have begun my Christian career in the enjoyment of the fellowship and the affections of the saints, let me keep there; the apostle says to the Thessalonians, "The Lord make you to increase, and abound in love one toward another", (1 Thessalonians 3: 12) and this verse says, "Let brotherly love continue", let it abide. May God grant that in His grace it may be so with each one of us, and to this end bless His word.

Deuteronomy 3

- (Deuteronomy 2)
  DEUTERONOMY 2 AND 3 (CAC 5)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 3 (JND 36)
- NOTES OF READINGS ON DEUTERONOMY (2) (JT 7)

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 3 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 3

— 20. *b'e-ver*; clearly "beyond"; see also verse 25 and chapter 4: 46, 47, 49; also chapter 11: 30.

NOTES OF READINGS ON DEUTERONOMY (2) (JT 7)

Deuteronomy 3

JT It may perhaps help to call attention again to the distinction that is to be made between the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, and this book of Deuteronomy, namely, that in Deuteronomy it is more what Moses' personal exercises were, and what he said to the people; whereas in the previous books it is what the *Lord* said to the people *through* Moses. That is, it is a question of God's authority in the previous three books, in the main; so you will find constantly in those three books "The Lord commanded Moses"; "The Lord spake unto Moses saying"; and so on. There was no room for Moses' exercises; it is a question of God's authority over our souls. That is largely what the kingdom implies.

TMG The lordship of Christ.

JT Yes; the authority of God exercised in Christ, leading to the subjection of our wills to God. When you come to Deuteronomy it is chiefly the exercises of Moses personally, and what he said to them. In the end of the book of Numbers it is said: "These are the commandments and the judgments which the Lord commanded, by the hand of Moses, unto the children of Israel, in the plains of Moab, by Jordan near Jericho" Numbers 36:13. In Deuteronomy 1:1 it is: "These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan, in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red Sea"; and it goes on to say in this chapter that Moses began to "unfold this law" Deuteronomy 1:5. *Moses* began to unfold it. Consequently Deuteronomy answers more to the headship of Christ; and the book, in the body of it, is engaged with moralising on the previous history of the people. Moses reviewed their whole history; he shows what God had been to them, and what they had been.

So a person, in having to do with Christ personally, is thrown back on his whole history as a believer, and is reminded of what God has been to him, and then what he himself has been. So that on the one hand the soul is encouraged in the knowledge of God, and humbled in the knowledge of itself; and then the communications of Christ to us, and the interest He evinces in us, attach us to Him, hence the desire to accompany Him into the land. We are going into it according to what He is. Deuteronomy is very little studied, but no one can fail to be struck with the character of it; it is peculiar; and undoubtedly it is intended to qualify us for the land, for heavenly privilege. We do not get the military side in it, as in the book of Joshua. Joshua is the military book in the main, and hence Joshua is a military leader. In Deuteronomy Moses has compassion for the people, and shows his personal

interest in the land, as we see in this chapter; he would "go in and see the good land" that is beyond Jordan, "that goodly mountain, and Lebanon" Deuteronomy 3:25. So he begins to unfold the law in Deuteronomy 1:5. "On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law". He beings with this that they are to go into Canaan; that is the great thought in the book. The unfolding of the law in Exodus is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might". But the unfolding of the law in Deuteronomy begins with Canaan; it is a question of going in there.

TMG What would it answer to in the New Testament?

JT Well, it is seen in Colossians and Ephesians. Headship is specially emphasised in Colossians; and then the extent of the territory in Ephesians; because that is outlined here.

WH That is why you add Ephesians, because the territory is brought in?

JT Yes; Ephesians 3 is the territory. There can be no question that headship is very little known.

TMG Would you say that it is the affection side in Deuteronomy?

JT Moses' love for the people is a marked feature in the book.

JM When you say headship is very little known, is it because we are not sufficiently subdued?

JT I think it is. As we were saying last night, there is a great deal of lawlessness within the bounds of the law; that is, your will may be active, while you are clever enough to escape the penalty by keeping within the bounds of the law as to your conduct; but in spirit you may be really lawless. This state of things exists to a great extent; you say 'I will do this', or 'I will do that', without considering whether it compromises the saints, or causes sorrow to the saints, or to Christ. You may be carrying out your own will, and yet not apparently doing anything out of the way.

TMG That is to say, it is yourself you are thinking of, instead of thinking of what is involved in headship. Christ is the Head. It is a collective idea.

JM So if that state is existing among us one can readily see that we do not get the gain of the Head. You would say the Corinthians had not the gain of the Head?

JT I think not; I think headship comes in where the Spirit is formally recognised. We were pointing out, that this law is unfolded when they were in Moab, In Numbers the two and a half tribes chose to dwell there, and that

was falling short of the purpose of God. In Deuteronomy it is divinely given territory. So Moses tells them formally that he gave it to these tribes; hence the position is that which Romans 8 points out for us; it is the territory where the will of the flesh is refused, the Holy Spirit being recognised. You cannot step into Canaan without it; Jordan is the barrier objectively; without the Spirit you cannot go into Canaan, for it is a question of power. In the book of Numbers, from chapter 21 onward, where they found the springing well, this territory is outlined; I mean the Spirit is formally recognised. "Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it". Numbers 21:17. It is in that state of soul we are prepared for headship. So the plains of Moab are divine territory; territory to which God is entitled, and which He uses to lead us on further.

EM "As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God". Romans 8:14.

Ques Why does Moses in chapter 1 say, "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount"? Deuteronomy 1:6. It was where the law was given.

JT Well, mount Horeb stands for the covenant. It is not Sinai here; it is Horeb; the place of covenant relations. God entered into covenant with the people there, and really the Supper stands in that relation to us, because the cup is the new covenant, but then it was not the place to which they were called; they were to serve God there, but it the mountain of God's inheritance. It is a wonderful mount, the mountain of the covenant, but it is not the place of God's inheritance. Moses says, "I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon". Deuteronomy 3:25. Exodus 15 speaks of the mountain of God's inheritance. That is the mountain we are to dwell in. So they had dwelt long enough where they were; it was essential that they should dwell a period there.

Rem So that knowing headship means real movement in the soul.

JT It is. At the Supper you touch it; but it leads you on. The great object for us is heaven: "Thou shalt bring them *in*, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance". Exodus 15:17.

JM And is the Supper in order that Christ might take His place, in our affections, as Head?

JT Yes, I think so and it is the Lord's initiative. He goes in first, and prepares the place, and then comes back and takes us in to it, John 14: 2. In the meanwhile He comes to us spiritually.

JM So that the Supper is to give Him His place in our affections.

JT That is what it does.

TMG And we come in now in the power of the Spirit.

JT Under His leadership. It is well to have before us mount Horeb, however blessed is the mountain of God's inheritance.

JM Would you say that Horeb is the link with it?

JT Well, it is the place of the covenant. You see you go in married, as we may say. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" Song of Songs 8: 5. That is an allusion to Moses taking the people out of the wilderness towards Canaan. Christ is the "Beloved". Nothing can be more interesting than to see how God proposes the covenant in Exodus 19. He produces it in this way, that He commends Himself; and He commends Himself by recounting certain evidences of His care and love for the people. He says, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself". Exodus 19:4. Now that is God's proposal; and He sends that word to them through Moses. He says as it were, 'I want you to consider whether it is worth your while to enter into covenant with Me; I want you to consider the past, and what I have done for you, what I have been to you. Is it worth your while?' He does not speak directly to them; He speaks through Moses to them; and then they send Moses back to God; they do not speak to God, but they send the messenger back to God, saying as it were, 'We accept the proposal; we will keep the covenant'. "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do". Exodus 19:8. Now, that was the formal contract which was made there; and prophetically it is alluded to later as a marriage bond, where God is a husband to the people. He says, "I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant", Ezekiel 16: 60.

RL The first mention we have of Horeb is in Exodus 3, where the Angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush; and He proclaimed His name there. What is the thought in it? Horeb is also called the mount of God.

JT And there they were to serve Him. God says, "ye shall serve God upon this mountain" Exodus 3:12. That is where divine service is established.

RL The preservation of the people is indicated; but, as you say, they were not to remain there.

Rem The covenant conveys the love of God.

JT I do not know anything more wonderful in a way than that God should commend His love to us; not only manifest it, but *commend* it.

JMcF Is entering into the covenant responding to divine love?

JT I think so. God is showing His love. He not only commends it, but He sheds it abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us; and then we answer to it. So it is not now as in Israel; you do not undertake to do the will of God without the means to do it; by the Spirit you do it; so that the righteous requirements bf the law are fulfilled in us. That is our side, answering to the covenant.

Now, I was remarking that in these chapters you find that the Spirit moralises on the occurrences in the wilderness; whether it be God's dealings with them, or their conduct. In chapter 2 He calls attention to what they have been; during all the forty years they had lacked nothing; and then when you come to this chapter I think He moralises on the event of the overthrow of Og, which typically was consequent on the reception of the Spirit.

JM What would Og answer to?

JT Well, he was a very big man. That is what we all are after the flesh in our own account. Self is prominent. It was a great day in the history of the apostle when the overthrow of that took place in him.

T.M.C. Is that Romans 8?

JT Yes.

JM What is your thought as to the moralising on this?

JT I mean that the Spirit would base certain teaching on it for the instruction and blessing of our souls.

RL It says they took all his cities at that time and they utterly destroyed them. That would be complete deliverance.

JT Quite so: the complete overthrow of that huge man; and this is the only passage where we get the dimensions and the description of his bed. He represents a very great moral hindrance to the soul's progress. Do you not think so?

TMG I think that most of us know it experimentally.

RL Not only did they overthrow, but they possessed the land, Deuteronomy 3:12.

JT We must not allow a void; the ground occupied by the flesh must be occupied by the Spirit.

JM What do you mean by that?

JT There is to be no vacancy in the heart; no void crevices; all of it is to be occupied by the Spirit of Christ. Mark this is not the sphere of the purpose of

God; this refers to what goes on within your soul.

TMG It is preparatory.

JT And the occupation of the territory is most essential; no good general will leave any city unoccupied or unguarded, because if he does he will suffer later. You are responsible for your own territory. It is a question of the operation of the Spirit in your soul.

JM It is a question of the Spirit taking the place of the flesh?

JT Yes and you hold the territory for Christ now; instead of having your own ambition, and conceptions, all that space is to be occupied for Christ.

WH In that way appreciation of the land would come in?

JT Yes. The Spirit displaces the will of the flesh.

TMG Would it answer to Romans 8: 9,10?

JT The territory is occupied in that way.

JMcF Would it go as far as Colossians; "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him"? Colossians 2:9,10.

JT That is further on. The Colossians were in danger of listening to men. Man's mind is apt to be interesting, and I must not listen to it; though it is able to say some very fine things. Now I think the apostle meets that danger by saying that we do not need anything outside Christ. "Ye are complete in him", he says, "who is the head of all principality and power". Colossians 2:10.

JM It is remarkable how much is said in Romans 8 of the Spirit.

JT Very remarkable; it is not only the plains of Moab, it is mount Nebo; it is a question of spiritual eminence. That is, Moses reaches typically the highest point of Romans 8; he did not get as far as Colossians, he did not reach to Ephesians, because that is all beyond Jordan. In this chapter Moses formally resigns in favour of Joshua; he can bring the people up to the point where the Spirit is recognised; and he expresses all the activities of the Head; but then he fails in the type, he does not go over Jordan.

TMG It is a point from which you can view all the land.

JT Romans 8 and fellowship go together. The Lord says to Abraham: "Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever", Genesis 13:14,15. Well, where was he then morally? He was in the spot where Lot separated from him. There was a separation because of the truth that involves fellowship. The Lord says:

"Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art". Genesis 13:14. Now there is a point of spiritual eminence in your soul that corresponds with Romans 8. So you lift up your eyes from that eminence, and the Lord shows you the land.

JMcF That is what Pisgah really means: the hill, or eminence.

JT If we are not in fellowship, we never can look into heaven; you do not see things rightly. Now, fellowship is connected with mount Horeb, because the covenant is attached to it; it is the bond that you are in; the contract that you have made. But then the other side is the Spirit. The Lord would lead you into the spiritual side.

JM And the bond is the love of God.

JT Moses, you may say, resigns here in favour of Joshua; he says, "I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto these two kings: so shall the Lord do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest. Ye shall not fear them: for the Lord your God he shall fight for you". Deuteronomy 3:21,22. It is Joshua now. Then Moses goes on to speak to the people; he says as it were: 'I would like to have gone in, but the Lord would not let me go in for your sakes'. That is Deuteronomy. It would be quite out of keeping with the Law that the law-giver should bring them into Canaan, but he could speak to them *about* Canaan. You like to hear a preacher speak about heaven. The book of Numbers, as we were saying last night, gives us the boundaries; the book of Deuteronomy gives us the full extent of the land. The boundaries are in Colossians; "Set your mind on things above, *not* on the things that are on the earth" Colossians 3:2; the "not" is like a boundary. Colossians shows you the boundary between heaven and earth; and you are, in the spirit of your mind, to be inside that boundary; not outside of it. Now when you come to Ephesians, it is not only that your mind is there, but *you are* there.

TMG Seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

JT Moses' mind was in the land, but he could not go in himself because of circumstances. He was a good Colossian!

JMcG Do you connect the thought of the Head with Joshua?

JT In a way; only when you come to Joshua it is more a *military* idea. One feels one's ignorance about these things; but it is well to take things up as Scripture presents them. Joshua is introduced as a military leader; but it is military in this sense, it is the way you are led subjectively. Joshua leads you directly against the enemy. Joshua is a type of Christ, but Christ known

spiritually in the soul. You will remember that in Exodus 17 he led against Amalek. The conflict was dependent upon Moses' hands being uplifted. It is intercession rather than authority that is needed in such conflict. In Exodus 33 Joshua is found in the tabernacle That is Christ in some spiritual way known to our souls.

JMcF At the end of this book it says that Moses laid his hands on Joshua. What is the force of that?

JT Well, the laying on of hands is committal; I think he would do that in an apostolic way, as the apostle Paul did on Timothy.

JMcF I thought it was Moses approving of him in that way as a suitable leader; he was Moses' servant, and therefore was thoroughly instructed and ready to take the lead, so to speak.

JT I love to think of Moses as a heavenly minded man. It is beautifully seen here; "I pray thee let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon". Deuteronomy 3:25. How he appreciated the land, although he had not really seen it.

Ques When the Lord said to Moses: "Speak no more unto me of this matter", Deuteronomy 3:26, would that mean that the Lord would do better for him?

JT I think the Lord was indicating, that, as a type, he could not go in; speaking unadvisedly with his lips disqualified him. He called the saints rebels; a very serious thing to do.

RL In verse 28 Joshua was to be charged, and encouraged, and strengthened. Moses must have had the mind of the Lord, so he could put his hands upon the one whom the Lord had marked out to lead His people.

JT All this is to show the great place the people had in his mind; if he could not take them in he saw to it that another would.

PL The Lord encouraged the people in that way. He pointed out the one who would bring them in.

Rem I suppose on the mount of transfiguration Moses had his desire answered.

JT I do wish we had heavenly minds, that we might see the boundaries, and keep inside them. Although you may be in the wilderness, your mind may be within the boundaries, Moses' mind was within the boundaries.

TMG That is, that we should be good Colossians.

JT When you come into the assembly, it is not only your mind, but you have come into the sphere; it is all God's land. I fear there is a great deal of national feeling among God's people, and that is all outside the boundaries of Canaan.

Deuteronomy 4

- DEUTERONOMY 4 (CAC 5)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 4 (JND 36)

DEUTERONOMY 4 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 4

We are seeking, by the Lord's help, to read this book as inspired of God, and as therefore having a profitable spiritual application to ourselves. The covenant declared to Israel, and written on two tables of stone, inaugurated a dispensation, and the Lord Jesus, as the true Moses, would recall to us that there has been in our case, as in theirs, divine speaking and divine writing. The covenant of which Christ would remind us is not the literal and legal covenant "gendering to bondage", but that which corresponds with it as inaugurating *our* dispensation. We have part in the new covenant which is in the value of the blood of Christ (Luke 22: 20), and the spirit of the new covenant has been ministered to us by the apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 3: 6). But in addition to this the whole wealth of God's glad tidings concerning His Son has been made available for us. Jehovah's covenant declared in Horeb covered all that He proposed to do for Israel, and the conditions that would be requisite on their side if they were to be suitable for what He proposed. So that it may be regarded as suggesting typically the whole scope of what has resulted from the declaration of God by "the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18). Redemption has now been accomplished, and Christ has been glorified in heaven, and the Spirit given to those who believe. We must now take all the Divine speaking and acting into account if we wish to answer to the Divine pleasure.

The "statutes and ordinances" (verse 5) all stand in immediate connection with the covenant; they comprise the things which are suitable to the dispensation, and they are laid down in precise terms, to which nothing is to be added, and from which nothing is to be taken away (verse 2). It is only those who love God who can truly take up His "statutes and ordinances"; all must move on the principle of "If ye love me keep my commandments" (John 14: 15).

This chapter calls our attention to the inauguration of the dispensation by the declaration of God's covenant, and it is our privilege to learn under the instruction of Christ what answers to this in our case, "The ends of the ages are come" upon us (1 Corinthians 10: 11). However God moved in ages past He always had ends in view, and those ends have come upon His saints in the present day. What was outwardly a dispensation of law had Christ and new covenant conditions as its blessed end (2 Corinthians 3: 13).

But before passing on to this Moses calls attention to "What Jehovah did because of Baal-Peor". (See Numbers 25) This snare came in after the destruction of Sihon and Og. It is the snare of worldly associations leading to

what is idolatrous. The influence of natural relationships and friendships is often more deadly than the self-exaltation or self indulgence of the flesh. The wiles and beguilings of the Midianites are often more fatal than the opposition of Sihon or Og. "The doctrine of Balaam" (Revelation 2: 14) is the teaching that it is quite permissible to cultivate worldly associations. "The error of Balaam" was that he was governed by thoughts of worldly advantage. There is no life on that line — "All the men that followed Baal-Peor, Jehovah thy God hath destroyed them from among you; but ye that did cleave to Jehovah your God are alive every one of you this day" (verses 3 and 4). How many have missed the land that way! The "statutes and ordinances" never put us on that line; they help us on the line of cleaving to Jehovah; they preserve us from giving the creature a place which rightly belongs to God.

Wisdom and understanding lie in keeping and doing the divine "statutes and ordinances". They make God's people "a wise and understanding people"; they would fill us "with the full knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Colossians 1: 9); they would direct us so that we should "walk carefully, not as unwise but as wise" (Ephesians 5: 15). The "statutes and ordinances" shew us what is suitable to the dispensation in which we live, and it is great favour from God to know this. If we love Him it will be a matter of deep interest to us to know it. The Old Testament is an immense help to us in detail; Christians suffer great loss if they regard it only as the history of a past dispensation, they really forget that "Every scripture is divinely inspired, and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, fully fitted to every good work" (2 Timothy 3: 16, 17). Then, what could be more precious and encouraging than to know that God is near to us, and available "in everything we call upon him for"? Christ would bring this before us as a divine certainty. I often have to remind myself that I have God, and I see that others need to be reminded of it also!

There is nothing in the world to compare with the "righteous statutes and ordinances" which God has given to His people (verse 8). The pleasure of divine love concerning us is truly wonderful; but in order to take it up rightly we must never forget how God has spoken to us. The motive and power of all obedience lies there. So that the Christ, as our Instructor, calls upon us to "take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things that thine eyes have seen ... the day that thou stoodest before Jehovah thy God in Horeb" (verses 9, 10). There is nothing more important than that we should keep in mind and heart the true character of God's speaking to us, and of His covenant. The Christ calls our attention to it afresh every first day of the week as we bless the cup of which He says, "This cup is the new covenant in

my blood" (1 Corinthians 11: 25). He reminds us, speaking typically, of how we have stood before God in Horeb. There has been something in the spiritual history of our souls which answers to that experience.

"And the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven ... And Jehovah spoke to you from the midst of the fire ... and he declared to you his covenant" (verses 11 - 13). Moses dwells on this as a mark of peculiar divine favour such as had never been shewn to man before. "For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man on the earth, and from one end of the heavens to the other end of the heavens, whether there hath been anything as this great thing is, or if anything hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking from the midst, of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?" (verses 32, 33). "From the heavens he made thee hear his voice, that he might instruct thee; and on the earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words from the midst of the fire. And *because he loved thy fathers*, and chose their seed after them, he brought thee out with his countenance, with his great power, out of Egypt" etc. (verses 36 - 40). It was, even literally, as presented here, a speaking of favour and love to a people chosen of God and redeemed by Him.

The remarkable expression, "burned with fire to the heart of heaven" — an expression not found in Exodus — has, I do not doubt, a typical reference to the love of God. It speaks of the unquenchable flame of that holy love. What else could reach to "the heart of heaven"? The fire intimates, indeed, the consuming of all that is unsuitable to God; it is a sin consuming flame; but from the midst of it God speaks in love to His chosen people.

The "darkness, clouds, and obscurity" suggest what was necessitated by the state of the natural and fallen man. Man in the flesh could never apprehend the blessedness of the love of God. Hence the new birth is a divine necessity (John 3: 3). Apart from it, all will be cloudy, dark, and obscure in the heart of man, however blessedly God may speak in love. The natural man can neither see nor hear in any spiritual sense (John 3: 3, 32); the sentence of death is upon him; he must go out in judgment. So that when the true speaking from "the heart of heaven" is heard in John 3 it tells us of the lifting up of the Son of Man. The "darkness, clouds and obscurity" were there in all their unmitigated dreadfulness when He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But it was by the action of the love of God that He was there. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him may not perish, but have life eternal". That is a fire that burns "to the heart of heaven" — the unquenchable flame of divine love. And it is from the midst of that fire that God has declared Himself. How

wondrous that God should reveal Himself from heaven, by sending His own Son to bear the judgment of sin, consuming all that was abhorrent to Him, but in that very time and place making Himself known in love! We have to do now with a love which reaches the very "heart of heaven". God will burn up all that is unsuitable to Himself, but He will declare His love in the way of covenant, and secure thereby a people for Himself — "a people of inheritance, as it is this day" (verse 20).

Luke 15 makes known a love which meets the lost and the sinful, but which burns — I think we may say — to the heart of heaven. It tells us of "joy in heaven for one repenting sinner", of "joy before the angels of God"; it tells us of merrymaking and rejoicing which has its spring in the heart of the blessed God Himself. That is the character of the speaking now; the oracles are being uttered from heaven. Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant is now in "the heart of heaven", and all the love of God disclosed in His dying for sinful men is being uttered from the heaven of His glory. Sin has been unsparingly judged, but in the way of love to man, for God's "own Son" has borne the judgment, and is the eternal Witness of the love of God.

If we understood how God has spoken to us "from the midst of the fire" we should understand better the chastening of His love. We should understand that "our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12: 29) — a quotation from Deuteronomy 4: 24. He will not tolerate in His people whom He loves that which He has judged in His own Son. Hence His discipline comes in to consume what is of the flesh that we may be partakers of His holiness.

"Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, *lest thou forget*". The Christ would have us never to forget how God has spoken to us — we are never to forget our Horeb! God spoke to us in love through the death of His Son, and gave us His Spirit to pour out that love into our hearts. There is a blessed new covenant ministry of righteousness and the Spirit from Christ in heaven. Have we heard the speaking from heaven? Has it impressed our hearts with the character of the dispensation that has been inaugurated? The Lord would ever direct our hearts into the love of God; He would have us to drink into it afresh each time that we drink the cup of the Lord's supper.

I know nothing more important than that we should ever remember the manner of God's speaking to us, because it determines the full blessedness of our responsibility as His people. "And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to do, the ten words". The knowledge of God made known in love introduces an entirely new character and measure of creature responsibility. Our walk, our words, our spirits must now be worthy of Him whose love we know. "The ten words" indicate that the covenant is now the

measure of responsibility. It is not merely an authoritative voice requiring obedience in an arbitrary way. But the blessed God has come out in the revelation of Himself to bind us to Him as known in love, and He says, Now what you know Me to be is to govern you in everything; as My people you are to be worthy of Me. Nothing less than that is the true measure of the responsibility of God's people. "The ten words" and the covenant are identical. See Matthew 5: 44 - 48; Matthew 18: 32, 33; Ephesians 4: 32 - 5: 1; 1 Thessalonians 2: 12; 1 Peter 2: 9; 1 John 4: 11; 3 John 6; etc.

The words of the covenant were not only spoken but they were written. Divine speaking and divine writing are characteristic of the dispensation. God has spoken in the Person of the Son; His covenant has been declared. That is objective; it is altogether outside of ourselves. But writing brings in what is subjective; it speaks of a divine working in men. If men have "a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36: 26) it must be given of God. Otherwise there will be no "fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3: 3) for Him to write upon. But having made the heart impressionable, He writes upon it the knowledge of Himself as made known in new covenant grace, and the writing is in the indelible power of the Spirit of the living God. See 2 Corinthians 3. Christ is not only the great Speaker, but He is also the great Writer. Our dispensation takes character from the speaking and writing of Christ. The saints are "manifested to be Christ's epistle ... written not with ink, but the Spirit of the living God; not on stone tables, but on fleshy tables of the heart".

There is no demand now upon man in the flesh. There is a speaking in love on God's part, and a divine working in men so that they appreciate what has been spoken. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit", and nothing else is really responsive to God.

It is of the utmost importance to keep in mind the character of the period in which we are living. There has never been anything like it before; it is, as Galatians 4: 4 says, "the fulness of the time". All our ways and behaviour are to be regulated in the light of that knowledge of God which is acquired in the mount of the covenant. The "statutes and ordinances" are all in keeping with the covenant. There is a great tendency to slip away from the things we have heard (Hebrews 2: 1). In the last book of the Old Testament God called upon His people to "Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, the statutes and ordinances" (Malachi 4: 4). And at the end of *our* dispensation God recalls to us the character of what He inaugurated at the beginning. We have *our* Horeb, and we are never to forget it. Christ would ever remind us that we are to walk together as brethren, and

to go in to possess the "good land", in the light of how God has spoken to us from heaven — a speaking of infinite grace and love.

The next section of the chapter reminds us that we are connected with a spiritual order of things. "Ye saw no form". "God is a Spirit", and our appreciation of Him, and our approaches to Him, must be spiritual in character. Natural thoughts of God may be degraded — as set forth in an image of a beast or even a creeping thing (verses 17, 18) — or they may be elevated — as set forth in the sun, moon, and stars (verse 19) — but they inevitably tend to obscure what has been revealed. God's people must beware of what is elevated as well as what is degraded. Some men can say most sublime and wonderful things of God; their thoughts seem so elevated as to have some correspondence with "the whole host of heaven"! But be not deceived! Bring everything to the test of the divine speaking in the Son — to the test of the death, the sin-bearing, the judgment-enduring of Christ on the cross!

It is with a view to this, perhaps, that Moses says again at this point what he had said twice before in other connections, "And Jehovah was angry with me on your account". It is a touching suggestion that everything that is spiritual and acceptable to God in relation to His worship and service, must have regard to the vicarious sufferings of Christ — must have those holy sufferings as its basis.

If we forget the covenant (verse 23) there is imminent danger of idolatry — something that is of the creature displacing God in the thoughts and affections of His people. We are to let that abide in us which we heard from the beginning, and then we shall abide in the Son and in the Father (1 John 2: 24). We shall then have no expectations from the flesh at all, either in ourselves or in others; our expectations will be from God and from what He works in His saints. If we make ourselves "a graven image" we shall find that it can do nothing for us. How many give time and attention to unnecessary things, only to find them burdensome like the idols of Isaiah 46! We may not make images of wood or stone, but it is not a needless word that John writes at the end of the epistle — "Children, keep yourselves from idols".

In verses 25 - 31 there is a prophetic announcement: the people would corrupt themselves and do evil, and would perish from off the land, and be taken up with things which have no vitality — "which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell". How this has been realised in the Christian profession! The true character of the dispensation has been forgotten, the divine speaking has been slipped away from, the spiritual nature of Christianity departed from. All kinds of things have been introduced that are human and natural, and the result has been that possession of the divinely given "land" has been lost.

But there is also here a prophetic intimation of repentance and recovery being granted in mercy. "And from thence ye shall seek Jehovah thy God, and thou shalt find him, if thou shalt seek him with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul. In thy tribulation, and when all these things shall come upon thee at the end of days, thou shalt return to Jehovah thy God, and shalt hearken to his voice, — for Jehovah thy God is a merciful God, — he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them" (verses 29 - 31). Restoration will be granted to Israel because God will not give up His thoughts in regard to them. See Jeremiah 31: 35 - 37; Jeremiah 32: 39, 40; etc. He will in sovereign mercy "at the end of days" cause them to seek Him, and to find Him, and to hearken to His voice. And what He will do for Israel He *is* doing now for His saints of the assembly.

1 Timothy gives us the character of the dispensation of God as inaugurated by Him at the beginning, but 2 Timothy gives us the character of things as rekindled in view of testimony in the "last days". This is when "all who are in Asia" — and the designation reminds us that it was the "assemblies which are in Asia" which were addressed by the Lord in Revelation 2 and 3 as representing *all* the assemblies — have turned away from Paul. God is now working on the line of His "promise of life, the life which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1: l), and on the line of His "own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time" (2 Timothy 1: 9), and from that point of view He contemplates a rekindling of things "at the end of days" This recovery — which is undoubtedly going on at the present moment — is the fruit of God's sovereign mercy. He does not forget the covenant, and He is bringing His people back to the "land" which had been forfeited through the allowance of things which had no place in the dispensation as inaugurated by Him.

2 Timothy points out clearly the line on which divine recovery takes place. God's calling and election are recognised as distinct from the mass of profession. It is a question now of the elect obtaining "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Timothy 2: 10). "The firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, The Lord knows those that are his; and, Let everyone who names the name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity" (2 Timothy 2: 19). The whole epistle should be most carefully and prayerfully considered by all who would participate in the divine and spiritual recovery which is going on. It is by pursuing the line laid down in 2 Timothy that the Philadelphian state can alone be reached, which really involves recovery to all that was in the mind of God from the outset. It involves restoration to the "land" of His love and purpose in Christ Jesus.

The covenant in all its blessedness is preserved and made plain in Christ Jesus; He is the Ark of the covenant. If we turn away from the man after the flesh and from all those things which he has introduced into the Christian profession, and come to Christ Jesus, the Man of divine purpose and pleasure, we shall come back to all that the dispensation started with. John's writings preserve the original and undecaying character of what is from the beginning. On the divine side there is unbroken continuity; there is no change in that which is in the Son of God, and there is no change morally in the saints viewed as begotten of God. What is of God does not change. If we have departed from it, there is a call to repent and return.

"Thou shalt find him, if thou shalt seek him with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul". But the whole movement of recovery is brought about from the divine side, as we may see in Jeremiah 32: 37 - 41. There we see how God acts with *His* whole heart and with *His* whole soul! There is a blessed harmony and correspondence between God's ways in restoring Israel in a coming day and His ways in recovering His people at the present time. It is wholly on the principle of sovereign mercy, and in the exercise of His own love. From the beginning to the end of His ways all is that we might know Him (Deuteronomy 4: 35) as acting in love. There has never been anything like His present speaking and acting. Think of how He has delivered us from the world, and of the greatness of His salvation in Christ! We do well to know and consider in our hearts "that Jehovah, he is God in the heavens above, and on the earth beneath, there is none else".

There is a deeply interesting parenthesis at this point. The course of instruction is arrested to let in the three verses 41 - 43 with regard to the three cities of refuge. There is no other incident introduced in a similar way throughout the book, so that it has evidently unique importance. It refers to the intensely solemn fact that, as foreknown of God, Israel would be the slayer of Christ. What complete forfeiture of title to live in the divine inheritance is implied in this! But what mercy that would take account of it as done "unawares"! It is, indeed, the full disclosure of how far man may go — nay, of how far he *has* gone. It intimates to Israel, and to us in principle, that we have incurred the guilt of slaying God's Anointed. How then can we live on divine territory? It can only be on the footing of mercy.

God has taken account of all that man is capable of doing. To be restored from forgetfulness and idolatry is great mercy, but what can be said of the deservings of those who slay the One who has been so truly a Neighbour, and who is the supreme object of God's love and delight? Such have forfeited all title to live, but in the prerogative of mercy God accounts the dark deed as

done "unawares", and He provides cities that the manslayer might flee and live. The manslayer is purely a vessel of mercy, and it is on this ground alone that he can "live" in the inheritance. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34). "And now, brethren, I know that ye did it in ignorance, as also your rulers" (Acts 3: 17). But even if mercy takes this account of it, it is a most dreadful thing that God's Anointed should be killed by those whom He came to bless. All the idolatry which stained the pages of Israel's history was less guilty than that. One can imagine with what horror the hearts of the convicted remnant were filled when they heard from Peter that "by the hand of lawless men" they had crucified and slain their Messiah. What grief and anguish, what true repentance, for what they had done "unawares"! But there was a city to flee to, and Peter opened the gate of that city when he said, "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. For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God may call" (Acts 2: 38, 39).

It is as true for ourselves as it will be true for Israel in a coming day that the inheritance can only be possessed on the ground of pure mercy. Our title to live is forfeited. Hence the epistle to the Romans, which answers to "this side of the Jordan", describes both the called ones from amongst the Jews, and those from amongst the nations, as "vessels of mercy". And the epistle to the Ephesians, which answers to the land over Jordan, speaks touchingly of God as "being rich in mercy". To "live" on that ground alone is humbling to the pride of man. It means the surrender of all claim. What did it avail to be the most distinguished descendant of Abraham if a man killed his neighbour unawares? He must henceforth live in the city of refuge, or fall under the hand of the avenger of blood.

The "three cities" would suggest full testimony to the ground on which alone the inheritance can be occupied. And this has a voice for us also in a day when all title to live in the inheritance has been forfeited by the departure and utter failure of the people of God. Any movement of recovery, and restoration to forfeited privileges and blessings, is purely a matter of God's sovereign mercy. We have already referred to 2 Timothy as indicating the conditions on which spiritual vitality can be maintained in the last days of departure and corruption. The principles there laid down are a city of refuge, made available for us in sovereign mercy, and as we flee to them we "live", though conscious that we are part of a profession that has forfeited everything by its unfaithfulness. But infinite mercy has restored to us the possibility of living in the divine inheritance. We can occupy it now, not merely as conferred

originally on the saints, but as being recovered to it in pure mercy through divine faithfulness after all being forfeited on our side.

This chapter is a very comprehensive one, as setting forth, typically, the glory of the dispensation as inaugurated by divine speaking and writing; and then the terrible departure which has come in through man's unfaithfulness; and, finally, restoration brought about in divine faithfulness, so that there are those who "live" in the inheritance on the ground of mercy alone. All this is as definitely spiritual instruction and light for us, under the teaching of Christ, as it will be for Israel when their heart turns to the Lord, and they learn that He is the Spirit, not only of the new covenant, but also of the old.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 4 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 4

— 34. How "war"? see Exodus 15.

Deuteronomy 5

- DEUTERONOMY 5 (CAC 5)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 5 (JND 36)

DEUTERONOMY 5 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 5

The knowledge of the covenant must ever be a primary consideration, for it is God who has made it, and Christ, is the Mediator of it, and we see typically in the chapter now before us how the Lord Jesus would recall our hearts to it. Indeed He loves to do so repeatedly, and especially each first day of the week as we receive the cup, of which He said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out, for you" (Luke 22: 20). It is most important that we should not forget the covenant, for it gives character to the dispensation; and to all our relations not only with God but with His people.

"Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb" (verse 2). It was not what man had done, or failed to do, but what Jehovah had done. "And this is the covenant *from me to them*, when I shall have taken away their sins" (Romans 11: 27). God is entitled to lay down the terms on which He may be known, and according to which He will go on with His people, and they may go on with Him and serve Him. He says, "I will *consummate* a new covenant" (Hebrews 8: 8); that is, He establishes all the conditions of the covenant in completeness and finality. His people have simply to receive it as declared to them by the Mediator, and to take it up in faithful affections through that divine teaching which His gracious work effects in them. It is not left to us to determine the conditions of the covenant, we have simply to fall in with what God has ordained, and those who love Him are delighted that it should be so.

The covenant now is consummated by God speaking in infinite grace, making Himself known to His people as merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and as never remembering their sins and their lawlessnesses any more. And along with this there is a divine working in His people which corresponds with what will be wrought in Israel when the new covenant is consummated with them. "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me all their days, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not draw back from them, to do them good; and I will put my fear in their heart, that they may not turn aside from me. And I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land with my whole heart and with my whole soul" (Jeremiah 32: 38 - 41). So that the covenant now lies in the knowledge of God in the grace of forgiveness, and also as working in His people "both the willing and the working according to his good pleasure" (Philippians 2: 13).

Attention is called in verse 3 to the fact that the covenant was not made "with our fathers ... but with us, even us, those who are here alive all of us this day". The "fathers" were the generation of unbelief who had been "strewed in the desert", representing the man after the flesh, but "those who are here alive" represent the generation who are able to go in and possess the land. They represent those who are born of God — a people able to take up the covenant and answer to it because of the way in which they know God. Such have been quickened by the Lord as the Spirit, and therefore are "alive" in relation to God. They have the Spirit of the Lord, and that brings in liberty and power.

A blessed feature of the covenant is that it is mediatorial, and this feature is emphasised in the chapter before us. "I stood between Jehovah and you at that time, to declare to you the word of Jehovah" (verse 5). "Come thou near, and hear all that Jehovah our God will say; and speak thou to us all that Jehovah our God will speak to thee" (verse 27). Jehovah was pleased with what the people said when they felt the need for a mediator. "And Jehovah heard the voice of your words, when ye spoke to me; and Jehovah said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people that have spoken to thee; they have well spoken all that they have spoken" (verse 28). It very definitely suggests the mediatorship of the Lord Jesus; God would have His people to feel the necessity for Christ as the Mediator. He would have them to know that He is God, and that they are men, and that they cannot meet Him "face to face" without a Mediator.

Every right intuition in man cries out for a Mediator. Every one who realises the greatness and majesty of God, as Job did, must feel, as he did, the need for a Mediator. See Job 9. For man is not only a creature, but he is a fallen and sinful creature, and hence it is right for man to be "afraid". If one has never known this feeling of holy fear he can never have realised his creature condition, or his moral state, in the presence of the greatness and majesty of God, nor will he be at all capable of realising the immensity of the grace in which God makes known His covenant through the Mediator. There must be the learning of what we are, and it is a great pleasure to God when we realise the absolute necessity for the Mediator. The holy fear which leads to this conviction is the moral basis in our souls of all right knowledge or appreciation of the covenant. It is from this point of view that the fear of the people at Horeb is presented in Deuteronomy 5. It is presented as a feeling that is morally right and pleasing to God — such a feeling as could only be found truly with persons born anew.

It is the One who could say, "Jehovah was angry with me on your account", who also says, "I stood between Jehovah and you". The Sin-bearer is the One who alone can be the Mediator. The glory of the Lord as Mediator rests on the basis of His having borne the judgment of sin on behalf of men. God is now speaking to men in a Man, making known all that He is in grace on the ground that sin has been judged in that Man. It is right that we should fear, having regard to what we are, and having regard to the holiness of God; but then those who thus fear God learn how Christ has taken up on their account what was due to the sinful creature, so that all that God is can now shine forth in perfect grace to men. A glorious Person who knew no sin has been made sin sacrificially on our account, and He is now the Mediator of the new covenant. He has maintained divine glory in the fullest way as the Sin-bearer, so that now God can speak out all that is in His heart man-ward through the Mediator. God is not now obstructed by the sin of man; He has dealt with that according to His own majesty and holiness, and now He speaks by One who has "made by himself the purification of sins" (Hebrews 1: 3). We know God through the Mediator as One merciful to our unrighteousnesses, and who never remembers our sins and our lawlessnesses any more. Christ has been, in infinite grace, in our place before God as the Sin-bearer, and now as the Mediator He is on God's part to us-ward, to make known to us all that is in the heart of God. All that God is in grace and love is told out in a Man; the glory of God is in the face of Jesus; the glory of the Christ is that He is the Image of God. But certain exercises are needed on our part to prepare us to appreciate the Mediator and what is spoken through Him, and this chapter views the people as having such exercises. They express their consciousness of the need of a mediator, and Jehovah approved of what they said. God would have us to realise the necessity for Christ; if we want to please God we must have hearts to appreciate Christ as the Mediator.

What we see here, typically, is a people alive in the presence of Christ, being instructed by Him in the covenant of God, and being reminded by Him that all that lies in that covenant came to them mediatorially through Him. All has in view their entrance into the land and the prolongation of their days therein. The land can only be possessed or enjoyed in a spirit of fidelity to the covenant, and there is the possibility with us, as there was with Israel, of being unfaithful to the covenant bond. To know God according to His covenant, and to be His people according to His covenant, raises the question of faithfulness. The marriage relationship is used repeatedly as a figure of the covenant bond, but it is a relationship of which the conditions have to be faithfully maintained. Those conditions are set out in the terms of the covenant, and in the spirit of them. For we have not to do with the letter

merely, but with the spirit. If we read the old covenant in the letter of it, we shall find it a ministry of death and condemnation. The veil will remain unremoved from our hearts; we shall not fix our eyes on "the end" which it had in view. But if we see that *Christ* is the Spirit of what Moses wrote, and that He quickens so that the spirit of the covenant may be livingly in the people of God, we shall get clear spiritual vision. The spirit of the old covenant is secured in the people of God by their coming under the effective ministry of the spirit of the new covenant.

Take the first word of the covenant! "I am Jehovah thy God who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me". Does not this appeal to us in a very touching way? It is our Saviour-God, whom we know as having delivered us from this present evil world, and from every form of legal bondage, who brings Himself before our hearts. At what a cost did He bring us out! The gift and death of His beloved Son, the mighty operations of His Spirit, the making manifest that He was "for us" — the Source for us of infinite and everlasting good! What a gracious word that He should say, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me"! He would not have anything to displace Him in our thoughts or hearts. He would always be to us the blessed God whom we have learned to know in delivering grace.

There is no command to love God in the "ten words", (though there is in verse 5 of the next chapter) but there is an intimation that He has "thousands" who do so. Such are undoubtedly begotten of God, and they come out in marked contrast to the seed of the serpent who "hate" Him. His children are to have no other thought of Him than what He has revealed of Himself in His beloved Son. Do we want any other God? Every one begotten of Him would say, No, I do not want to have another — I do not want to entertain any thought of God save what He has made known in His Son. But, alas! our souls may decline in their appreciation of the God whom they have known, and then the door is open for things to come in which practically displace Him in our affections. So long as we are here faithfulness is tested, and there is ever the danger of idolatry. But His children are, characteristically, "those who love God" (Romans 8: 28).

The second "word" is a warning against making "any graven image, any form", and them. "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for also the Father seeks such as his worshippers". That is the privilege side, but along with it the Lord insists on the moral necessity and obligation of spiritual worship. "God is a spirit, and they who worship him *must* worship him in spirit and truth" (John 4: 23, 24). We must ever remember this. But spiritual

worship necessitates *spiritual worshippers*. How could a natural man worship in spirit? Or even a carnal believer? An unspiritual man can only introduce unspiritual elements; what is of the creature will appear in it rather than what is of God. It may be the product of laborious skill, like a "graven image", but it will not really correspond with the divine speaking. Great pains are often taken to make what is called the service of God attractive or impressive — beautiful music, intonations, religious vestments, and so on — but *who* is impressed by these things? *Who* is served by them? God or man? They please the eye and ear of the creature; nothing but what is "in spirit and truth" will do for God.

We may, through great mercy, be delivered from much that is material and formal — that has "graven image" character under God's eye — but we need to remember that even beautiful and scriptural expressions which others have used in the Spirit, or which we ourselves have used at some time in the Spirit, may be used formally, and without having the true spirit of them in our hearts. The service of God can only be sustained in spiritual character as we give place to the Holy Spirit, and walk in self-judgment; that is, as we ourselves are truly spiritual.

A "graven image" could never be a true expression of God; it could never express a living God. It would always be the product of man's mind or imagination, perhaps helped by Satan. It would be man's thought of God, or how Satan would have man to think of God, and not the blessed revelation which He has made of Himself in His Son. Christendom today is well-nigh full of thoughts of God which are as alien to the revelation He has made as any "graven image" could be. It is well for us to see that we have not before our hearts any thought of God other than what He has made known of Himself in Christ. The epistle to the Galatians shews how soon even true believers may entertain a thought of God which is not at all according to what He has revealed of Himself in grace. We see how it provoked the holy jealousy of Paul, and his zeal was the expression of the jealousy of God.

"For I, Jehovah thy God, am a jealous God". God is not jealous in relation to unconverted people. Jealousy supposes a definite engagement or committal; it supposes that we have known the love of God, and recognised that He is entitled to our affections, and we have given them to Him. Jehovah could say seven hundred years afterwards, "I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness" (Jeremiah 2: 2). Has there been a day of espousal in our history? Have we ever given God our affections? If so, He never forgets it, and if there is departure on our side it awakens His holy jealousy. If "love is strong as death" it has its counterpart in a jealousy which is "cruel as Sheol: the flashes

thereof are flashes of fire, flames of Jah" (Song of Songs 8: 6). It speaks of the intensity of divine love; God cannot bear not to have the responsive affections of His people. Human jealousy has all kinds of mixed feelings and motives in it, but the jealousy of God is the jealousy of an unquenchable love. Hence we get the judgment of the Lord in immediate relation to His supper. That supper speaks sweetly and touchingly of His love, but if we come to the supper in an unjudged state we must expect that the fire of jealousy will burn.

Hence Paul says, "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" There must be fidelity to the bond we have entered into; otherwise the fire of His jealousy will burn amongst us.

The blessed God has delivered us from the power of Satan and from this present evil world; He has given us His Spirit; He has fed us with manna; He has nursed us in the desert; He has borne us on eagle's wings; He has cared for us in ten thousand details of wilderness need; He has made known to us His covenant. Has He not won our love? What a solemn thing if, after the love of espousals has had its place, there should come a time when God has to say, I remember when your heart was on fire towards me, but it is cold today!

There are only two characters contemplated in verses 9, 10 — haters and lovers. If we turn away from what is spiritual, we are moving towards those who hate God. Iniquity is found on that line, and sad results for ourselves and our sons; in principle it would apply to all who come under our influence. How important that we should be found promoting what is spiritual! We shall then come in for the "mercy" which is shewn to the "thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments". Such prove the blessed consideration and help of God. See 2 Corinthians 4: 1.

Then, "Thou shalt not idly (or, for an untruth) utter the name of Jehovah thy God". The Name of the Lord is on no account to be connected with what is untrue. It is the seal of God's firm foundation, "Let every one who names the name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity" (2 Timothy 2: 19). The Lord's Name is not to be linked with what is unholy or untrue. That is an important part of the covenant.

The hallowing of the sabbath day is not connected here as in Exodus 20 with God's work in creation, but with deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The sabbath in Exodus looks on to the end of God's work when He will rest, and men will share His rest. But in Deuteronomy the sabbath is kept in remembrance of a complete past deliverance, and it is to be kept in a spirit of grace towards others. "That thy bondman and thy handmaid may rest as well as thou" is added here; it is one of the beautiful touches we find in this book. In Exodus the sabbath speaks of communion with God in His rest; but what is

emphasised here is the enjoyment of a rest which is the fruit of His deliverance — through grace from every kind of bondage, so that it leads to gracious consideration for others. The Lord's deliverances wrought on the sabbath day were Deuteronomic in character. He liberated persons from terrible infirmities that they might know divine favour and power in that way. Could any of them ever forget what a sabbath the day of their deliverance became? Would not every heart rightly affected by such a deliverance be kindly disposed towards others? It is the rest brought to *us* through grace that is remembered in Deuteronomy; in Exodus it is rather how God secures what is restful to Himself.

It is important to see that the covenant has to do, not only with God's relations to us and ours to Him, but also with our relations with His people. The first thing requisite in a child is that it should recognise parental care and honour it. Speaking naturally, no one has such a genuine and unselfish care for our welfare as our parents. It is good when children recognise this, and honour their parents. God has used both father and mother as expressive of His own parental love, and He would set up what corresponds with His own care in every Christian household. "The household of God" is where His parental care is known, and every Christian household should be expressive of features which characterise God's household.

The first principle of the covenant in its application to our relations with the people of God is that we have to recognise that we are under parental care. The Lord spoke more than once to His disciples as "children", and John, who had drunk into His spirit, habitually says, "children". It speaks of parental affection. Spiritual care is surely not less than natural care. Paul's letters breathe the spirit of parental care. To the Thessalonians he says, "But have been gentle in the midst of you, as a nurse would cherish her own children ... ye know how, as a father his own children, we used to exhort each one of you, and comfort and testify", etc. (1 Thessalonians 2: 7, 11). To the Corinthians he says, "As my beloved children I admonish you. For if ye should have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the glad tidings. I entreat you therefore, be my imitators" (1 Corinthians 4: 14 - 16). We may gather from this that to be a mere instructor, even in Christ, is not to be compared with parental affection.

We are not only immediately under God's parental care, but mediately as finding that care amongst His saints. I doubt whether we know really what it is to be of the household of God if we have not recognised parental care amongst the saints. The Thessalonians had recognised it in Paul, and he had

imitators at Thessalonica, for he begged them to know those who laboured among them, and took the lead among them in the Lord, and admonished them. All admonishing and exhorting is to be in parental care and affection. The schoolmaster and the policeman have no place in the household of God.

One of the earliest features of taking up covenant relations is to recognise and honour the parental care that is to be found amongst the people of God. If young believers do not start that way they will miss a good deal that would qualify them to be truly helpful in the household of God. I think it will be found that if hardness and harshness characterise believers they have not had much experience of the warmth and tenderness of parental care. They have not recognised or honoured the parental care that is found in the household of God. They are like children who have been thrust out to earn their own living while they should have been still nourished and cared for in parental affection. It is a great thing to prove in one's early days what the household of God is by experiencing the parental care that is there. That care is to be recognised and honoured; there is great blessing attached to doing so. It secures that days will be prolonged, and it will be well with us in the land which God gives us. If we do not start by appreciating, and responding to, the parental care and interest that is to be found in the household of God we shall never grow up rightly in that household. If we are independent and self confident, and not prepared to be admonished, we cannot have spiritual prosperity. At the present day children soon want to act independently of their parents, but it does not make for happiness, and if that spirit is in young believers they will not prosper in the household of God. It is very blessed to think of being here for a prolonged period for the pleasure of God, and of His people, in His household. We ought to consider whether we are conducting ourselves in such a way as to make it pleasing to God to retain us here for a long time. If I have begun rightly in the household of God I am conscious how I have been fed and nurtured and cared for and warmed. I owe so much to the parental care of the saints that I could never speak evil of them; they will always be estimable and honourable in my sight because I have proved what a benefit they have been to me. Parental interest and care amongst the people of God is the direct product of His love.

The sixth "word" is, "Thou shalt not kill". Matthew 5: 21, 22 would indicate that being angry with one's brother may have something of the spirit of killing him in it. It is right sometimes to be angry, but we must beware of our spirits. John puts it very strongly, "Every one that hates his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3: 15). Cain was of the wicked one and slew his brother. The spirit of the covenant would put that away from us; John brings it before the family of God as a needful

warning. Even if there has to be discipline it is for the life of the person, not to kill him. The most terrible of all discipline is to be delivered to Satan, but even this is "for destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5: 5). It is really for the person's life. So if you see a brother sinning a sin not unto death, you ask and God gives him life (1 John 5: 16). And James says, "My brethren, if anyone among you err from the truth, and one bring him back, let him know that he that brings back a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall cover a multitude of sins" (James 5: 19, 20). We should not like to burn a man at the stake, but it is quite possible to be found acting in the same kind of spirit that would do it, and such a spirit is altogether out of keeping with the covenant.

"Neither shalt thou commit adultery". Scripture contains many references to adultery in a spiritual sense. There is nothing more important than to maintain fidelity in our affections. Adultery in a spiritual sense is the corrupting of the affections of God's people so that they are unfaithful to Him. Jezebel is the great adulteress in the assembly period; she calls herself prophetess, and teaches and leads astray the Lord's servants. The Lord's present ministry is very largely directed to the end that all corrupting influences may be displaced from the hearts of His people so that they may be marked by purity and fidelity in their affections towards Him, and towards one another.

"Neither shalt thou steal". There is great possibility of our appropriating things in an unlawful way. "Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith Jehovah, that steal my words every one from his neighbour" (Jeremiah 23: 36). Even the words of the Lord may be stolen goods, not honestly come by. The thought of this would make us careful about taking up the words of others, and using them as if they were our own, when we have not bought them by facing the exercise which they involve so as to make them our own in a godly way. According to Ephesians the stealer is to become a giver (Ephesians 4: 28); through honest toil he is to acquire that which he may distribute. To contribute to the brethren is very different from stealing from them. Under the new covenant there is a serving out of things — a ministry of righteousness and of the Spirit — and this becomes characteristic of the mutual activities of the people of God. Each becomes a channel of supply rather than a thief, or one who makes demands. If there is a lack, let us see to it that we serve out to the brethren the thing that is lacking.

"Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour". Many wrong impressions are made, and personal feelings created which hinder confidence, by statements which are not true. There is often failure to exercise godly care in this matter, and the enemy gets an advantage. It is not always that there is

an evil motive, but things are passed on too readily from one to another that are not definitely known to be true.

"Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, nor his bondman, nor his handmaid, his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's". It is interesting to see that under grace desires run the other way; instead of there being a wish to deprive one's neighbour there is desire to enrich and add to him. There is desire to be contributory. Hence we get such scriptures as "Desire earnestly the greater gifts" (1 Corinthians 12: 31); "I desire to speak five words with my understanding that I may instruct others also" (1 Corinthians 14: 19); "Seek that ye may abound for the edification of the assembly" (1 Corinthians 14: 12); "So that, brethren, desire to prophesy" (1 Corinthians 14: 39); "Thus, yearning over you, we had found our delight in having imparted to you not only the glad tidings of God, but our own lives also, because ye had become beloved of us" (1 Thessalonians 2: 8); "I have coveted the silver or gold or clothing of no one ... I have shewed you all things, that thus labouring we ought to come in aid of the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20: 33 - 35).

The thought of the covenant is sometimes limited in the mind to our relations with God, but it includes also our relations with one another. The covenant, known in spiritual grace and power, would adjust our relations with the brethren, If God makes a covenant it shews how willing He is to engage Himself to men, and to have men conscious of it so that they engage themselves to Him. He says, "I ... have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage". I have been for you; now you are to be for me in the attitude of your heart towards me, and towards one another. There comes a moment in the history of souls when exercises are raised as to how the pleasure of God is to be brought into effect in regard to them. In the section of this chapter from verse 22 - 33 Moses calls attention to the fact that they had realised the necessity for a mediator, and Jehovah was pleased that they did so. "I have heard the voice of the words of this people that have spoken to thee: they have well spoken all that they have spoken" (verse 28). If the covenant is to be effectuated it must be through Christ as the Mediator. Indeed it is He who is given "for a covenant of the people" (Isaiah 42: 6; Isaiah 49: 8), and He is the Mediator of it (Hebrews 8: 6; Hebrews 12: 24), and the Spirit of it (2 Corinthians 3:6; 2 Corinthians 3:17,18). Everything is made good now through the Lord Jesus Christ. The word "mediator" is not used in Romans 5, but the whole of that chapter is a presentation of what comes to us from God *through* the Lord Jesus Christ; there are seven things

particularly mentioned. Then He is a quickening Spirit, so that those who believe on Him are caused to live in liberty in the knowledge of God and in response to Him. Matthew 5: 17 tells us that He did not come to make void the law or the prophets, but to give the fulness of them, and He does this in those who are quickened by Him.

It is well to note the words, "and he added no more" (verse 22). The covenant was complete, and did not require any additions. When we come to the covenant as we know it, expressed in Christ, we see how complete it is. The full presentation of God in grace, the perfect answer to it in a Man, and divine quickening power brought in to make it effectual in men.

The people representatively and officially — "ye came near to me all the heads of your tribes, and your elders" — express their deep sense of the need for a mediator. I think it may be regarded as typical of the heart of Israel turning to the Lord, for Jehovah approved of it. It sets forth, typically, that they realised how indispensable Christ was in Mediatorship. The solemn accompaniments of cloud, obscurity, and darkness brought this home to them. For us there is a greater solemnity at Calvary than was known at Horeb. "There was darkness over the whole land" (Matthew 27: 46). The cry of the holy but forsaken One brings home to us what God is in His purity and majesty in far greater intensity than the thunderings and trumpet soundings of Sinai. Infinite love is there indeed, but infinite holiness too, and it is not well that the sense of this should be feeble in our souls. We are creatures, and we have been sinful creatures, and God is God and He is holy. He would have us to fear Him; it is most wholesome to do so; there could be no true knowledge of His love otherwise — no true valuation in our hearts of Christ as the Mediator. We must learn what we are in the presence of the greatness and holiness of God. This was Job's lesson. He had long known that man could only be accepted with God on the ground of the burnt offering (see Job 1: 5) but he did not realise what he himself was, in presence of the greatness and purity of God, until he saw and heard God for himself. He had to learn the need of Christ, as Ransom, Redeemer, Mediator, Interpreter. Every exercise that leads us to value Christ is of incalculable advantage and benefit.

There was spiritual intelligence in what the people said when they asked that Moses might be the mediator between God and them. If the pleasure of God is to be effectuated in us it must be through Christ as the Mediator, and through His being the Spirit of the covenant to quicken us. In 2 Corinthians 3 Paul enlarges on this. He says that "the Spirit quickens" (verse 6) and then, passing over the parenthesis to verse 17, he says, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, but where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, looking on the glory

of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit".

Moses was not only a type of Christ; but he was a remarkable vessel of the Spirit of Christ. If Moses could have imparted to the people his own spirit the covenant might have been blessedly effectuated. How delightful it must have been to God to have a man with whom He could speak face to face! "If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known to him in a vision, I will speak to him in a dream. Not so my servant Moses: he is faithful in all my house. Mouth to mouth do I speak to him openly, and not in riddles" (Numbers 12: 6 - 8). If it had been possible for Moses to quicken the people, and to give them his spirit, how different all would have been! But we have come to One who can do what Moses could not do, great as he was personally and as a type. Our Moses is not only the Mediator to bring to us the knowledge of God in holy love, but He is a quickening Spirit to make us to live in the appreciation of God as He has made Him known, and He gives His Spirit so that we may respond in the liberty of holy affections to God, and move in holy affections, too, towards His people.

"Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments continually, that it might be well with them and with their sons for ever!" (verse 29). Such are the breathings of the heart of God, and through the Mediator He has provided all the conditions by which His desires can be realised in His people. This scripture suggests that as under the mediatorship all the conditions suitable to the inheritance would be brought about. God is now putting, the Spirit of the Lord — the Spirit of Him who is the Mediator — into millions of hearts, that they may know God in His love, and be able to answer to the pleasure of His love concerning them, and to do so in perfect liberty of heart. God as known through the Mediator is the infinite Source of supply; He supplies all that His heart requires, so that all that pertains to the covenant, and that is suited to the inheritance, may have its place with us for His pleasure.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 5 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 5

— 15. This is motive, not the thing celebrated.

— 28, 29. It is not the intention or desire to obey which was presumptuous — that was all right, and there is no allusion to what was said in Exodus, which was after all this. God had spoken out of the midst of the fire, and then Moses went up. The presumptuous point was taking all the blessings and covenant on the specific ground of "*If* ye will obey my voice, ye shall be". They might have said "We fear to have all our blessings depend on our own obedience, for fear we lose them". In the covenant of Sinai, the being God's people, and getting the blessing was "if"; and, I repeat, it is the whole point, when, after the terror of God's appearing, they said "We will obey" — it was a natural effect of terror, and a right intention. But they begged to hear no more, and no covenant was based on it — on Moses going up and bringing the "if" tranquilly down, they tranquilly undertook it as the base of blessing. Bound to obey they were — intention to obey was right — but a covenant of blessing on that condition was the grossest ignorance of self and was presumptuous.

The reason why God did all this was to teach men that, on this ground, no flesh could be justified. Nothing could be more important. The promise to Abraham had not raised any question of righteousness — it was a simple promise on God's part, certain to be fulfilled. But here the question of righteousness was raised as it ought to be and must be, and first on man's part for God, according to what was rightly required of man; when that point was cleared, and flesh proved what it is, then the righteousness of God was revealed through the promised Seed. We should not have had half Romans and all Galatians but for this.

As to delusion in the people, clearly there was, as the golden calf proved. The law was never given to man, as such, as God's way of blessing, but to a peculiar people called to Himself, and brought to Himself, to have flesh tested. It was given as exacting obedience as the prior and indispensable condition of life and joy. It was positively "If ye obey, ye shall" ... "Do this and live". To Abraham, further, it was unconditioned promise, and the uncircumcised was cut off from blessing which remained to others — at the law the covenant was absolutely based on the condition of man's obedience as its first principle.

Continual access to God did not lay open to them — individual faith in promise might go to God, but the law, tabernacle and all said, "Death if ye come near". God did not come out — man could not go in. In Christ God did come out,

and, blessed be God, Man is gone in; the Holy Ghost signified this by the veil — "We have boldness to enter into the holiest, by a new and living way, consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh", and we draw nigh. And even in the sacrifices, they were in contrast with Christ, a remembrance of sins still there — now "perfected for ever", never to be remembered.

Deuteronomy 6

- DEUTERONOMY 6 (CAC 5)
- WELLS AND SPRINGS (9) (JT 52)

DEUTERONOMY 6 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 6

The object which the covenant has in view, as we see at the end of the previous chapter, is that a living people are secured for the pleasure of God, and for the enjoyment of what His love bestows on them. It secures moral conditions which are suitable to the land of divine purpose — "the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee" (verse 10).

There are two lines suggested in this chapter on which God appeals to the hearts of His people. One is connected with what He has taught us experimentally of the character of the world, and the way in which His grace and power have acted to deliver us from it. And the other is connected with the unchangeableness of His purpose, as to which He swore long before deliverance from the world was needed. Compare verses 12, 21, 22 with verses 10, 18, 23. "He brought us out ... that he might bring us in".

God has taken great pains to instruct us in what the world is, and to shew us that His judgment rests on every feature of it. This chapter speaks of the signs which He shewed upon Egypt (verse 22). A sign signifies something; it is instructive; and in the signs we see all the features of the world exposed as having come under divine judgment. We were once in bondage to the power of the world, and it hindered us from being for the pleasure of God, but He has come in to set us free from it so that we might love Him and serve Him in perfect liberty. The world is a "house of bondage". It is a system of things which hinders liberty in serving God. We have not only been wrong ourselves, but we have been held in a system which is altogether opposed to God, and we have needed to be freed from it. Peter said on the day of Pentecost "Be saved from this perverse generation". Isaiah not only said, "I am a man of unclean lips" but he added, "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6: 5). He realised that he was wrong, but his whole environment was wrong also. True repentance involves that we not only judge ourselves, but we judge the whole Egypt system to be a "house of bondage", and are thankful that a divine deliverance from it has been wrought for us.

Then, on the other hand, Jehovah had sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that He would give "the land" to His people. He would carry out what He had promised. His oath was connected with "the unchangeableness of his purpose" (Hebrews 6: 17) — a purpose formed long before there was any need of deliverance from bondage. God has called us "out of darkness to his wonderful light", but that calling is "according to purpose" (Romans 8: 28). "The land"

was ever God's objective for His people. It represents a sphere of spiritual blessing which is according to the love of God (Deuteronomy 7: 8), and which He would have His people to possess and increase in as the true sphere of their life. Many of us might have some difficulty in stating what we understand by "the land", but if it is the present portion which the love of God would bring us into, it is well worth our while to give earnest attention to it.

The first mention of "the land" in Scripture is in Genesis 12. It is to be noted that in Genesis 10 we find among the sons of Ham both Mizraim (Egypt) and Canaan; and in Ham's posterity we get Babel (Babylon), Assyria, Nineveh, the Philistines, Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah. I single these out as being prominent in Scripture as representing the world where man seeks to glorify himself by the use of his own resources or wisdom, or to gratify himself by the indulgence of his lusts in various ways. They represent the whole scope of what man can compass, or acquire for himself, with the aid of Satan who is the god and prince of this world.

But in Genesis 12 Jehovah spoke to Abraham of "the land that I will shew thee" (verse 1), and said, "Unto thy seed will I give this land" (verse 7). It is a land shewn by God to a man called out by Him, and promised as a gift to that man's seed. It represents what God would call attention to as being of Himself in contrast to everything that is of the world, and which He would give to the heirs of promise.

Stephen tells us that "The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham" (Acts 7: 2). God would shew that true glory was with Him, and that He had something for man far better than all that the world could offer. However great the glory of Egypt, or Babylon, or Nineveh, or Sidon, it is the glory of a creature under sin and death, about to be called to account by his despised Creator, and how vain is such glory! But God has imperishable glory, and in the outshining of that glory He calls men in sovereign love, and makes Himself known to them as the God of redemption and of resurrection power, and as giving what is worthy of Himself.

In Genesis 12 we read, "And the Canaanite was then in the land". In Genesis 13 we read, "And the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land". In Genesis 15 we read, "And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full". "The land" was not to be possessed by God's chosen and called people until the maturing of what was evil. God would wait until then; all that He had in reserve — all that was the subject of promise — had to await, for its enjoyment, the development in evil of a power that was opposed to it. The thoughts of God, in regard to what He would give to man, were known as a matter of promise. But spiritual

powers were present which stood against the knowledge of God; and against the realisation of what God would give in love to man. The "four hundred years" of which Jehovah spoke to Abram in Genesis 15 may be taken as typical of the whole period between the promises being given, and their being entered upon in realisation by the "heirs according to promise". Israel's entering into the land under Joshua was not the true fulfilment of the promise, though it was figurative of it. See Hebrews 4: 8. The true entrance into "the land" in a spiritual sense may be *our* portion now; the actual coming into it by Israel is yet future. "The land" speaks typically of eternal life as God's answer in love to all that the enemy had brought in.

"The iniquity of the Amorites" was *full* in a spiritual sense when God had presented Himself in His Son and been rejected, when the Holy Spirit's testimony to a risen and glorified Christ had been refused, and when God's thoughts of redemption, and of dwelling amongst His people, had taken form in the assembly. The character of the opposing spiritual forces was then fully manifested and matured. Then it was that a new sphere of blessing was opened up for men in association with a risen Christ. Eternal life was known as a blessing to be entered on now.

The whole history of Israel, as we have been following it in its typical bearing, requires the death of Christ to give it meaning. The Passover, the Red Sea, the smitten rock, the sacrifices, the brazen serpent, all indicate that there could be no true coming out of Egypt, or passing through the wilderness, save by those who have learned the meaning of the death of Christ. That is, the whole history as to its divine import, applies to *us* who live after the death of Christ is an accomplished fact. There is one more type of that death which we have not come to yet, and that is Jordan. Jordan is a type of the death of Christ as that through which "the land" may be entered. "The land" is a region outside the life of this world altogether. It can, perhaps, be most simply understood if we consider the character of the life in which the disciples were with the risen Christ, and He with them, during the forty days after His resurrection. *He* was beyond death, and outside the life of this world, and in His company *they*, too, had occupations and intercourse, and were found in living associations, that were completely outside the life of this world. The character and occupations of life in the land are set forth in a typical, but divinely perfect way, in the book of Deuteronomy, and also the conditions essential to its possession and enjoyment.

The glory of the present dispensation is that the people of God are so set in the knowledge of His love that they love Him. Apart from this there is no capacity to truly enjoy the land. Hence the Lord Jesus quoted verses 4 and 5

of this chapter as being "The first commandment of all" (Mark 12: 29). It is affecting to think of how He must have delighted to ponder this chapter, and to use it in meeting the temptations of the devil on the one hand, or, on the other, to answer the exercise of an intelligent man like the scribe of Mark 12. The Lord has singled out this chapter, and given it peculiar importance. This should surely arrest our attention.

"Hear, Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah; and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength", Nothing could be more blessed than to know that it is within the range of possibility that we should love God with our whole moral being. It is indeed our supreme happiness to do so. The covenant having been made known, and the Mediator being now a quickening spirit it is possible for our days to be prolonged as those who love God. It is not only that the love of God is known, but He is loved by His people. Christians are characteristically "those who love God" (Romans 8: 28), and those who do so are known of God. "But if any one love God, he is known of him" (1 Corinthians 8: 3); there is something there which God can recognise, in contrast with mere knowledge. Love is the breath of life. Israel in the world to come will be in eternal life; they will know God as revealed in love by the Mediator, and they will be quickened so as to respond to Him in love. What a delight to think of God's Israel as having every part of their moral being permeated with love to God. I understand that the Hebrew word "quicken" conveys the thought not only of being made alive, but of being preserved in life. Now the glory of the present time is that God has been made known, and the One who has made Him known is the quickening Spirit so that we might live in responsive love to God. 1 Corinthians 8 takes up the thought of "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah". "There is no other God save one ... to us there is one God, the Father, of whom all things, and we for him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom all things, and we by him". "To us" that is the position; "One God, the Father, of whom all things". Everything originated with Him — the ancient promises and oath, the deliverance from Egypt, the covenant, the land — all of Him, and for His own delight and glory. Then how did it all come about? By the Mediator, the one Lord, Jesus Christ, "by whom all things and we by him". Everything secured by His mediatorship, and His quickening power. The glory of the dispensation is that God has spoken from the very depths of His nature — from the very heart of heaven — in unquenchable love that we might know Him. And the Person who is the Mediator of all this is a quickening Spirit; He gives His own Spirit to those who believe, so that it may become spiritually possible for us to love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our understanding, and with all our strength. Most of us may feel ready to say, I have not come to that yet.

Well, let us pray about it! Let us desire to see the full glory of the dispensation in which we have part! In eternity we shall love God with the whole energy of our moral being. In the world to come Israel will do so as a people on earth. But do not let us think of it as being impossible today! Let us entertain more worthy thoughts of the spiritual possibilities of the present time!

You will notice that the mind, or understanding, is not mentioned in Deuteronomy 6: 5. The Lord added it (Mark 12: 30) from the Greek translation of the Scriptures, and it is now included in what is made known of the will of God. The mind has a most important place in Christianity, as we may see by looking up the passages which refer to it, The edification of the assembly depends on the mind, or understanding, being fruitful (1 Corinthians 14). So that one is to pray, or sing, or speak with the understanding as well as with the spirit. Paul would rather speak five words with his understanding, that he might instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue, even though the latter might be in the power of the spirit of God. The mind, as well as the heart and soul and strength, may be wholly filled with love to God.

Anything short of this falls short of the blessedness attached to being in "the bond of the covenant". It is a solemn judgment of God upon the heathen world that "God gave them up to *a reprobate mind*", or "a mind void of moral discernment". (See Romans 1) But as a result of new birth man gets *an exercised mind* which is not void of moral discernment. (See Romans 7) Then in Romans 12 we find that saints, indwelt by the Spirit and walking in spiritual liberty, have *a renewed mind* which transforms them into correspondence with the will of God. The scribe of Mark 12 had an exercised mind, and the Lord told him, in substance, that he was not far from having a renewed mind.

That God should be loved with the whole inward being of His people is surely most blessed, and none of us should rest content with anything less than this. It never was, nor could be, secured on the line of requirement; it can be secured, blessed be God, through God revealing Himself in love in His Son, and through the death of Christ, and through the Spirit being given to those who believe. The glory of the dispensation is that God is revealed in love, and that those to whom He has given His Spirit know Him as thus revealed, and love Him, and love one another. We may have to own that the glory of the dispensation is little known by us! Well, let us humble ourselves, and pray that we may know it better for the glory of God.

"The land" can only be enjoyed as the affections of God's people are in accord with the covenant. Hence, "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt impress them on thy sons, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou goest on the way,

and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign on thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and upon thy gates". In "the land" days are to be prolonged in love to God, and everything about us is to carry the impress of how we know God and delight in His will. Our conversation, our service, our countenances, the ordering of our houses, and what comes into them or goes out of them — all to be suitable to those who know God and love Him! Is it not spiritually attractive?

Then in "the land" everything is the fruit of divine giving. Blessed things are there which we did not originate or contribute to; "great and good cities which thou buildest not, and houses full of everything good which thou filledst not, and wells digged which thou diggedst not, vineyards and oliveyards which thou plantedst not". God has provided everything that is essential to the enjoyment of the life which is common to His saints viewed as risen with Christ. Cities, houses, wells, vineyards and olive-yards all have their spiritual counterpart. We are "fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2: 19); "the cities of our God" are in "the land"; the ideas of "cities" is not connected with the wilderness, but with what is over Jordan. The life of the world is centralised in its cities, but God would give His answer to that in *His* cities. The assemblies, from this point of view, are communities with a civic life all their own. They stand on spiritual territory — on ground which is contrasted by the Spirit of God with being "alive in the world" (Colossians 2: 20). *Christ* is the life of the saints viewed as dwelling together as fellow citizens.

Then "houses full of everything good" would suggest such household conditions as are outlined for us in Colossians and Ephesians. It is to be noted that it is in epistles which contemplate the saints as over Jordan that we get the divine ordering of Christian households. I think we can see that houses thus ordered would be "full of everything good". Each "house" would contribute spiritually to the common civic life as fellow-citizens. "Wells digged" would refer to sources of spiritual refreshment which have been furnished through the labour of others — primarily by the labour of the apostles, but in a subordinate way by the labours of many others who have opened up to the people of God springs of refreshment. "Vineyards and oliveyards" would speak of fulness of joy and of spiritual grace and power. All is looked at here as given in divine love, and according to the promise and oath of God. Nothing is acquired on the principle of works. It is all, as we should say in New Testament language, of the Father (Colossians 1: 12; Ephesians 1: 3); it is all the fruit of the riches of God's mercy and of His great love, and of the

surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2).

No epistle magnifies the absoluteness of mercy, love and grace as Ephesians does. All is as much of grace there as in Romans.

At the beginning all was prepared before the people were called in. All that was set forth in the city, the house, the well, the vineyard, the olive-yard, was set up amongst the saints in the power of the Holy Spirit. All the great and good things were there, and men were called to come into them. It is encouraging and liberating to consider that the most blessed things are provided without contribution from us. Everything essential to our associations, our comfort, our happiness and fatness of soul, is provided, and we come into it purely on the footing of grace. We have to continue in the goodness of God; to depart from it is apostasy. Paul does not say that the Gentile will be cut off if he does not do what is good, or if he does not respond to the goodness of God, but if he does not abide in it. We have to keep the blessed God before us as the Object of our hearts. The supreme truth of Scripture is the Headship of God. David said, "Thou art exalted as Head above all; and riches and glory are of thee ... for all is of thee" (1 Chronicles 29: 10 - 15). The Head of Christ is God; everything that is in Christ, the blessed anointed Man has its origin in God. Luke 14, Luke 15, brings out that everything is divinely provided — the feast, the robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf — and all flows from the heart of God. We are receivers, not contributors, though surely all that originates with God reverts to Him in praise. God's blessed universe is going to be filled out of His fulness, and all is going to revert to Him in praise. It is a marvellous thought!

This is never to be forgotten (verse 12). In the enjoyment even of good there is danger that we may forget the Source of it, or lose the sense of the infinite mercy and grace that secured such as we were for such blessing. Hence the call to "remember" in Ephesians 2: 11. God is a jealous God in the midst of His people (verse 15): He loves them so much that He cannot bear to lose their affections.

The temptation at Massah (verse 16) was a very serious matter in God's sight. There was not water for the people to drink, and they said, "Is Jehovah among us or not?" (Exodus 17). They took little account of what they had already known of God, either His ancient promises or His great deliverance, or His pillar of cloud and fire, or His supply of daily manna. They were ready, the moment a test came, to say, "Is Jehovah among us or not?" The Lord had His testing time, but it never raised any question in His mind as to whether God was with Him or not. He did not need to prove it by casting Himself down from

the edge of the temple. He answered the tempter by this very scripture. Let us beware of the unbelief which would raise a question as to whether God is with His people or not! He is so pledged to them in love and faithfulness that to question it is to tempt Him.

Let us refer again, for a moment, to God swearing to the fathers to give the land. It is mentioned three times in this chapter (verses 10, 18, 23). It must strike everyone of us that it is an extraordinary thing for God to swear. We might say, I think, with all reverence that it would not be an ordinary matter for God to take an oath. Such a solemn asseveration on God's part would only be called forth by the activities of tremendous powers of evil, standing, as it were, to challenge His right of way. Under such circumstances "God, willing to shew more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of his purpose, intervened by an oath, that by two unchangeable things, in which it was impossible that God should lie, we might have a strong encouragement who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us" (Hebrews 6: 13 - 20). Whether it is the swearing to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as to the land; or the swearing that the generation of hardened unbelief should not enter into God's rest (Psalm 95: 11); or the swearing which constituted Christ a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek (Psalm 110: 4); or the swearing that unto God every knee shall bow (Isaiah 14: 23), the oath on God's part is called forth by the presence of conditions which are contrary to Him.

We have already remarked that when "the land" was first spoken of the Canaanite was there; adverse powers were present. The swearing of the oath by Jehovah was in Genesis 22, after Isaac had been, in figure, offered up, and received again from the dead — a precious type of Christ, the Son of the Father's love.

Then it was said, "Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies". A hostile power was in evidence, but it was to be overthrown and dispossessed. So "the land" represents a sphere which has been held by the power of evil, but from which that power is to be cast out so that the people of God may enjoy a good that is wholly of God — a good that is the divine answer to the evil that was there. "The land" is specifically called "the land of promise" (Hebrews 11: 9), so that it may be regarded as covering figuratively the whole range of divine promise.

If we consider the development of divine promise I think we shall find that as certain manifestations of the power of evil made their appearance in the world God met them by promises. He would defeat the enemy, and in place of every evil He would bring in a corresponding good. The "seven nations greater and mightier than thou" would represent the complete power of spiritual

wickedness. See Ephesians 6: 12. We have to take account of the fact that evil did not originate in this world; it had its origin in the devil (1 John 3: 8), and was found also in other beings who are called his angels. But it came in and got a footing here, and God was displaced in the hearts of His highly favoured creatures. To displace or misrepresent God, or to alienate man from God, and from all that is in the thought of God for man, was, and is, the great design of the enemy. But God met the working of evil in the garden of Eden by a statement which, though not addressed directly to man, had the nature of promise. The Seed of the woman should crush the serpent's head; through Christ the devices of the devil should be defeated.

Sin and death came in, violence and corruption, and then — after the flood — human glory centralised in Babel, and idolatry. The whole system had then been introduced by which men should be held in ignorance of the true God. It might be developed in after ages, but all the elements had declared themselves. Now God shews His hand; He intervenes by calling Abraham out, and by giving promises. It was the God of glory who appeared to Abraham to speak to him of a land which He would shew, to speak of greatness which He would confer, to speak of blessing which should be for all families of the earth! On the principle of God having His place all the works of the devil should be undone. God would secure our attention to things which are great enough for Him to give as the God of glory.

One can see the importance of the covenant having its place in view of entrance into the land, for only a people with undivided hearts — hearts full of love to God — could appreciate what He proposes to give. It is such who can take up warfare for the land. They can understand in their measure the words of our New Testament Joshua, "We do not war according to flesh. For the arms of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful according to God to the overthrow of strongholds; overthrowing reasonings and every high thing that lifts itself up against the knowledge of God, and leading captive every thought into the obedience of the Christ" (2 Corinthians 10: 4). The "seven nations" represent those spiritual forces which oppose themselves to our true knowledge of God in the sphere of His own actings in resurrection power. They can only be overcome as every thought is led captive into the obedience of the Christ. The Christ whom we have learned to know as the Ark of the covenant, has gone through death as the obedient One in view of our knowing Him and being in association with Him as the risen One. "The land" has its antitype — not in heaven, for we do not expect to find "seven nations greater and mightier than thou" there — but in those blessings and associations which saints are privileged to possess and enjoy spiritually now as those who are risen with Christ, while yet the full power of spiritual wickedness has to be met

and overcome. There are spiritual powers in great activity to countervail every divine thought, and to hinder the knowledge of God. Thoughts — apparently founded on Scripture — are brought forward; "the artifices of the devil" often take this form. Since the Lord has given light as to prophecy and dispensational truth an immense amount of this has been incorporated in various systems of error, and souls are often deceived by what appears to be increased light as to Scripture, whereas the real object is to obscure the true grace of God as made known in the glad tidings, and to bring in entirely wrong thoughts of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.

Every spiritual gain is secured now at the cost of conflict, and this is particularly the case in regard to what answers to "the land". Where there is desire to walk in the present truth, and to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God, the most subtle efforts of the enemy will be put forth to hinder it.

WELLS AND SPRINGS (9) (JT 52)

Psalm 84: 5 - 7; Psalm 114: 8; Deuteronomy 6: 10, 11; Deuteronomy 8: 7 - 10

JT The assembly in the wilderness has engaged us during the recent readings. It has been pointed out that the ministry of the assemblies thus viewed, typified in Zipporah, contemplates certain fleshly features that have to be owned, that have marked its history, and still mark it. What will come before us in these four scriptures this evening, will give an opportunity to speak of the other side, namely, the gain of the wilderness experience. The two scriptures from the Psalms are significant as depicting certain experiences in the wilderness, not necessarily the actual wilderness of Sinai, but what has this character; and for the christian, the wilderness always exists. The two in Deuteronomy will show how that in the wilderness, we *anticipate* the land of promise; that is, heaven as presently realised, where all is of God. Wells have *not* to be digged there, as in the wilderness. There is plenty of water gushing forth without any toil on our part. These two scriptures, therefore, will help us as to the service of God in the assembly, where we reach a point where all is of God. We are impressed with the bounty of God apart from the product of our own exercises.

Psalm 84 points to what accrued in the wilderness experience; that is, those who passed through the valley of Baca. They make it a well-spring; *they* make it that. Instead of being overwhelmed by the pressure of the wilderness, they gain in experience, being able to overcome through the well-spring. They are described: "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee — they, in whose heart are the highways. Passing through the valley of Baca, they make it a well-spring; yea, the early rain covereth it with blessings. They go from strength to strength: each one will appear before God in Zion", Psalm 84: 5 - 7.

JTJr The title of the psalm is helpful too, is it not? "To the chief Musician. Upon the Gittith". The note refers to Psalm 8, and says, 'A musical instrument'. The word is feminine as Psalm 81 and Psalm 84; from a root meaning *vat* or *press*. Evidently it suggests *pressure*.

JT And it is "Of the sons of Korah", which would allude to the sovereign mercy of God.

ANW The meaning of Baca is *weeping*.

JT That is very applicable today; there is so much cause for weeping and, indeed, so much weeping. It is not only in the world but among the people of God, too. We have joy, but we have also the sorrow, especially in disrupted

families and bereaved persons, and also in some of the young people, and others, too, turning away from the truth. The psalm, therefore, is an encouragement, because it shows that faith, by the Spirit, overcomes.

ABP The altars would appear to be in disuse, if the sparrow had found them as a place for her house.

JT The allusion would be to what is *available* there, the Lord using the word *sparrow* as denoting what is apparently insignificant, but yet it does not fall without God. "The sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she layeth her young, thine altars, O Jehovah of hosts, my King and my God" (verse 3). The early verses would point to what is available to outwardly small things. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Jehovah of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of Jehovah; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found a house" (verses 1 - 3). I thought it would show how liberal the house is in its receptiveness, and what it avails for such as might be represented in the sparrow and the swallow. In this sense the birds would be typical. They avail themselves of what affords them shelter. The swallow can lay her young on the altars of God. Typically, these creatures represent those who do not need to be great outwardly, in order to have a share in the house of God.

RWS Does this psalm represent the secret, victorious side, collateral with the ugly features that are public?

JT That is what I thought. We have enlarged on the ugly features of the assembly in the wilderness, but that is only one side of the picture. We saw that in Corinthians, for instance, but even Corinth itself is not without evidence of the delightful side of the truth. The assembly is viewed as *the Christ* in Corinthians — the anointed vessel of God, typified in Exodus 40. Abstractly, there is no disparity there. Then, it also says that the saints at Corinth were temple of God, as indwelt by the Holy Spirit. There are many other such expressions in both epistles, but when we come to Ephesians, we have the full thought. We come into the power and gain of the Spirit as in this psalm, and make the wilderness a well-spring. "Yea, the early rain covereth it with blessings" (verse 6). So that the wilderness, according to these two psalms, affords distinct and permanent gain for us, adverse though it be; and that, of course, enhances the assembly in its service.

Psalm 114 speaks about what Israel was when she came out of Egypt: "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah was his sanctuary, Israel his dominion. The sea saw it and fled, the Jordan turned back; the mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs. What ailed thee, thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou

turnedst back? Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams? ye hills, like lambs? Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turned the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a fountain of waters". Faith, in the wilderness; would see these things and understand. They happened in that part of the history when Israel went out of Egypt. So that it was not all sorrow; it was not all complaining. Faith could see more than that, and that is the thing for us now to see, whatever there is of God, small though things be, and sorrowful, too. The book of Ezekiel shows that in one sense it was only sin all the way through, beginning with Egypt, until they entered the land, and also in the land; but then there was another side, and these psalms show that. Joshua and others, who saw things spiritually, grow in the truth all the way through. So that Caleb is as able at the end of that journey, as he was at the beginning.

AR From Psalm 84 it would appear as if the service of God goes on uninterruptedly. It says in verse 4, "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be constantly praising thee. Selah". In spite of the valley of Baca and the sorrow, the service of God goes on.

JT That is very beautiful. "In whose heart are the highways" (verse 5). That is, you apprehend the thing, by faith, in the eyes of the heart. The highways are in the heart. You will not turn aside in the wilderness. You will not fall there. You go right through.

ANW Is that why the first part of that verse is in the singular, challenging each one of us individually? "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee".

JT I think that is the way the experience is presented, whatever anyone of us may be. You may not be a Caleb, or a Joshua. Jehovah, at Sinai, began by saying, "... showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me", Exodus 20: 6. It is not the thousands that *ought* to love Him, but those who do; so that there must have been many in Israel in whose hearts were the highways.

AR Thus, in spite of the pressure that is going on all over the world, it must be very pleasurable to heaven to take account of the week-ends in which the service of God goes on in many places. Through grace we have part in it.

JT That is a great matter. God begins the wilderness journey with the thousands of those who love Him, and if a man of faith heard that, he would say, 'I must find those thousands. He says there are thousands of those who love Him, and He shows mercy to *them*. I would like to find them out'. No doubt there were many who did find them, those who loved Him in the camps of Israel, in the booths; for they dwelt in booths as they started. They were near each other in the exchange of love — at least, typically. That is the

position today; there are those who take sides with the truth, because they love God. "He that has my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves me", John 14: 21. There were the Levites who stood with Moses at the time of the golden calf. They took sides with the truth. Every man slew his brother. "Let every one who names the name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity", 2 Timothy 2: 19. That corresponds with what we have been referring to.

FNW The apostle Paul says, "But if any one love God, *he* is known of him", 1 Corinthians 8: 3.

JT Yes; "*he* is known of him". God has His own way of showing that He knows. There are relatively few; but still, there are thousands, and He knows them and would recognise each one. God recognises His lovers. The highways to Zion, for us, involve the wilderness. There were no roads in the wilderness. The tabernacle and the pillar of fire marked the way.

> 'Is the wilderness before thee,
> Desert lands where drought abides?
> Heavenly springs shall there restore thee,
> Fresh from God's exhaustless tides.
> Light divine surrounds thy going,
> God Himself shall mark thy way;
> Secret blessings, richly flowing,
> Lead to everlasting day'. (76:2)

Those lines are beautiful as marking all this; how the way is made for us by the light of God in the tabernacle. Each one was to keep his eye on the tent of meeting; as it moved, he moved. Thus the way was made, but the first movement would be in the *heart*. "This is the way, walk ye in it", Isaiah 30: 21. So in the Acts, "the way" is, in a sense, a synonym of christianity; it is the way out of the world into God's world.

FHL Would Isaiah 35 develop it a little? "And the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" (verse 1).

JT The Scriptures are very full of this, affording a way out of the world; *through* the world as a wilderness, but *out* of it into Canaan; the heart is sustained by the well-spring and the rain that fills the pools. The way was marked by the movement of the cloud on the tabernacle. But what comes out is that while the cloud led the people up to the period mentioned in Numbers 21, then you have the well. The princes digged the well. From that point on, it is a question of the Holy Spirit; the way is by the Spirit. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, *these* are sons of God", Romans 8: 14.

GVD The sons of Korah had been through the experience of being brought low and got the gain of it.

JT I think that is what is meant. The author is not given. It is in relation to the sons of Korah, or for them, but it is definitely called a *psalm*, meaning an experience that some one had. You want to get in touch with the man who has experience in the ways of God, and that is what this psalm means.

WB-w The well springs up. It is a well-spring, and the early rain covers the earth with blessing. Does that refer to the ministry?

JT The rain is the blessing of heaven, really. The spring is the Spirit in the believer working out through his affections. So that in spite of the pressure there is joyousness and buoyancy. It is what springs up in the inwards. David in Psalm 103 calls upon all that is within him to praise Jehovah; he taxes his affections to praise God.

WB-w How does the early rain fit in with that?

JT It would be ministry; there was the early and the latter rain. It refers to the seasons; what, as given suitably, promotes growth. The early rain was at the time of sowing; that is, at the beginning of sowing the rains would cause refreshment to the soil.

AAT The assembly at Smyrna (Revelation 2), went through much pressure. The word to it is, "I know thy tribulation and thy poverty; but thou art rich; and the railing of those who say that they themselves are Jews, and are not, but a synagogue of Satan. Fear nothing of what thou art about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days" (verses 9, 10). The valley of Baca.

JT Yes; the Lord was pointing out how long it would be; that Satan can go just so far. There would be ten days of suffering. The comfort is that it can only go so far. The devil has not a free hand. Many of them came into the valley of Baca and made it a well-spring. In the history of the assembly we have many illustrations of this very thing. How glorious were the real martyrs, in their testimony and in their enjoyment too!

WFK Would this well-spring be special ministry?

JT It would be rather what you make it yourself. They *make* it; that is, the weeping gives place to joy. Our sorrow is turned into joy. The Lord told the disciples that would happen. "Your grief shall be turned to joy", John 16: 20. "In the world ye have tribulation; but be of good courage: I have overcome the world" (verse 33).

AR Perhaps one of the best examples is in Acts 16. It was certainly the valley of weeping for Paul and Silas, but they were praising and blessing God.

JT The rain is additional. The well-spring is what you call upon in yourself. John 4 points to that, springing up into eternal life; but then there is an additional thing in ministry that comes to us, and you sit down and enjoy it. It carries blessing with it; that is, the seed sown develops and grows through it. God's testing discipline goes on in the wilderness through the experience there; the hard experiences that we have. And as you accept it, according to Hebrews 12, enduring chastening, there is a good result — partakers of God's holiness. The believer is tested by the experiences of the wilderness, and you will find that you overcome by what is within — the springing up of the well — and then the rain is objective ministry that comes to you. You sit down and enjoy it. It brings blessing, for it is the early rain, which affects the sowing. Therefore, you will have a harvest. "Have patience, therefore, brethren, till the coming of the Lord. Behold, the labourer awaits the precious fruit of the earth, having patience for it until it receive the early and the latter rain", James 5: 7.

ABP Going to the meeting at night and getting refreshed is not all. There would be more for God if there were overcoming in the trying circumstances of the day. Then the meeting at night would be like the rain.

JT Just so. Many of us know the care and pressure in the households, and elsewhere, but it is a matter of making it a well-spring. It is the Spirit within. What you receive in the assembly is additional. The latter rain would allude to what would be necessary as the growing time continues. It is not any less in value than the early rain.

WFK It would be like Romans 7 and 8; the eighth chapter being the operation of the Spirit.

JT That is how it works out. Romans 5 is the acceptance of wilderness conditions. "Knowing that tribulation works endurance; and endurance, experience; and experience, hope; and hope does not make ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (verses 3 - 5). That is the secret of the well-spring. Chapter 8 brings out the *well-spring* because it definitely treats of the Spirit within us, and what it issues forth in.

AAT Do you connect verse 7 with the service of God?

JT "They go from strength to strength; each one will appear before God in Zion". *Strength to strength* here is something like *glory to glory* in 2 Corinthians 3: 18. The next thing is *appearing before God in Zion*. That is, we do not fail to be at the meetings. We do not stop short of the full thought of

God to appear before Him. The way into the holiest is open to us, so that, "Let us approach with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, sprinkled as to our hearts from a wicked conscience, and washed as to our body with pure water", Hebrews 10: 22. We appear before God in Zion. He loves Zion.

Romans 7 is what goes on inside the believer in view of the Spirit, so that He may have scope. Chapter 6 is the wilderness, where you are baptised. Baptism brings you into the wilderness publicly, preparatory to the experiences that you have to go through there. Chapter 7 is to develop and to clarify the inwards. Chapter 5 states that "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit". Well then, make room for Him *there*. The heart is one organ. Some of us were saying lately of the two on the way to Emmaus, that their heart burned, but their other organs did not react to that. They did not go back to Jerusalem because their heart burned. That was only one organ. Romans 7 shows how all the organs are brought into action. Things are cleared away by self-judgment so that there is *deliverance*. That makes way for chapter 8 where you get the full result of the Spirit operating in the believer.

AR How would you work out this psalm? It says, "Jehovah, God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed" (verses 8, 9). Then the psalmist says, "Jehovah Elohim is a sun and shield: Jehovah will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (verse 11). The use of divine names here is remarkable.

JT It is a wonderful psalm, one of the most remarkable of them. Finally it says, "Jehovah of hosts, blessed is the man that confideth in thee!" (verse 12). That is the finish; the blessedness of the man that confides in Jehovah. The psalm depicts that blessedness. It is well worth taking to heart, and being one of those men.

WB-w One of the characteristic features of this third book of Psalms is the sanctuary. Does that fit here?

JT It does. Asaph is the main writer in the book; most of these psalms are his. Who is he? He is a leading singer. He is a man to follow. He was distressed, according to Psalm 73, but he says, "Until I went into the sanctuaries of God; then understood I their end" (verse 17). All now is clear to him. Hence these psalms are so full of encouragement to the believer. David, in Psalm 72, contemplates Solomon in dominance. "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended" (verse 20). All is well *above*. Everything is secured in Christ; everything of God is yea and amen in Him. Our own state of soul is the

difficulty. Asaph is troubled with his inward difficulties, but he gets them clarified when he enters into the sanctuaries of God.

WB-w Psalm 72 ends the second book, and Psalm 73 begins with the sanctuaries. Is that the thought?

JT That is right. The third book is mainly Asaph's book and he gives a good lead, because he shows how you get things clear by entering the sanctuaries of God.

JTJr Paul was greatly pressed also. He speaks about combats without and fears within, and yet he says that when Titus came he had great joy. The tide was turned; Titus came from Corinth where he had been greatly refreshed through what he found there. Is that not the way things work? Localities are judging themselves and thus the position is changed and affords refreshment.

JT Exactly. Those who go about seeking to serve the saints have opportunity to see what goes on and are refreshed. They carry tidings back and spread it abroad so that others are refreshed. That is how the work is going on; the joy and the sorrow are mingled. Let us not fail to make the most of the joy!

WB-w Does Psalm 113 suggest power?

JT That is the point. First, what Israel was to God. "Judah was his sanctuary" (verse 2). I suppose Judah would represent the full thought of the service of God in David — David and Solomon are outstanding in the service of God, and that is how the matter stood; although it was not in Judah at first, it was in Levi. It was Moses and Aaron, originally, but ultimately it was David and Solomon. That is the highest part of God's service. It would seem that was in view. "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, the place that thou, Jehovah, hast made thy dwelling, the Sanctuary, Lord, that thy hands have prepared", Exodus 15: 17. All that runs on to David. That is how the matter stood; great power marked Israel from this standpoint. The psalm depicts this, ending with God: "Who turned the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a fountain of waters", Psalm 114: 8. It is the power of God.

WB-w I was wondering why he ends up with the rock. He speaks of power at the Red Sea, power at the Jordan, and then he comes back to this rock.

JT I suppose Exodus 17 is in mind. The allusion here is more to the hardness of it — the flint. In spite of that. God turned it into a fountain of waters. That is what God can do for us.

ABP Does not that verse suggest the complete journey? The sea was at the beginning and the Jordan at the end; also the rock is mentioned twice; at the

beginning and at the end of the journey.

JT That is the idea, I think. It is really wilderness experience; although the psalm would be written in a later day, he is alluding to the wilderness experiences. It is what anyone who had faith could have entered into during the wilderness experience. It is to stimulate us by being reminded of what others realised in the wilderness. Why should I not realise it, too? The last verse would show that God can overcome the hardness: "Who turned the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a fountain of waters"; that is, He changed the very hardness, making it yield refreshment.

ANW In Psalm 84, it is what we should do. "They make it a well-spring". In this psalm it is the power of God turning the rock into the means of refreshment.

Ques What is the suggestion in the statement that Israel is His dominion and Judah is His sanctuary?

JT The idea of the sanctuary is in Judah. The dominion was in Israel. It contemplates an undivided Israel. Division took place later. This is the full thought of God; it is nothing less than Israel, and the sanctuary in Judah. I would take it to represent David and Solomon. They had the sanctuary in Judah, but Israel was the dominion. The full divine thought was there. Dominion alludes to kingship.

WB-w There were two rocks in the wilderness, one at the beginning and one at the end. Does this refer to the first rock?

JT There are two things to look at; one is that the Rock was Christ who followed them. From that point of view, the two ideas merge; it is one Christ, in Exodus 17 and Numbers 20 — the Rock which followed them. But here the allusion is rather to the hardness of that from which God caused the water to flow.

Ques Is the word *turning* important — the way God turns things for us? Sometimes things are very difficult, and they are just turned the opposite way.

JT God "turned the rock"; it is not simply that there were springs in the wilderness, but the thing itself is turned; the hardness is turned into refreshment. The flint, which is an extremely hard substance, was turned into a fountain of water. That is a very great comfort in hard circumstances. Every one of us must have them, but God is ready to change them for us.

Let us now look at the passage in Deuteronomy. It is still the ministry of Moses in the wilderness, but at the end of it. He is talking in the wilderness about what is in the land. He is not going in, but he knows what is there. So it is

what we have *anticipatively* in the service of God; the encouragement as to what we are coming into. "Things which eye has not seen, and ear not heard, and which have not come into man's heart, which God has prepared for them that love him, but God has revealed to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God", 1 Corinthians 2: 9, 10. That is in the wilderness epistle, but it is there to encourage us as to what is beyond. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us", Romans 8: 18. We should have great encouragement in these verses in Deuteronomy 6. Moses is telling Israel that God "bringeth thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee: great and good cities which thou buildedst not, and houses full of everything good which thou filledst not, and wells digged which thou diggedst not, vineyards and oliveyards which thou plantedst not, and thou shalt have eaten and shalt be full" (verses 10, 11). It is not now that the princes digged the well in the wilderness. That refers to self-judgment in us, under authority; but here it is what we *find*; what is *in the land*. Everything is provided. It is our destiny; and it is mentioned here to encourage us not to stop short of going across the Jordan into the land. Moses is telling them what is there. God honoured him by showing him the land; he did not enter it, but he told Israel about it, according to this book.

ABP Did J.N.D. touch on this in the hymn, 'By the Spirit all pervading' (14:5), and also when he wrote,

> And see! the Spirits power
> Has ope'd the heavenly door,
> Has brought us to that favoured hour
> When toil shall all be o'er. (74:5)

JT Quite so. His hymns are full of these great thoughts. We have light brought back to us as to it, and it is to encourage us to go in — not to stop short of going in. Moses said to his father-in-law, "Come with us, and we will do thee good; for Jehovah has spoken good concerning Israel", Numbers 10: 29. The whole book of Deuteronomy stresses the good, showing the great and glorious things God is bringing us into. Let us go on and not stop short! Let us not fall in the wilderness! Thus we shall answer to what the assembly is in the wilderness, according to God.

Ques Paul is ahead of Moses, is he not, in the outshining of the truth? He went up as far as the third heaven. He got into it himself; he was in the land.

JT That is right. He could speak of what he heard there. He says that he was "caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable things said which it is not allowed to man to utter", 2 Corinthians 12: 4.

AR Perhaps the book of Hebrews would correspond with it. The Hebrew saints were inclined to be earthly-minded, and Paul says a great deal about Christ in heaven, encouraging the brethren to go in.

JT That is the thing. "Let us also therefore ... run with endurance the race that lies before us, looking steadfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith: who, in view of the joy lying before him, endured the cross, having despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God", Hebrews 12: 1, 2.

ANW Can we be rightly in the wilderness, without this view before us?

JT We shall not be there buoyantly. We shall not be saying, 'Come with us and we will do thee good, for God has spoken good concerning Israel'.

DP Would Moses on the mount of transfiguration come into the full gain of the land?

JT We may say he was in the land. He was in the land talking with Jesus; he and Elias. Still, these great men represent the testimony there. They do not share the full place of the assembly.

AAT Do these verses anticipate the land, and connect with the service of God?

JT Yes. Typically, Moses is telling us of what is there. Anyone who has been there in any measure can speak of the place, according to that measure. No one of us can assume to have gone up like Paul, but still there is something that can be said, as already quoted from 74:1. That is something you may understand, and if you have tasted it you can tell others about it. It is a wholly spiritual matter. We encourage one another by what we have experienced, and that is what the Psalms largely signify; telling others about our experiences.

AAT You are speaking of individual experience. Is this not an assembly position?

JT It is; but each one of us, according to the work of God in himself, may reach into this. We are not all of the same stature. A person who is just converted can say very little, experimentally; whereas a man who has been on the way for years has experienced things, and the psalms indicate that he can tell you something about them; and it is to encourage you to go on to the same things, because it is open to you. The twelve spies went up to search

out the land, and they brought back tidings of it, and that is the idea; you can bring back tidings of what is there if you have enjoyed anything of it.

Ques How do you regard the resources of chapter 6 — "oliveyards which thou plantedst not", and so on?

JT The viewpoint is rather what *God* does. The things were all there before them, as they went in. They are typical of what God has for us. He says, in principle, You did not build them — "Good cities which thou buildedst not, and houses full of everything good which thou filledst not, and wells digged which thou diggedst not, vineyards and oliveyards which thou plantedst not". Literally, men did it, but that is not the point. It is what the believer *finds*. It is what the pilgrim here finds when he gets into the land of promise. God has it all for him. So that our chapter says, "For Jehovah thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of water-brooks, of springs, and of deep waters, that gush forth in the valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness", Deuteronomy 8: 7 - 9. That is what you find in the land. This is a much fuller statement than that in chapter 6, especially as to water; and, of course, this is our subject. It is a "land of water-brooks, of springs, and of deep waters, that gush forth in the valleys and hills". It is most expressive of what is in the land for us.

DP Is this the ministry of the new covenant?

JT This is not the new covenant. It is the land of promise, of which God had spoken to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That is what is in mind here, as you will observe in chapter 6: "God bringeth thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee" (verse 10). It is a question of the land of promise which was spoken of before there was any covenant with Israel at all. It was a *promise* to Abraham, and now Israel is going into it. The twelve spies went up and saw these things, and hid them in their hearts; at least Joshua and Caleb did; and now they are going into them. Caleb and Joshua correspond to the Holy Spirit, of whom the Lord says, "The Spirit of truth who goes forth from with the Father, he shall bear witness concerning me", John 15: 26, and, "He will announce to you what is coming" (chapter 16: 13). He would tell them of heavenly things. The apostles could tell of the path of Jesus here below because they had been with Him, but the Holy Spirit brings out tidings of the heavenly land, and that is the ministry of Paul, the heavenly side of the truth. That is what Moses is speaking about here. It imparts a heavenly character to the saints as of the assembly, in view of our translation to heaven.

AR When Paul said to the Corinthians, in his wilderness epistle, "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago", it would be to stimulate them to go in, would it not?

JT It is like the testimony of the twelve spies. Paul was there and could tell them what was there. No doubt there was much more than was written about that visit by Paul to heaven. No doubt there were things of which he would have spoken in detail to encourage the saints to go in for the heavenly side of the truth.

Ques Would you link on the thought of the water-brooks with the epistle to the Ephesians?

JT Yes; it is what is gushing forth. Psalm 104 as an analogy helps. It refers to the earth, but it is what God did *creatively*. "He sendeth the springs into the valleys: they run among the mountains" (verse 10). The heavenly land also comes from the hand of God for the saints. Think of the wonderfulness of it — that "eye hath not seen nor ear heard!" Of course, we have been saying that, typically, the spies brought tidings of it down; but it is really the Holy Spirit that brings it down; no natural eye has seen it. The Holy Spirit reveals it to us, for He "searches ... the depths of God". As we make room for Him, He will bring heavenly things to us so that we may go in for them.

RWS Does the contemplation and enjoyment of this furnish material in the heart for the service of God?

JT Clearly; you become a heavenly man. You take part in it in heavenly power. That is the idea in Ephesians; "And has raised us up together, and has made us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus" (chapter 2: 6). The house of God down here is a counterpart of that. "Ye are no longer strangers and foreigners, but ye are fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God" (verse 19). That involves the heavenly part of the service of God; we come into what is entirely of God, what He has prepared for us; what we enter into by the Spirit's power.

Rem In Hebrews, Christ is said to be bringing many sons to glory. Here it is "Jehovah thy God bringeth thee" (verse 7). It is what God has in His mind for us.

JT Quite so. He brings us *there*. In the wilderness, it is, "I have brought you to myself". That was at Mount Horeb; but this is the inheritance in the place "that thy" (Jehovah's) "hands have prepared". That is the idea. Moses would say that with great feeling.

Ques What would the stones of iron suggest?

JT Richness; what is so much spoken of today; resources, such as oil, rubber, iron, and everything that man needs, in abundance. That is what you get in certain places on earth, but heaven yields everything that divine love can devise for its objects, and that is what we are to come into. The Holy Spirit is the Earnest of this inheritance, so we have it already, in this sense. Any yield to God is the result of the saints entering into these things. Our service in the assembly requires that we should enter on the heavenly side, so that we should be strong enough to take part in the whole service of God — "In order that he may give you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power by his Spirit in the inner man; that the Christ may dwell, through faith, in your hearts, being rooted and founded in love, in order that ye may be fully able to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge; that ye may be filled even to all the fulness of God", Ephesians 3: 16 - 19.

Deuteronomy 7

- DEUTERONOMY 7 (CAC 5)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 7 (JND 36)
- ATTACHMENT BY GOD (JR 2)
- SMALLNESS (JT 96)

DEUTERONOMY 7 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 7

The "seven nations greater and mightier than thou" represent spiritual powers that are opposed to God, and to the blessing of His people. "Our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but against principalities, against authorities, against the universal lords of this darkness, against spiritual power of wickedness in the heavenlies" (Ephesians 6: 11). We have to recognise that there are evil powers greater than man whose influence is being exerted upon men to darken and pervert all that is of God. The possession and enjoyment of the inheritance is dependent upon the overthrow of these powers.

When Paul spoke of "the universal lords of this darkness" he was referring to powers which God would dispossess and displace so far as His people were concerned. Divine light was to shine in holy brilliance where the darkness had been. Instead of "spiritual power of wickedness" holding sway, His people were to possess and enjoy a God-given inheritance. So that "the land" as possessed by the people of God is contrasted with certain former conditions, and is the divine answer to those conditions. Light is relative to darkness, reconciliation is contrasted with enmity, reigning in life stands over against the reign of death, the reign of grace through righteousness to eternal life is contrasted with the reign of sin in the power of death, eternal life as the act of favour of God comes in as the contrast with death as the wages of sin, quickened with the Christ is said of those who had been dead in offences and sins, the putting on the new man is contrasted with the old man of our former conversation, sharing the portion of the saints in light is set over against being under the authority of darkness, the expression "the only true God" derives its force from the existence of the many false gods of idolatry, "the truth" stands out in distinctiveness in contrast to all that has the nature of a lie. The inheritance is where the power of the enemy *has been*, but it is *now* to be held for God through the victory of faith.

The inheritance as typified in "the land" has relation to the sphere in which the enemy had operated; it is the fruit of God's victory over every form of the enemy's power. And it is easy to see what a great place this has throughout Scripture.

But the "heirs" have something which is even more precious than the inheritance; that is, their own relationship to the One who in love gives the inheritance. "Ye are sons of Jehovah your God" (Deuteronomy 14: 1). Eternal life is the inheritance as set forth in "the land"; the Lord speaks of eternal life as being inherited (Matthew 19: 29); and this was understood by others, for

more than one said, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10: 17; Luke 10: 25). But the relationship of "sons" is for the satisfaction of the heart of God; He marked the saints out for sonship to Himself "before the world's foundation". This stands connected with eternal purpose, when God had nothing to consider but how He would provide for the satisfaction of His own love. The heirs of the inheritance have their own personal relationship with God as sons, and this is even greater and sweeter than the inheritance. Indeed the inheritance derives its true blessedness from being taken up by those who are personally in the relationship and affections of sons. Eternal life is the gift of God for men, but sonship is *for the delight of God*. Revelation 21: 7 gives the two sides:-"He that overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will he to him God, and he shall be to me son".

Every darkening influence — whether it be lawlessness, hatred, corruption, pride, idolatry, philosophy, self-righteousness, infidelity, superstition, or whatever has the character of a lie or of antichrist — has to be overcome and displaced. The power of the enemy lies in "reasonings and every high thing that lifts itself up against the knowledge of God". These things have their origin in heavenly places: they proceed from spiritual powers of wickedness — the universal lords of the darkness that is here. The thought of this is intensely serious. There are great powers standing against the knowledge of God, and they have to be cast out, so that all that God is, as known through promise, may be enjoyed by His people. God would displace every thought that the enemy has brought in by what is of Himself, meeting every evil by a corresponding good, and meeting every lie by the truth, so that His people may stand in an inheritance that is wholly of God in the very region that has been held by the power of evil.

Every darkening influence is to be overcome, and the armour in Ephesians 6 shews us the moral features with which the saints need to be invested if they are to stand as victors in the conflict. Paul used spiritual weapons — weapons that no power of darkness could stand against — and he used them as one who was personally invested with "the panoply of God", and who was "strong in the Lord, and in the might of his strength". Acquaintance with truth in terms is not sufficient; the loins must be girt about, with it. The breast-plate of righteousness must be put on, the feet shod with the preparation of the glad tidings of peace. The shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, must all be there. And the soldier in this warfare must pray "at all seasons, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit".

It is indeed a "deadly fight" between the light of God and satanic darkness, and the enjoyment of the inheritance depends not only on victory, but on the

maintenance of absolute separation from what is of darkness. "Then thou shalt utterly destroy them: thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them. And thou shalt make no marriages with them: thy daughter shalt thou not give unto his son, nor take his daughter for thy son; for he will turn away thy son from following me" (verses 2, 3). There must be the uncompromising refusal of every principle which is not of God, especially when it takes a religious form. "But thus shall ye deal with them: ye shall break down their altars, and shatter their statues, and hew down their asherahs, and burn their graven images with fire".

Satan's great object in the world is to darken souls as to God. He does this not only in the gross form of heathen idolatry, but by the perversion and corruption of Christianity, and the introduction of what is idolatrous in principle, or in direct opposition to the truth. We must never allow ourselves to be persuaded that religious error is a small matter, or that earnestness or zeal in connection with what is untrue makes it worthy of respect. Everything opposed to the true knowledge of God and of Christ, and to the enjoyment of the inheritance by the people of God, is satanic in origin, and no terms are to be made with it. At the present day the spirit of compromise is everywhere in the air. Even when things are judged to be evil there is a great tendency to make covenants with them. A protest against evil has not much force if we go on with the things we protest against.

It need hardly be said that the conflict is not with persons. "Our struggle is not against blood and flesh"; it is against evil influences which operate through persons. As to the persons we desire that they may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. "For a holy people art thou unto Jehovah thy God: Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be unto him a people for a possession, above all the peoples that are upon the face of the earth" (verse 6). We are called to be vessels to honour. See 2 Timothy 2 "Wooden and earthen" vessels would represent those who are of fleshly or natural character, but "gold and silver vessels" would represent those who are spiritually formed for the pleasure of God. If we wish to be vessels to honour we must purify ourselves from vessels to dishonour in separating from them. A vessel to dishonour would be one who gave a wrong impression of God, or who in some way perverted the truth. "A holy people ... unto Jehovah ... for a possession" must necessarily be entirely separate from what is of darkness, cherishing the precious light of God, and enjoying the portion of the saints in light, so that they may be a holy possession for Him.

Verses 7, 8 are a touching reminder that we owe all to sovereign love, and to God's faithfulness to His promise and oath. But if it is ever true that He is "the

faithful God, who keepeth covenant and mercy to a thousand generations with them that love him and keep his commandments" (verse 9), covenant conditions on our side must be maintained, and no faithful heart would wish it to be otherwise. Those that hate Him will be repaid "each to his face". God's ways in government secure blessing to those who love Him and keep His ordinances, but they are solemnly retributive to those who do otherwise. If God gives light as to His love and faithfulness it is a most solemn thing not to be affected by it. If He gives any spiritual light and we do not come into accord with it, we may expect to find that His ways are retributive. When any God-given light has been, in principle, hated rather than loved, the result has been that souls have lost what they once seemed to enjoy. We have seen Christians refuse divine light, and go back into things which they once judged. One would not say that any true believer could be spoken of as a hater of God, but the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, and a true believer may practically be influenced and coloured by something which is, at the moment, utterly opposed to the mind of God. It is quite possible to admit the rights of God abstractly, and to profess the truth in a general way, and yet be much opposed to what is of God as sought to be worked out practically. We are tested when it comes to the application of what is of God in a practical way to our walk and associations, because increase of light involves displacement of certain elements of darkness which have been there, and we are not always prepared for this.

Conditional upon the obedience of His people God pledges Himself to them in faithfulness. "He will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee, and will bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy ground, thy corn and thy new wine, and thine oil, the offspring of thy kine, and the increase of thy sheep, in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee" (verse 13). Every kind of spiritual increase is secured to a faithful people by God's sworn covenant and mercy. Barrenness and unfruitfulness can only be regarded as a special and serious exercise. Abundant increase is the normal experience, and the absence of all sickness in a moral sense — "the evil infirmities of Egypt, which thou knowest". We have known painfully what those "evil infirmities" were. "For we were once ourselves also without intelligence, disobedient, wandering in error, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another" (Titus 3: 3). Such "evil infirmities" are not with those who "become heirs according to the hope of eternal life". Where God's love is complacent there will be spiritual health and increase; it will be proved that, as Solomon said, "There has not failed one word of all his good promises which he spoke through Moses his servant" (1 Kings 8: 56). God verified every word which He had spoken. Nothing could be more blessed than to have continual

experience of spiritual increase. Christendom is on the line of seeking material increase — increase of numbers and influence in the world, an enlarged status here — but the true answer to these promises lies in spiritual increase.

Paul speaks of the glad tidings as "bearing fruit and growing, even as also among you, from the day ye heard them and knew indeed the grace of God in truth".

He speaks of "Bearing fruit in every good work, and growing by the true knowledge of God". He speaks of "The head, from whom all the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bands, increases with the increase of God" (Colossians 1: 6, 10; Colossians 2: 19). This is the kind of increase which should be our great object of desire.

God would greatly encourage us to pursue a course which leads to unlimited expansion and fruitfulness in a spiritual sense. He would encourage us to be without fear as to every hostile power (verses 17, 18). God can use apparently insignificant means — "the hornet" — to discomfit the adversaries. "Thou shalt not be afraid of them; for Jehovah thy God is in thy midst, a God great and terrible" (verse 21). The powers of evil and darkness are, indeed, greater than we are, but they are not greater than God, and *with Him* we may move into the conflict with calm confidence. Every darkening influence is to be overcome, and every thought led captive into the obedience of the Christ. We need not fear. Our danger lies, not in the power of the enemy, but in the possibility that we may see something attractive in what pertains to that enemy, and take it to us (verse 25). There is to be no appropriation even of what may seem valuable in itself if it has acquired through idolatrous use the character of "an abomination to Jehovah thy God". Everything connected with idolatrous worship is to be detested and utterly abhorred, "for it is a cursed thing". God's curse is not only now on material images, but on everything that perverts the glad tidings. "But if even we or an angel out of heaven announce as glad tidings to you anything besides what we have announced as glad tidings to you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1: 8, 9).

The Galatians when they did not know God "were in bondage to those who by nature are not gods" — they had been poor idolaters. But in turning to Judaism, circumcision, law-keeping, and observing days and months and times and years they were turning "again to the weak and beggarly principles to which ye desire to be again anew in bondage" (Galatians 4: 8 - 11). They were going back to that which was as great a darkening bondage as that of the heathen world. It is an important instruction for us in a day when so much that passes for Christianity is not at all in accord with Paul's glad tidings, but is rather Judaism with Christian terms attached to it. Instead of illuminating men

with the light of God revealed in Christ it darkens their souls by putting them on the line of works, prayers, sacraments, and all kinds of activities which never perfect their relations with God. It is all part of the influence of “the universal lords of this darkness”.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 7 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 7

In this chapter we have the consecration of the people to God.

Not to lose sight of it, I mark that the infidel argument from this chapter and Ezra 9:11 is wholly without force, and, as usual, superficial. The same language as that of this chapter is found in Exodus 34:12 - 17. The use of the word "prophets" proves nothing at all — Abraham was a prophet; and Ezra in this verse speaks of their then going into the land when the prophet spoke, and so said "by the prophet speaking". All the objections are nonsense and worse.

ATTACHMENT BY GOD (JR 2)

Deuteronomy 7:7,8

These are the words of Moses, his own impression of what God's people meant to Him. He said in verse 6, "For a holy people art thou unto Jehovah thy God: Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be unto him a people for a possession, above all the peoples that are upon the face of the earth". It indicates how Jehovah valued His people. He said Himself in Exodus 19, "if ye will hearken to my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then shall ye be my own possession out of all the peoples — for all the earth is mine — and ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation", vv 5, 6. It is what His people are to be to Him as something special, not only as the earth is His — of course it is His, He made it — but there is something on the earth that is a special possession.

We read, "Not because ye were more in number than all the peoples, hath Jehovah been attached to you and chosen you". It is very affecting that Moses speaks about Jehovah being attached to them, not because they were more in number, not because of anything that men could take account of, but because Jehovah loved them. He was attached to them because He loved them. We are accustomed to speak about love as following attachment. We love the Lord Jesus by first of all becoming attached to Him, but here it is the reverse order, Jehovah was attached to them because He loved them. I suppose that love for us would involve His purpose. Moses said, He has chosen you. We are loved because in purpose we were chosen. His love is His attitude, it is the disposition of His heart; but then it says He has been "attached to you". That is a very fine thing. Attachment involves something very personal, persons in whom God is interested. We sometimes speak about the disciples being attached to the Lord Jesus, and so they were, but think of the Lord Jesus attached to His disciples! Think of how He was attached to them, think of how He went in and out amongst them during the three and a half years of His service here! It says, "having loved his own who were in the world, loved them to the end", John 13: 1. The Lord Jesus became attached to the disciples, and He would become attached to every one of us because of His love. His love is His general disposition, but "being attached to" is something personal. We would all do well to consider the Lord Jesus being attached to us; He certainly was attached to His disciples. He went in and out amongst them, He taught them, He cared for them, He acted as a father towards them. Three times over the Lord addresses them as His children, He cared for them as a father. He became attached to them. According to John's gospel the Lord felt leaving them, He was so attached to them. They felt the Lord leaving them, but He

felt leaving them. Think of the forty days in which He went in and out amongst them — not only His lifetime here, but in the forty days, was He not attached to them? He said to Mary, "I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren", John 20: 17. He was so attached to His brethren that He did not immediately ascend to the Father; He was forty days among them and He felt leaving them, but He made ample provision for them. He speaks in John 14, 15 and 16 about the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. In effect the Lord says to the disciples, the Comforter will be just as much attached to you as I have been.

And so it is; think of the Holy Spirit attached to us, dear brethren. The Lord says about Him, "he abides with you, and shall be in you", John 14: 17. Think of how near the Holy Spirit has come in His attachment to each one of us! We sang about being sealed, being sealed with the Spirit, owned as God's property. Think of how the Spirit is attached to us! Once we receive the Spirit He remains with us. We have ignored Him, grieved Him, quenched Him, and yet He has become attached to us; He remains with us. The Lord Jesus was with the disciples a certain time, three and a half years, but He says about the Comforter, "that he may be with you for ever" (John 14: 16). He will not be like Me; He will not leave you, He will be with you for ever. As long as we need Him in the testimony down here, the Spirit will be here. Just consider, dear brethren, how the Holy Spirit has become attached to us because He loves us. We read in Romans 15 of "the love of the Spirit" (v 30); He loves us and has become attached to us, dwells in our bodies. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor 6: 19). How immediate is the Spirit's presence with each believer. He has become attached to us.

Think of the Father being attached to us. The Lord said, "the Father himself has affection for you, because ye have had affection for me", John 16: 27. That expression "has affection for" is the same as "attached to" it is the word phileo, the word that Peter used in John 21 when he said, "I am attached to thee", and the Lord challenged him the third time, "Art thou attached to me?". It is the same expression as having affection for; it might be translated, The Father Himself is attached to you, because ye have become attached to Me. Think of the Father's love for His family, His committal to each one of us as belonging to His family, His children, His sons. It says here, "Not because ye were more in number than all the peoples, hath Jehovah been attached to you and chosen you, for ye are the fewest of all the peoples": they were not of much account in men's estimation — "but because Jehovah loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers". That is God's faithfulness, God's faithful love.

Consider, dear brethren, for our encouragement that the Lord Jesus is committed to us and has become attached to us. The Holy Spirit is committed to us, sealed us, is attached to us. The Father in His love, His interest in us, has become attached to us. What a comfort this is! There is much to face, maybe for young people especially, much to confront them, difficulties, temptations, but oh, just to be conscious of divine attachment to each one of us!

May the Lord encourage us!

SMALLNESS (JT 96)

Deuteronomy 7: 7; Amos 7: 1 - 9

You will observe that there is the thought of smallness in these scriptures. In the first incident God is calling attention to it, and in the second, His servant Amos is calling God's attention to the smallness of Jacob. My remarks will centre around these scriptures, which call forth much in the way of a general principle in relation to God's ways and dealings with us: how He dissipates all natural thoughts at the roots. We are told to be natural, to think naturally, speak naturally, but God ever sets Himself against the natural in His sphere of things. Indeed He says the natural man understands not the things of the Spirit they are foolishness to him. He may seek to accommodate himself to them, but finally they are foolishness to him. And unless he is subject to God, he refutes them entirely.

God knows that, and from the outset He would dissipate what is natural: and one of the natural tendencies is the desire for bigness in the things of God. It is perfectly normal in the world, this desire for bigness. It shone out at Shinar as we remember, when they set about to build a city and a tower, the top of which would reach to heaven.

That was natural, and we might say normal in this world out of which God had been eliminated. They did not like to retain Him in their knowledge: they eliminated God from their calculations. So the outcome was that they would have something big. It comes right down to us, it is seen everywhere. Huge buildings, hospitals, cities, ships. Bigness is a feature, and will be while the world lasts as it is. "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?" says Nebuchadnezzar.

God at the beginning would dissipate all that from the hearts of His people. He called Abraham out of that, and as called out, He refers back to him, to Isaac and Jacob in Psalm 105. They were few and of little account, and they went from one kingdom to another people. But God says in this verse (Deuteronomy 7: 7) referring to them, "Not because ye were more in number than all the peoples, hath Jehovah been attached to you and chosen you, for ye are the fewest of all the peoples".

From these remarks, someone might think that smallness is a virtue. But it may not be a virtue; it may be the result of laziness; want of industry maybe, and that is not a virtue. But smallness on account of quality, because of refusing to take on the spirit of the world; smallness on account of non-absorption with the world is a virtue.

One said, "it is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a contentious woman, and a house in common", Proverbs 21: 9. It means that those assuming to be the church, and taking the ground in relation to Christ, are marked by contentions and quarrellings. There is not a sect in Christendom that is not thus marked. There can be no dwelling with that spirit of contention. Even the church is subjected to Christ; not only subject, but subjected according to the mind of God. And the Holy Spirit works in her so that she is subjected. The mind of God for her is that she is placed in subjection to Christ; and the work of the Holy Spirit is to bring about subjection accordingly. So where a contentious spirit is, there is no dwelling. "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a contentious woman". But, "Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them". That is the kind of smallness to which virtue is attached and which heaven honours.

And that is what marked the beginning of Israel,

they did not link up with the world. The call to Abram was "Go out of thy land". Why should that be first? Why not his family first? But it is "thy land, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house", intimating that national feeling is one of the strongest that appeals to nature. He got out from Haran; he was slow to leave his father, but after his father died, he removed and came out. Abram is definitely out: into the land of Canaan he came, and Psalm 105 contemplates him in that position. "When they were a few men in number, of small account". Not that they were of no account to God; they were, but they were of small account in this world.

They went from one kingdom to another; they had not a foothold in those days. It was a question of purpose for them: they went from one kingdom to another, but they came under God's protection. And the psalm says He "reproved kings for their sakes". How precious! We may be sure that all the happenings today are in relation to those who love God. They are the apple of His eye, and all the happenings in the world bear relation to them. Nothing happens without God and nothing will be detrimental to them, for God has to say to the rulers of this world for the sake of those who love Him. So we want to be amongst those who love God.

He "reproved kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed ones, and do my prophets no harm". That is the protection they came under; it was when they were few and of small account. God reminds us that they were everything to Him, My prophets, My anointed. That is to say, where the Holy Spirit is owned; the anointing means the Spirit.

The Philistines were big men in the land in those days; they typify big people mentally. But "touch not mine anointed"; that is, the Spirit is the means of intelligence. He teaches you all things. It is the dignity of maturity, a certain character of intelligence which is beyond the natural mind. It may be foolishness to the natural man, and beyond him.

"For who of men hath known the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? thus also the things of God knows no one except the Spirit of God". So the anointing refers to us who recognise the Spirit. "Mine anointed" and "my prophets", it is very beautiful; and with the anointing is the prophetic word. The anointing is the dignity attached to us. The simplest believer is more intelligent than the most learned man. He has intelligence as regards God, and that is the only thing that counts. Material things do not count in eternity; it is only what continues that is of any value.

"Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me", Jeremiah 9: 24. And if I know God I will speak about Him and not merely worship the creature, but rather the Creator. There are men in scientific circles spending their lives finding out things about the creature, and disregarding the Creator. In worshipping and serving the Creator, it is a question of knowing God and His knowing us. "If any one love God, *he is* known of him", 1 Corinthians 8:3.

And therefore He loved Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He was known of them; and that is because of the anointing. "Touch not mine anointed", they were dignified by the anointing, and then there was the prophetic word. Being anointed you speak of God; men eliminate God, but His prophets would bring Him in. The world may do what it wishes, but those who love God are bound to speak of Him; He is the theme of their conversation. "My prophets", not Baal's prophets. There were four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and but one prophet of Jehovah. And he stood out and they all went down before him; he was God's prophet.

So in this verse you see how that is enlarged. "Not because ye were more in number than all the peoples, hath Jehovah been attached to you and chosen you, for ye are the fewest of all the peoples; but because Jehovah loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath Jehovah brought you out with a powerful hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt".

That is where every one in this world is; he is a bondman. He that serves sin is a bondman. God has set His love upon us and called us out of it. What an honour to be called out of it, not because we are many, but because of the fewness! He has chosen us according to His eternal purpose, applying it to

ourselves. He set His love upon us and delivered us from the house of bondage.

Now in Amos this is taken up when Israel had been enlarged and again become small under the government of God. It is one thing to be small in our beginnings, as when Abram was called out, but it is another thing to be small under the government of God. Why are we so small? Why are there not more converts? That is a question for the heart, and Amos was observant as to it. We should not sit down and fold our hands, assuming that it is so and cannot be otherwise. It can be otherwise. That is what this chapter brings out, and Amos understood in effect.

It is the Lord Jehovah you observe, in verses 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, and in verse 7 it is just the Lord. Then in verse 8 the original word is not the same as in verse 7. It is Jehovah in verse 8 and in verse 7 it is Master. Now I mention that not to make a point of it, but it is a question of the covenant. Those who love God will always be touched by the thought of His covenant, because it expresses His love and special interest in His own. And He calls the prophet's attention to what is going to happen; some governmental action that is going to be disastrous for the people of God. We have no such indication from God, although He is ever ready to convey to us pending happenings, perhaps not in this exact way, but the Holy Spirit has a way of impressing us, so that the people of God are never in the dark. They always know; if they cannot give an account, yet they are assured in themselves, God assures us in ourselves.

So we find that He shows Amos the pending calamity. It says, "Thus did the Lord Jehovah chew unto me; and behold, he formed locusts in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth, and behold, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings". Now this had not happened yet, and it never did happen, thank God. It was a vision of pending happening which God repented of.

Some of us may wonder why the word should be used that God should change His mind. It is compatible with His divine nature. God is perfectly righteous to send calamity, but He is righteous to cancel it. Why should not God do that? Love will do that. God is not governed by the law of the Medes and Persians; God is God. And God is love, and He is perfectly right in ordering judgments, but He may also be perfectly right in cancelling them.

And so He reveals to Amos the pending calamity. He formed the grasshoppers Himself. We most of us know the disastrous effect of a plague of locusts. They eat up everything. So God can use the most insignificant creatures to carry out the most serious judgments. That is what God can do. Scientific men can tell us a good deal about the locusts, but God can use these insignificant creatures

to carry out His judgment. It is to call attention to the immensity of His instrumentalities.

He formed them and they are to eat up the grass,

after the king's mowings — the Lord's rights over His people. You might have some result in this town, but that does not follow that it would continue. But what comes in after the king's mowings, the tender grass coming up, the latter growth; these locusts are going to eat it up. And Amos says, "O Lord Jehovah ... . How shall Jacob arise? for he is small". How pleasing that was to God! It was the result He sought. It was the king's mowings in Amos; He was getting His joy from the heart of His servant, in one who was concerned. "How shall Jacob arise? for he is small". And God repented.

Dear brethren, one would urge that we should get near to the Lord and be sure to solicit His intervention. He is ready to hear us. It is the first-fruit of what He is doing. He showed the prophet this and formed the locusts in the vision, and Amos interposed and threw himself between the disaster and the people. Jesus entered into Gethsemane and into death and the grave to stand between the judgment and His people. And the Spirit of Christ is seen in Amos when he says, "How shall Jacob arise? for he is small". And the Lord said, "It shall not be". So Amos got the gain of it and carried his ministry to the people. Any manifestation of God is not for the servant alone; it gives character to his service to the people of God. Amos would tell them about this, how that they were saved from this calamity. And so today, those who are in the secret of God will turn to Him about the conditions which prevail and He will hear and do. "It shall not be". And it was not.

"And behold, the Lord Jehovah called to contend by fire; and it devoured the great deep". That is a remarkable way of expressing the power of fire; of its eating up the inheritance. It was a greater disaster than the other. And the prophet says, "O Lord Jehovah ... . How shall Jacob arise? for he is small". It is the acceptance of the smallness under the government of God because of the failure of Israel. And God accepts the solicitation of His servant, and says, "This also shall not be". For God loves His people. In the days of Abraham God came down from fifty to ten: "I will not destroy it for the ten's sake". Abraham did not go further than that, and the city was destroyed. It shows the importance of prayer by every one of us in view of conditions; God will answer it: "This also shall not be", and it was not. So these two great disasters did not happen at all. It is an important principle, because God has placed His people in the position of priests unto Him, and He hears and acts for them. Revelation brings that out.

Then the next vision is in the seventh verse "Thus did he shew unto me". It is not the Lord God here, "and behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumb-line, with a plumb-line in his hand. And Jehovah said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumb-line. And the Lord said, Behold, I will set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more. And the high places of Isaac shall be desolated, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will arise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword".

This is the third vision: there is no repentance this time; there is no prayer on the part of Amos. It is a very solemn vision this. The introduction of the high places of Isaac, who is a type of Christ risen, would mean that there are those in the position of priests, who are most exalted, and yet God says, 'I am not going to pass by them any more', meaning that He is going to execute judgment upon them. It is very solemn and it might be applied to the general state of the professing church, Babylon; God has been prolonging this day of grace, but He solemnly calls a halt.

The Lord is seen now standing upon a wall which is made by a plumb-line; that means a refutation of the general principles of christendom with its lawlessness and loose thoughts and contentions that we were speaking of. They are building as they like, without a plumb-line, without a spirit level. Babylon heaps her sins one upon the other. That is building without a plumb-line; that is christendom. Not living stones but sins, heaping them one on the other.

What must that be to heaven? The high places of Isaac, the greatest pretension of things. God is standing upon a wall built by a plumb-line. It can stand His weight, the "exceeding ... weight of glory". He is supported by the wall. Is our fellowship great enough for that? The fellowship of God's Son; that is what this means. It shuts out evil and shuts in good. Standing on the altar means grace, but standing on the wall built by a plumb-line is solidity. God stands on that built by a plumb-line. 'You have been falsifying all My thoughts, forcing false doctrines into My house. My building is on the principle of the plumb-line, and I will not pass by you any more'. It is very solemn; it is pending now.

So any building of God's must be according to the plumb-line. He has got His principles; we must not force our principles on God. The temple was built entirely according to the pattern given to David. While God brooks man's devices, He bears with them, but He refuses them. Anything not according to the plumb-line will come under the judgment of God. It is very solemn. I am not speaking so much of that as of the importance of prayer, like Amos getting

to God as impending dangers and disasters are discerned, and seeing that if they come upon them, “How shall Jacob arise? for he is small”. But the prayer of Amos pleases God and He says, “It shall not be”. How sweet it is that we can continue, knowing that our labour is not in vain in the Lord! The quality is much more important.

He drinks of the brook by the way; He loves to come in, however few there may be. He does not wish that it should dry up. While the Holy Spirit is down here the Lord will continue. Amos discerned the mind of God and prayed according to it. And our prayers will be heard. He is ready to be moved. “This also shall not be, said the Lord Jehovah”. May God bless the word.

Deuteronomy 8

- (Deuteronomy 6)
  WELLS AND SPRINGS (9) (JT 52)
- SPIRITUAL FOOD (AJG 3)
- DEUTERONOMY 8 (CAC 5)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 8 (JND 36)
- DIVINE TESTING (JT 48)
- THE RICHNESS OF THE LAND (JT 91)

SPIRITUAL FOOD (AJG 3)

Exodus 12: 5 - 11; Exodus 16: 14 - 19; Deuteronomy 8: 3, 16; John 6: 54 - 57; John 14: 19, 20

In reading these scriptures I have in mind the matter of eating in a spiritual sense. For just as natural life is supported on the principle of eating, so spiritual life is also supported on that principle, and we shall suffer greatly as regards our spiritual life and enjoyment if we neglect the matter of eating spiritual food. Hence Scripture is full of the thought of eating. Eating in a spiritual sense is a matter of feeding our minds and our hearts; that is, the mind is to be occupied with what is worthy of its occupation and then the affections will follow suit.

I commenced with the passover because the passover lamb as eaten represents an apprehension and appropriation by us of Christ in His death, in His suffering love. Indeed, we may say, it is intended to mark us all through our Christian pathway. The passover comes in normally at the beginning of our pathway but it is also to characterise us all through. It was eaten in the land of Egypt and became the power by which the people moved out of Egypt, it became strength for them, but the passover had also to be celebrated in the wilderness and in the land. It is therefore not so much an elementary thought as a fundamental thought which goes right through.

As we know, the passover lamb was taken on the tenth day of the first month. The word was, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months... In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb," Exodus 12: 2, 3. The passover lamb was taken on the tenth day of the month and was kept until the fourteenth day and was then slain before their eyes, and the blood of the lamb was put on the doorposts and lintels and that became their salvation from judgment. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you," verse 13. It represents the value of the blood of Christ as that by means of which we, as Christians, have been redeemed, so that we have been saved from the judgment that otherwise must have fallen upon us, by means of the value in the sight of God of the blood of Christ. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God," 1 Peter 1: 18 - 21. But then what is also to be noticed is that the flesh of the lamb, whose blood provided them with safety from judgment, was to be eaten by those who were

thus saved from judgment. This is a matter that is sometimes neglected. The object in eating the flesh roast with fire is that we should soberly consider the fact that, if we were to be redeemed, it necessitated that Christ Himself should bear the judgment of God in a most unsparing form. The flesh was to be eaten roast with fire. There was to be no modification of the action of the fire. Christ is to be before our minds and hearts as having had to endure and exhaust the judgment of God against sin in a most absolute way if we were to be redeemed for the pleasure of God. As feeding our minds on Christ in that way we get a right sense in our souls of the seriousness of sin. It is not a matter to be treated lightly. If the only way that we could be saved was that Christ had to bear the judgment, then as we feed upon it, it gives us an increasing sense of the seriousness of sin. We come to it in our minds and our affections that by the grace of God we will not any longer go on with sin; that is, we will not live to ourselves.

We will not do our own wills; our own wills are exposed in the light of the death of Christ. It has in view our being delivered practically from the world and secured here for the present time as bondmen to God.

In the wilderness they still had to celebrate the passover and also when they were in the land. It is not that we need to be always dwelling on it, but that our affections are to be maintained by the love of Christ thus expressed so that we repudiate every working of our own will. "Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head and his legs, and with the purtenance thereof" (or inwards), Exodus 12: 9. His head refers to the glory of His Person, and the legs to the perfection of His walk, and the inwards to the perfection of His motives and inner feelings. We are to be impressed with the seriousness of sin and the greatness of the love of Christ, and as feeding upon it thus to be energised to refuse every working of sin in ourselves. They were to let nothing of it remain until the morning. "Thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste," verse 11. The feeding on the passover is intended to promote diligence with us to leave the world and its features behind. The world is just a system in which man lives to himself and pleases himself. The more we are characterised by feeding on the passover lamb, the more we will be exercised to leave that system behind. It was the power in their souls to move out of Egypt as a people redeemed for the pleasure of God, and it goes right through. Clearly we must be maintained in it, whether it is a question of being in the wilderness for the pleasure of God, or whether it is a question of entering into our greatest privileges. In whatever position we are viewed, there must be maintained with us the judgment of sin; there can be no allowance of sin.

So one had the thought just a few moments ago of king Uzziah, king of Judah (2 Chronicles 26). We read of how marvellously he was helped; he sought God and God made him to prosper. The chapter enlarges on his prosperity and the increase of power that marked him, and how successful he was in war against God's enemies. In that chapter there is no mention of any keeping of the passover. Then it says that his heart was lifted up and he transgressed and went into the house of God to burn incense. You see how it is possible for us to go on a long while and apparently prosper spiritually, and yet if the passover is neglected we shall find ourselves transgressing. He became a leper and remained so to the day of his death. We need the passover as food right through our spiritual history.

Exodus 16 brings us to the thought of the manna. That is another type of Christ as food. The food provided for us in a spiritual sense is nearly always Christ in one form or another. I do not say it is invariably Christ, for I think there is a sense in which we may feed on the work of God in the saints. David fed on the shewbread, which would refer to the saints as God views them, and it is important to feed our affections on the people of God thus. David no doubt would be greatly strengthened in meeting the persecutions which he endured for so long by having fed on the shewbread, having fed his mind and affections on the saints as God can take account of them. But as a general rule, spiritual food would be Christ in some aspect or another. The manna is found in the wilderness, and when I speak of the wilderness that is simply what the world has become to the Christian in the absence of Christ. It is the scene where Christ is not, and such a scene becomes a wilderness to the one who loves Christ. There is nothing in the scene which can minister to me spiritually. There is nothing in the world, or that is of the world that will contribute to the spiritual well-being of the saints. But we have to go through the world, and we have to go through it as redeemed, redeemed to God so as to be for the pleasure of God and governed by the will of God, and it is a question as to how we are sustained in that. It is a daily matter. It is a great help to recognise that the principle of a believer's life is day by day. We are to cultivate the idea of keeping short reckonings with God. Do not let a day go by without that day, so to speak, coming under review with God, and any matter not wholly suitable to God being judged and disposed of. It is a great matter to live day by day. If it is a question of food, it is a matter of day by day. Alas, when in their unbelief and lust the people asked for flesh, God gave enough quails to last a month, and they had to eat flesh for a month until it came out at their nostrils (Numbers 11: 19, 20). God's hand is not shortened. If it were His way to provide us with food to last us for a month, He could easily do so, but that is not His mind. He intends to deliver us from every form of

independence, and develop in us the spirit of dependence which has been seen in Christ. The wilderness is intended to develop in the people of God the attitude of dependence on God every day.

"When the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing as small as the hoar frost on the ground," Exodus 16: 14. The smallness of it is emphasised. We all naturally like bigness in some form. The smallness refers to the lowly grace in which the Lord Jesus has been found here, in the same circumstances of daily life as we ourselves have to go through. That is, we start as babes, and the Lord Jesus, who in wonderful grace became a Man, was found as a Babe. We have to go through the period of being children, placed in relation to parents, and our responsibility before God is to be obedient to our parents, and the Lord Jesus is brought before us as One who was placed in His boyhood in relation to parents and we are told that He was subject to them. As we grow up we have to submit ourselves to whatever may be the line of occupation that God has for us. In the case of the Lord Jesus it was that of a carpenter, nothing very attractive to the natural man. It was certainly nothing that would make Him appear great in the eyes of men. "Is not this the carpenter?" Mark 6: 3. He lived in Nazareth, not a very desirable place to live in, and in Capernaum, another undesirable place to live in. We are reminded that in wonderful grace the Lord Jesus has been down here in this world in similar circumstances to those in which the people of God find themselves in the ordering of God. And He filled out those circumstances in dependence on God, having His ear wakened morning by morning to hear what God would say to Him. He moved through on that principle, rejoicing in God's will and moving dependently. Psalm 16 gives us by the Spirit a delineation of the features of the Lord Jesus Christ as Man here, beginning with dependence and then lowliness, contentment and many other features which you can discern in that Psalm in which is set out the moral excellence which characterised the Lord Jesus in His path down here. I need not say that He was entirely without sin, but He moved through on a line which we ourselves can take up. We can take up the principle of obedience and dependence on God. The Lord Jesus took it up in order that He might set out the way in which God intends His people to move through this world, and as moving through on this principle, to be completely victorious over the world.

So the manna is a small thing. It will fit into anything. There is no circumstance in which we can find ourselves in our path here into which obedience to God's will does not fit. The principle of obedience as set out so gloriously in the Lord Jesus here is the governing principle of the believer's life, and as taken up and answered to by us we shall find we can go through this

world, not overcome by it. Indeed the feeding upon the manna develops what is typified in the acacia wood. The acacia wood represents the incorruptible order of manhood according to Jesus Christ, in which the saints are formed by the Spirit, which enables us to stand here in the wilderness as identified with the testimony of God. And as thus standing up, we are set together, in order to move together to provide a dwelling place for God and to serve Him in it. For that we need the power of endurance and the power of overcoming, and that is developed as we feed upon the manna. "A small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground". The word manna means 'What is it?' It is something that is entirely new. It is morally glorious. It says "Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord," Exodus 16: 6, 7. In the evening what did they see? They saw quails brought up, covering the camp. Here quails were brought up in the evening just to show what God could do if He pleased. There was no limit to the power of God. The Lord could quite easily take us out of testing conditions. He could alter things in our favour any time He pleased, but that is not God's way. His way is to develop in us features of dependence and obedience which were found perfectly in the Lord Jesus. Wilderness circumstances and testings have that in mind and the manna is provided accordingly. In the morning they saw the manna - the glory of the Lord, and what a glory it is! He Who is Creator of heaven and earth came down in grace into the humble circumstances of human life and adorned them! What a glory it is that He should have come so low in circumstances similar to our own in order to be food for us! So a child may understand that Jesus has been a child and has been subject to parents. The Spirit of God will remind that child that Jesus was subject to His parents. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews says that in the ark was the manna in a *golden* pot (Hebrews 9: 4). You can understand how he would speak of it as a glorious matter.

The manna was to be gathered every morning, "every man according to his eating". That is, we are tested as to how much we can eat. Then it says that they were not to leave of it, "Let no man leave of it till the morning," that is, the idea of freshness in our appropriation of it is emphasized. "On the sixth day they gathered twice as much," in view of the rest, the holy sabbath on the following day. I am sure that will be found verified in the experience of the brethren; as we give ourselves to feeding on the manna it leads to restfulness of spirit. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Matthew 11: 28. He gives it on certain lines - "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find

rest unto your souls," verse 29. He is prepared to give us rest, but He gives it as the result of our taking His yoke upon us and learning from Him. It corresponds morally to feeding on the manna day by day and we find that it leads to a sabbath.

In Deuteronomy the Spirit of God, through Moses, commenting on the way they had been led, says, "who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end," chapter 8: 16. It is well for us to understand that, beloved brethren, that the manna is intended to prove us as to whether we are obedient or not, and as we are obedient, we shall find that God will do good to us in our latter end.

Now in John 6 we have another kind of food. We have spoken of the passover which is to characterise us all through our Christian course. There is also the manna which is food for the wilderness and the wilderness only; that is in our ordinary responsible life here in the world where Christ is not. This food spoken of in John 6 is living bread come down from heaven. When it comes to eating it we find that the Lord changes the figure and it is not spoken of as bread, but as His flesh and His blood; eating His flesh and drinking His blood. That is another aspect in which we should feed our minds and our hearts on Christ, on Christ as having died, for His flesh and His blood obviously allude to His death. It is the death of Christ as that by means of which He has vicariously brought to an end the condition of flesh and blood in which we are at the moment involved, with a view to bringing to light in Himself as Man beyond death, a new order of life in which we partake by the Spirit. The condition of flesh and blood is not the final thought of God, but that which is now set out in Christ as risen from the dead. As having received the Spirit of God we have the power to move in our thoughts and affections into another order of life where Christ is. We must bear in mind that Christian blessings are spiritual blessings in heavenly places. They are not natural things; they are not earthly things. The blessings that God in His grace has given us are spiritual blessings and in heavenly places, and God has given us the Holy Spirit, linking us with Christ who is in heaven, in order that in the Spirit we may find our life and satisfaction in the things that are above. We have to go through the world and in it we may glorify God and serve Him. There is the thought of our moving together in the wilderness as carrying the testimony of God. There is also this important matter of finding our life in the things that are above.

So Christ is presented to us as food, as having come down from heaven for the express purpose of dying and taking life again beyond death, a spiritual order of life in which we may have part already by the Holy Spirit whom we

have received. Naturally we all tend to live in natural things, and hence the lever by which we can be helped to move in our thoughts and affections away from what is natural to what is spiritual, is the death of Christ. Though we have to continue for the moment in a flesh and blood condition we may move in the power of the Spirit in relation to Christ in another condition. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life," verse 54. That is life that cannot be touched by death. If I am living in natural affections, however right they may be according to God, however happy they may be, they can be touched by death. And if I live in natural affections and death comes, it is most solemn. My life, so to speak, is gone, and I am desolate. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." The more we feed upon Christ in this light, the more our souls are sustained in appreciation of Christ where He is, and of all that stands in connection with Him, including the assembly. That is a character of life that is eternal. I am not despising natural affections,

but it is a question of what we find our life in. The Lord would encourage us to eat His flesh and drink His blood, in order to find our life in the circle of which He is the centre. It means that, more and more, we find our life in something that cannot be touched by death. If death invades our circle, it does not rob us of what is our life. That is indeed what the saints prove, they truly have part in eternal life; they have their life and joy in Christ and in the circle of the saints. They find when times of sorrow come they are supported above their sorrow. I do not say they do not feel it, but keen though the sorrow is, they have not been robbed of that in which they find their life. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him," verse 56. The more we feed upon Christ in His death in this way, the greater the place Christ has in our hearts' affections and we become more conscious of having a place in Him. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." The result is that Christ Himself where He is becomes, in the Spirit's power, more and more the occupation and satisfying portion of our hearts. This is presented in John 6 on individual lines, for after all we must feed individually, but it has in view what is collective. It may be that neglect of individual feeding on these lines, may explain in some measure any lack of substance and power that appears when we come together in assembly.

There is the collective feeding which, I suppose, is typified in the old corn of the land. When the people of God passed over Jordan they found the old corn there before them. They found that which belonged to the land: it was there before them and they were able to feed upon it. That is what is suggested in these words in John 14. The Lord speaks of going into the Father's presence before His disciples. He was speaking of what they would enjoy when He had

gone to the Father, by reason of the Holy Spirit being with them down here, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." What comes to pass is that, though the world sees Christ no longer, we see Him. The Spirit engages the hearts' affections of the saints with Christ where He is; the Spirit gives us the consciousness of our part as bound up with Christ where He is. Although for the moment we are down here and He is with the Father, our part is bound up with Him there. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me," John 17: 24. The Spirit gives us the consciousness that our portion is with Christ where He is. "Because I live ye live also," I believe that corresponds to our feeding on the old corn of the land. We feed our hearts' affections on Christ where He is as the One with whom the assembly is bound up in life, and we learn in Him our portion in the favour of the blessed God.

So the Lord goes on to say, "At that day," that is, the Spirit's day, "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you," verse 20. It is what the Spirit's service results in, that we are made conscious of the place Christ has in the Father's affections, and that we have a place in His affections, and that He has a place in our affections. The assembly is bound up with Christ. We are in the full light that He is in His Father. It is opened up by the Spirit, and because He lives we live also. We come to enjoy it on the principle of feeding on the old corn of the land. The One who has gone there before us belongs to the scene, and we feed upon Him in our minds and affections,

and it sustains us together in what is heavenly.

I trust this will impress us with the importance of spiritual food. I have not attempted to touch on another feature of food and that is the tree of life. You remember the promise to the overcomer in Ephesus, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God," Revelation 2: 7. May the Lord help us to appropriate the food that is available to us.

DEUTERONOMY 8 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 8

This chapter brings before us in a striking way God's paternal chastening of His sons in the wilderness, and the end which His love has in view in that chastening. All is "to do thee good at thy latter end" (verse 16) when the wealth of the land is entered upon, which is here described with a greater fulness of detail than before. God's disciplinary ways belong to the wilderness, but they have the land in view, and they are always to be kept in mind.

There is no mention in this chapter of the ways of the people, no reference to their unbelief or their murmurings. The chastening ways of God are the subject; "all the way" is viewed as the leading of Jehovah. The whole of the "forty years in the wilderness" has been divine leading, divine chastening, divine education. We have all had to feel that God's ways with us have been of a humbling character. "To humble thee" (verse 2); "and he humbled thee" (verse 3); "that he might humble thee" (verse 16). We may have been inclined to regard such experiences as being largely wasted time. But in the outlook of this chapter not a day of it has been wasted. There has not been a single unnecessary encampment; not a spot nor a step that we can afford to forget. There has been something of spiritual and abiding value in it all. None of it is to be forgotten in the land.

In Deuteronomy 8 we are not looked at as going through the experiences of the wilderness, but as getting spiritual intelligence as to them under the instruction of Christ, after we have gone through them, so that we may understand their divine intent. A faithful God has been patiently teaching us lessons which are all essential in view of our entering the land and enjoying its wealth. God had the land before Him from the beginning as the inheritance to which He would bring His sons, and His leading and chastening of those sons always had some bearing on the end that was before Him. His ways always subserve the purposes of His love.

God must have His sons conformed to Christ, and with this in view He has to humble us and to prove us. A large part of our wilderness experience is to test whether we are in subjection to God or not, and to bring home to us how much there is in our hearts that is not, according to Christ. HE was ever in subjection and obedience; it was never a question whether He would keep God's commandments or not; He did always the things that pleased the Father.

We, being what we are, need humbling; we need to be proved that we may know what is in our heart. There is a great deal of self-deception with us all until God has proved us. We find out then how much there is in us that is unlike Christ. And God uses this in His grace to create "hunger" in our souls. The humbling lies in the discovery, under divine proving, of how unlike we are to Christ, and how unable we are, of ourselves, to become like Him. God allows this to become an intense exercise; He "suffered thee to hunger". He allows the sense of utter insufficiency in ourselves to be keenly felt, that there may be a deep soul-craving for a sufficiency that is God-given — that is not known to us naturally at all. "Which thou hast not known, and which thy fathers knew not".

God has led us by a way designed to reduce and humble us. We had to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" that we might prove divine sufficiency. Manna speaks of divine sufficiency for each day. "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little wanted nothing" (Exodus 16: 18). "But God is able to make every gracious gift abound towards you, that, having in every way always all-sufficiency, ye may abound to every good work" (2 Corinthians 9: 8). No one knows the value of the manna but a humbled soul who has been "suffered ... to hunger". The humbling need has to be felt before the supply comes. As humbled under the mighty hand of God we learn to appreciate Christ, who in wondrous grace was once humbled here. If my heart is haughty and mine eyes lofty, if I "exercise myself in great matters, and in things too wonderful for me" (Psalm 131), I am a long way from appreciating "Christ once humbled here". But the divine humblings bring us morally nearer to Him who was "meek and lowly in heart". They create "hunger" for food that will nourish us for a life that is patterned after Christ.

"He ... fed thee with the manna". The humbling and the hunger are not all. There had been right through the wilderness the proving of divine faithfulness and sufficiency. God had been saying to them, and is now saying to us, You must live by what comes directly from Me; I will be sufficient for you. God would remind us of how His grace has waited upon us and sustained us. Every believer who has had experience of God's wilderness ways has had sufficient proof of this to know it to be a reality. In dependence upon God as known in grace we have found support and strength. Every bit of life according to God in the wilderness is in the strength of grace that comes from heaven.

The kind of life that manna sustains was seen perfectly in Christ. There was not a step, not a word, that did not bring into evidence divine sufficiency; He lived by every word that went out of the mouth of God. In so far as we have done so we have learned what it was to be fed with manna. The daily "omer"

of manna was a necessity to the Israelite, and daily grace from heaven is a necessity to us. God would make us know that we do not live "by bread alone" — by natural resources — but by communications from Himself suited to each day's need. We have to learn that we do not live by outward circumstances or conditions, but by the way God is known to us. This is not anything that the wilderness could afford naturally. It is quite a new thing for us to find that what God has spoken is enough to keep us going through the most trying circumstances so that we live in something that is outside all circumstances. A man so living would not consider expediency; he would consider for God.

That was seen perfectly in the blessed Lord. The devil said to Him, You are a hungry man, but if you are the Son of God you can make this stone into bread; why not do it? The Lord replied by quoting the scripture before us in Deuteronomy 8. He was not living by bread, but by every word of God. He was living, as man should live, in relation to God. We are often more occupied as to how we can get comfortably through circumstances than concerned as to being in them in relation to God and His will. God's providential ordering could easily make all things comfortable for me, but that would not ensure my living spiritually in relation to Him. I do not need manna to make me happy and comfortable in a natural way in my circumstances, but to enable me to be in them in spiritual relation to God, so that I am sustained in my spirit by what comes to me from God. God would have us to live by His word; His sons can live on the communications which He makes to them. What a delight it was to God to have One Man here to whom His word was enough! He lived "by every word of God". I suppose every saint must have known what it was to live by *some* word that God has spoken but His beloved Son lived "by *every word* of God". He knew the full sustainment of what God could be for man, and in the consciousness of divine sufficiency He refused the devil's suggestion that He should make bread for Himself.

What is emphasised here is the fact that God in faithfulness provided the manna; it was there for them day by day whether they appreciated it or not; and its great lesson was that "man doth not live by bread alone, but by everything that goeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live". We know from the history in Numbers that the people lost appreciation of the manna. If we walk as men we shall lose taste for the manna. The Corinthians were walking as men, and by the wisdom of man; they were not living by every word of God. It is possible for us to be prudent, and to order our ways with outward propriety and yet have little taste for the manna. It is a pity to be so self-sufficient as to miss the proving of the divine sufficiency which is ever available through God's grace and faithfulness.

"Thy clothing grew not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years". This is what the faithfulness of God secured to His people in wilderness conditions. Clothing that does not, grow old — clothing suitable to the kingdom of God — is described in Romans 12 - Romans 14; we may see there the features with which God would have His people invested in the wilderness. God's faithfulness makes that raiment available, and no one has ever been able to wear it out! It is very durable; it will stand all the vicissitudes of the wilderness, The tribulations of the wilderness — the trying nature of the road — have brought out that God's people have been able to go through. "Tribulation works endurance; and endurance, experience" (Romans 5: 3, 4). The experience is the proving that through divine faithfulness our foot did not swell. We could speak of ten thousand weaknesses in ourselves, but we have come through to the praise of the One who has brought us through. The wilderness, as viewed here, is just One long experience of divine faithfulness and care, and from this point of view it is intensely interesting. What God can be to His people in the wilderness is as important — in its place — as what He can bestow in the divinely given wealth of the land. Both combine to give us the knowledge of the blessed God who in grace has brought us to Himself.

"And know in thy heart that, as a man chasteneth his son, so Jehovah thy God chasteneth thee" (verse 6). God's chastening is parental, not merely punitive. He deals with us as with sons. See Hebrews 12. God began with the thought of sonship; "Thus saith Jehovah: Israel is my son, my firstborn. And I say to thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me" (Exodus 4: 22, 23). Then all through the wilderness, "as a man chasteneth his son, so Jehovah thy God chasteneth thee". And in the land, "Ye are sons of Jehovah your God" (Deuteronomy 14: 1). We are always sons in the thought of God; it is the blessed relationship with Himself in which His love has set us. We were sons in divine purpose from eternity. Then, when God's calling separated us from the world, it was that we might receive sonship. Then divine chastening came in that we might be freed from things unsuitable in sons, that we might be partakers of God's holiness, and fruitful in all that has the character of righteousness, so that sons' affections might he free. And, finally, in the land the inheritance is enjoyed by the heirs in the consciousness of their relationship and dignity as sons of God for His delight. The inheritance is their God-given portion, but they themselves are His portion, His inheritance, His delight, as in the relationship which His love has called them into, and formed them for. Chastening deals with what is unsuitable in us, but it deals with it from the standpoint of the blessed relationship into which God has called us.

Verses 7 - 10 give us a very comprehensive summary of the wealth of the "good land" which is the fruition of divine promise. There are three parts in the description. Verse 7 speaks of waterbrooks, springs and deep waters; that would have reference to the presence and activities of the Holy Spirit in the saints. Then there is a sevenfold plenty in verse 8 which is suggestive of the completeness of satisfaction which the saints may become possessed of in Christ. And the iron and copper of verse 9 are the hidden strength and wealth of the land. Digging is necessary to secure them; they lie beneath the surface, and can only be acquired as the product of strenuous exercise. But these things are so important that they call for consideration in detail.

"Waterbrooks", "springs", and "deep waters" speak of the diversity, freshness and fulness of the power of the Holy Spirit, in the saints. These are not "wells digged" as in chapter 6, which would refer to sources of refreshment made available by the spiritual labour of others. These are directly God-given, and I have no doubt they refer to the Spirit as spoken of by the Lord in the Gospel of John. John 4 speaks of the Spirit as living water given by the Son of God which should become in the believer "a fountain of water, springing up into eternal life". And Jesus made known how the "waterbrooks" flow when He "stood and cried saying, If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this he said concerning the Spirit, which they that believed on him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified" (John 7: 37 - 39). Then the Comforter as spoken of in John 14, John 15 and John 16 would surely be typified by the "deep waters".

It is striking that; the first feature mentioned of the "good land" makes prominent, figuratively, the Holy Spirit in His varied activities. Eternal life will only be known and enjoyed as the result of the Fountain of water springing up into it. All refreshment and fertility in that region is dependent on the Spirit. There must be the coming to the Son of God and drinking so that the "rivers of living water" may flow. To how many "eternal life" means only the assurance that one is eternally safe, but in Scripture it is "*the* blessing" (Psalm 133: 3); it means present and eternal satisfaction (John 4: 14); it means fulness of joy (1 John 1: 4). There is no hunger, no thirst, no dryness nor barrenness in the region of eternal life. It is "a land of waterbrooks, of springs, and of deep waters, that gush forth in the valleys and hills". The very language used is calculated to awaken the most lively anticipation in our hearts. For, remember, it is presented to us here in all its attractiveness by our blessed Instructor to allure our hearts onward to something not yet possessed. It is the blessed thought of God, the gift of His love, but, from the standpoint of

Deuteronomy 8, not yet entered upon in realisation. It is into such a land our God would bring us.

> "Amid those favoured hills,
> The waterbrooks run down;
> River and rill the valleys fill;
> And the glad land the Lord doth till,
> With plenty crown".

No greater service could be rendered to the people of God today than to awaken the interest of their hearts in eternal life as that which answers spiritually to the "good land". The heart of God cherishes the thought of eternal life for man, as we see in John 3; and then in John 4 the Spirit is given as living water to be in us a Fountain springing up into eternal life — to carry *our* affections in that direction. It is a real loss for souls to read the scriptures as to eternal life in John's Gospel merely as assurance of eternal security. They involve this, most surely, but they mean very much more than this; they suggest infinite present satisfaction and blessedness. How few can truly say that they know what it is to live in a "region of satisfied desire" ! But that this is the thought of God's love for His people, and that this is involved in eternal life, it is impossible, in the face of Scripture, to deny. Let us open our hearts more fully to the precious thoughts of divine love!

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12 of the varied gifts bestowed by the Spirit and exercised in His power. The Spirit divides "to each in particular according as he pleases", and it is God who sets gifts in the assembly. The victorious and ascended Christ has also given gifts — "some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers" (Ephesians 4: 8 - 11).

All these are "waterbrooks" which flow, fed from "the rain from heaven", and take their divinely appointed course under the ordering of God without tarrying for the sanction or ordination of men. There is the greatest diversity in spiritual manifestations; no one ever saw two waterbrooks exactly alike; each gift in the power of the Spirit has its own distinctiveness, and carries refreshment and promotes spiritual fertility wherever it flows. The precious things of God are thus kept before the attention of saints in a living way, and fruitfulness is stimulated. How great the contrast between this and the human arrangements and order which prevail in Christendom! Men lay out canals of their own devising, but "living water" does not flow in artificial channels; the Spirit of God refuses to be restricted by the formal arrangements of men.

But we must not limit the activities of the Spirit, as typified in these gushing streams, to specific gifts for ministry. As set together in assembly relations each brother and each sister is to be a contributor of spiritual refreshment. The waterbrooks and springs and deep waters are in the saints generally. The effect of wilderness discipline is to bring under judgment all the elements that would cause believers to be a discomfort to each other, that there may be the unhindered flow of what is of the Spirit of God for mutual refreshment and comfort. Whether it be in the experience of the valleys (Philippians 2), or the hills (Philippians 3), the heavenly springs should flow.

It is very exercising when there is not a flow of "living water" amongst saints. If things are dry I must not blame others; are "rivers of living water" flowing out of me? Until these things take form in the saints they are not available for mutual refreshment. But the end of the humbling and parental discipline of the wilderness is that we come into the land to be possessed of these things, and as being possessed they become available for the brethren. Whatever each of us may have that is spiritual and of Christ is for the benefit of all the brethren. Every brother and sister should have an intense conviction of that. The humblings of the wilderness have in view spiritual enrichment in the land.

The scriptures to which we have referred in John's Gospel have every believer in view. They speak of inward satisfaction, and of ability for mutual refreshment, which *every* saint may look to realise in his own experience. It should be a matter of exercise and desire with each one of us to prove the present gain of the Spirit in this way. One has to admit that it is little known generally, and perhaps none of us can say that we know it more than in very feeble measure. But it is set before us in Deuteronomy 8 as an attractive prospect to encourage any desire which may be present with us towards entering the "good land". Every refreshment and fruit that belongs to "the land" is yielded in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is well to note that this is the first feature of "the land" in which Christ would instruct us. Eternal life is "from the Spirit" (Galatians 6: 8).

Then it is "a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, where thou shalt lack nothing" (verses 8, 9). A great wealth of spiritual substance is brought before us here. We are apt to pass too lightly over these things, but God would have us to ponder each separate item; we shall find great gain in doing so, with prayer that we may have spiritual understanding in regard to them.

"Wheat" speaks of what Christ was as coming in after a new and heavenly order entirely for the pleasure of God. He was "The grain of wheat", which

would have abode alone if it had not fallen into the ground and died. "But if it die, it bears much fruit" (John 12: 24). The saints as the fruit of Christ in death are wheat for the garner of God. "Such as the heavenly one, such also the heavenly ones. And as we have borne the image of the one made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly one" (1 Corinthians 15:48,49). Believers are "of Christ" — of that order of man — through grace and by the work of God. The food of the land would nourish our souls in the truth of this.

"Barley" — as seen in the "sheaf of the first-fruits" — is figurative of Christ in resurrection, "first-fruits of those fallen asleep". He went into death that He might be entitled to bring out of death all those who are His, and He will do this at His coming for those fallen asleep. There can be no doubt that the saints will all be raised after the order of Christ as risen. But if this is to be manifestly so at His coming He would nourish our souls even now on the great spiritual reality that He has been accepted for us as the risen One. We come into the land as His brethren, risen with Him.

"Vines" yield that "which gladdeneth the heart of man" (Psalm 104:16), and even "cheers God and man" (Judges 9:13). In John 15 where the Lord speaks of Himself as "the true vine", He says, "I have spoken these things to you that my joy may be in you, and your joy be full". "The land" is a sphere characterised by fulness of joy, so that when John reports to us "the eternal life, which was with the Father, and has been manifested to us", he adds, "And these things write we to you that your joy may be full" (1 John 1:4). When, some years back, there was a ministry which called attention to the true character and blessedness of eternal life, it was opposed as being an attempt to rob the saints of something. Whereas the object of that ministry was to bring about, through divine grace, that eternal life should not be a mere word to us, but that we should have some experimental knowledge of its preciousness, and of the fulness of joy which is involved in it. Is it not to be greatly desired that Christians generally should have more spiritual joy? It is one of the attractive features of the land that it is "a land of ... vines"; it yields abundant joy.

"Fig-trees" represent that sweet fruit of righteousness which Israel, under divine culture, failed to yield. See Luke 13: 6 - 9; Matthew 21: 19. One result of the Father's chastening is that it "yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those exercised by it" (Hebrews 12: 11). And Paul prays for the Philippians that they might be "complete as regards the fruit of righteousness, which is by Jesus Christ, to God's glory and praise" (Philippians 1: 11). The fruit of "the land" is figurative of precious things which take form "by Jesus Christ" and in the power of the Spirit in the saints. Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians

describe that fruit in detail. "The fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Ephesians 5: 9).

"Pomegranates" were on the skirts of the cloak of the priestly ephod (Exodus 28: 33), and they were also on the two pillars of brass for the porch of the temple (1 Kings 7: 18). They are also mentioned as characteristic of the bride in the Song of Solomon; when she is spoken of as a garden enclosed the Bridegroom says of her, "Thy shoots are a paradise of pomegranates, with precious fruits" (4: 13). They seem thus to be suggestive of "fruit unto holiness" as brought forth in the saints through being sustained by the priestly service of Christ. The Philadelphian overcomer who is made a pillar in the temple of God would have adornments such as the pomegranates represent, and such fruit is very precious to the heart of Christ as brought forth by His sister, His spouse. "Pomegranates" are yielded by holy affections, for holiness is by love, not by faith. See 1 Thessalonians 3: 12, 13. Such affections would secure unity amongst the brethren, and we may learn from John 17 how delightful this is to the Lord.

It is sad to have to recall that the Spirit of God has not only spoken of the pomegranates as adorning the pillars in the temple (1 Kings 7), but He has recorded how those pillars were broken up, and the brass thereof carried to Babylon (Jeremiah 52: 17 - 23). It is a needful reminder that, through unfaithfulness and departure, holy adornments may be lost, as they have been in the Christian profession generally. Indeed the language of Joel might well be applied today, "Be ashamed, ye husbandmen; howl, ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley: because the harvest of the field hath perished. The vine is dried up, and the fig-tree languisheth; the pomegranate-tree, the palm also and the apple-tree; all the trees of the field are withered, yea, joy is withered away from the children of men" (Joel 1: 11, 12). But if things have withered through unfaithfulness there is yet space to repent, and to return through self-judgment to the precious thoughts of God as made good in Christ, and to humbly wait on Him to make them good in us by His Spirit. In Deuteronomy 8 the abundant wealth of "the land" is set before us in all its fulness, and the question is, Are we attracted by it? Does it allure our hearts? If so, it can, through infinite mercy, be still enjoyed, for in the heart and thought of God He has nothing less for His people.

"A land of olive-trees". Christ Himself could say, "But as for me, I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God; I will confide in the loving-kindness of God for ever and ever" (Psalm 52: 8). And it is the privilege of those who have His Spirit to take up in their measure, the same words. Jehovah had called Israel, "A green olive-tree, fair, of goodly fruit" (Jeremiah 11: 16); and such

has He called His saints to be today. As drawing all from God's loving-kindness, in contrast with the wicked man "spreading like a green tree in its native soil" (Psalm 37: 35), the saints become spiritual, and yield the fruit of the Spirit. They count upon God, they are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and they partake of the root and fatness of God's goodness. "The land" is characterised as "a land of olive-trees", representing the saints as spiritual persons, capable of yielding spiritual fruit and ministering what is spiritual to others, all having its source in God and in the unction of His Spirit .

"Olive-trees and honey" are put together, intimating that "honey" here is not the sweetness of human nature, but of affections that are spiritual. It would speak of the sweet "consolation of love" which is the product of the united activities of the saints in the divine nature. Nothing could more aptly illustrate activities with a common purpose than a hive of bees. And "the land" is marked by the result of this in "honey". To have the wealth and sweetness of the land we must have the brethren, for the fruition of the land takes form in them by the Spirit. When we see this we begin to appreciate the essentiality of the Lord's commandment that we should "love one another". We begin to understand John's word that "*we* know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren". We need the gain of all that is in the brethren, and we derive it as we love them, and have fellowship with one another. The formal arrangements of the congregational or hierarchal systems in the religious world are grievous to the Holy Spirit because they hinder the development of fellowship and the spiritual affections of the brethren. The wealth and sweetness of "the land" cannot be enjoyed under such conditions.

Plenty and satisfaction can be found in "the good land". It is "a land wherein thou shalt eat bread... and be filled, and shalt bless Jehovah thy God for the good land which he hath given thee" (verses 9, 10). Every spiritual desire finds complete satisfaction there.

The "iron" and "copper" of verse 9 indicate the strength of those divine principles which secure the people of God from the inroads of evil. Iron and brass, according to Deuteronomy, are for security against evil. "Iron and brass shall be thy bolts" (Deuteronomy 33: 25). Things cannot be maintained for God, or for the joy of His people, without "bolts". It has often been noticed that in the days of Nehemiah it is not recorded that Eliashib the high priest put locks and bars on the sheep-gate which he built. He had no bolts of iron and brass, and this laxity led eventually to his preparing a great chamber in the courts of the house of God for the Ammonite (Nehemiah 3: 1; 13: 4 - 9). God would have us to be open brethren in relation to all that is good, but very exclusive in relation to what is evil.

"Iron" speaks of power to overcome the world. Before the time when all the power of the world will be broken by the "sceptre of iron" in the hand of Christ it has been broken morally by Him. He has overcome the world, and His saints can overcome also "through him that has loved us". In presence of divine power the nations are merely "as a potter's vessel". Jeremiah was appointed "an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land; against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to deliver thee" (Jeremiah 1: 18, 19).

"Brass (copper)" is clearly connected in Scripture with the unsparing judgment of evil, and moral separation from it. This is seen in the serpent of brass, the altar, the laver, and in the feet of the Son of Man in Revelation 1. As walking in the midst of the candlesticks He does not leave unjudged any feature of evil. If evil is not judged there will be no strength to maintain what is good, The holy and righteous discipline of the house of God is necessary for the safeguarding and preservation of the good that pertains to that house. The promise to the overcomer in Philadelphia is that he shall be made a pillar in the temple of God. It is an allusion to the pillars of brass in Solomon's temple; stability and strength are connected with the maintenance of holiness and truth, and this involves the judgment of evil, and separation from it.

Job 28 speaks in a striking way of the mining operations by which men get precious things out of the earth, and compares with them the finding of wisdom and understanding. And the conclusion reached at the end of the chapter is, "Lo, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding". Iron and brass would mark faithful saints as pursuing the path of separation indicated in 2 Timothy 2. The power of the Lord is with such, enabling them to steadfastly maintain good in separation from evil. We have to judge things first in ourselves. No evil has come into the Christian profession of which I cannot find the root and germ in my own flesh. The distinguishing of good and evil, and separating from evil, are most important. They involve deep exercise, answering to digging, but the result is that the soul is confirmed in moral strength, and this is the basis of all that is spiritual in our souls. The waters flow abundantly in the land, and there is great fruitfulness, but underlying are the iron and brass. They are worth attaining, even though only to be got by digging and by traversing "a path no bird of prey knoweth, and the vulture's eye hath not seen it; the proud beasts have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed over it".

The warnings of this chapter shew that even after the land has been possessed and enjoyed there are dangers. "Beware that thou forget not

Jehovah thy God, in not keeping his commandments ... lest when thou hast eaten and art full ... then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget Jehovah thy God ... and thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand has procured me this wealth" (verses 11 - 17). Even after being in the land we may get lifted up and become self-confident. These warnings are wholesome for us, for we are as much in danger of forgetting God's former ways and humbling as was Israel.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 8 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 8

Here we have the discipline and exercise in the way.

DIVINE TESTING (JT 48)

Deuteronomy 8:2,3; 1 Peter 1:6,7; Genesis 22:1 - 4

My subject, dear brethren, is divine testing; a feature of the present time, not only as regards the people of God but the nations particularly, and the whole sphere of Christian profession. All are tested in a peculiar way at the present time. The Lord's people feel it most keenly, believers in Christ — those who take on of His spirit — are more sensitive than others as to what God ordains in the way of trial. The Lord had warned His disciples that they should hear of wars and rumours of wars, saying, "For nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in different places", and adding, "these things are the beginnings of throes", (Mark 13:8). But, He says, You are not to be disturbed. He forearmed His people in view of crises that would greatly oppress others, that they should not be terrified. The prophetic word is a great advantage to us in this respect. We have insight into current matters that others have not, and thus are armed against being unnecessarily disturbed. The Lord, too, having forewarned us in the prophetic page Himself, is ready to assist us as to any acuteness of feeling. Much arises from fear, natural feeling and pessimism. Much unnecessary suffering is experienced; and the Lord is ready to assist us as to anything crucial in that way, to relieve our minds, for He would not have us to be burdened by what does not exist, and never will exist. He is a great Priest above; His priesthood implies His sympathy with us, that He can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. But not with the feelings arising from our natural proclivities — our feelings — national or otherwise. These are in themselves to be judged as sinful, not being of faith, and yet they may appear right. We often suffer from physical fear, which the Lord enjoins against: "And be not afraid of those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul; but fear rather him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell", (Matthew 10:28). Attention to that word would save us from much. The fear of man works a snare, but the fear of God is imperative and protective. I do not refer to slavish fear, but reverential fear. He is by our side in that.

In making these remarks I come to the passage in Deuteronomy which tells us of divine leading in the wilderness. Jehovah said to the people, "And thou shalt remember all the way which Jehovah thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness", chapter 8:2. Actual facts recorded would hardly lead us to conclude that God was leading *all* the time, for man's will led a great deal in what happened. We have rebellion upon rebellion, which of course is the outcome of man's will; but yet all these rebellions did not shut out God from leading His people. Even at the height of Korah's rebellion God was not shut

out; He was present all the time; He stood by Moses and Aaron and all those who stood by the truth with them. He here accredits Himself with having led them in the wilderness for forty years. The apostle Paul tells us, referring to this same thing, that Jehovah "nursed them in the desert" for about forty years. (Acts 13:18), a most touching fact. He bore with their manners as a parent has to bear with the adverse manners of his children. It may be necessary to bear with them to a point, but only to a point, for ill manners in a household, allowed indefinitely by parents, are contrary to God's will. God bore with the manners of His people in the wilderness for forty years, but then we know He used the rod, and severely too. In fact, six hundred thousand men, from twenty years old and above, died in the wilderness on account of their manners; their carcases were strewn in the desert. So that parents are reminded that ill manners are not to be indefinitely allowed. They are to be refused in principle. God bore with the manners of Israel, but the history shows He used the severest measures against the evil manifest in them.

Our chapter says, "And thou shalt remember all the way which Jehovah thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or not". It is not that God did not know what was in their hearts; I need not say that. The point is to bring out the knowledge of it; to bring out information; for all proceedings, judicial or otherwise, must be based on accredited testimony. God does not judge people exactly for what is in their hearts; it is what is brought out of their hearts — what is known — that He deals with. We sometimes wonder, doubtless, why God allows so much evil; but in a certain sense He orders it: "... making peace and creating evil", He says in Isaiah 45:7. It is a feature of His ways to bring out evil, even to furnish means of provoking it, so that sin might become exceeding sinful. We often challenge this in our minds, doubtless, and upbraid God in it, but while He speaks of that in Isaiah, He warns against answering again to Him. It is a common thing today to hear men say. If there be a God, why does He allow such dreadful things as are happening? It is challenging God. Who dare do it? It is His own realm. Who dare question His right to provoke sin so that sin might appear as it really is? What it really is, can be fully seen in Satan; but the trial is not in Satan now; it is in men, and God will bring out what is there. He says, "Let him that does unrighteously do unrighteously still", (Revelation 22:11). In His governmental ways, God allows evil, long practised, to work out in certain persons; one of the most solemn things in scripture. If one is filthy, let him be that; the word says. It is judicial. Judas is an example. God allowed sin in a peculiar form in that man; and it must be so. It was allowed "that the scripture might be fulfilled", (John 13:18). It is well to take these things into

account, dear brethren, because they allay our fears as to much that is current, and challenge us too, if we dare to answer again to God. "Who art *thou*" He enquires, "that answerest again to God?" (Romans 9:20).

Well, as has been said, our chapter records that God led them in the wilderness to know what was in their hearts. Who could tell what was in their hearts when they started out across the Red Sea? God, of course, knew; but who else could tell? You see young persons in that throng which went out from Egypt; amiable, obedient to their parents, having seen what had happened, how the firstborn of Egypt were slain and Israel spared. Who can say what will mature in these young men as they advance under divine leadership in contrary circumstances? How many of us can witness to what we have seen in our day! How little we expected to see what we have seen in youth as it developed! But it was there and it has been brought out "to know what was *in* thy heart". It is not exactly that God wished to know, but it is brought out in testimony.

God is leading His people now in these parts. We have great encouragement in divine leading, but then what about our hearts? Young men and women are growing up and coming into fellowship; commendable as far as the brethren see, but God says, I am leading, and what is in their hearts will come out; it will become a matter of public note; and it is only as it becomes such that it can be dealt with according to God. We do not deal with it while it is in their hearts; we do not know all that is there, but God does. He says, I will bring it out, as it says in our verse, "... to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart,

whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or not". That is an open question. A boy or a girl of thirteen, fourteen, or fifteen years of age desires to break bread, and the parents like it very much; we all like it. But then what is in their hearts? God is concerned about that, and what will develop out of it; and yet He says, as leading, I will take them on. I suppose two million people were led by God in the wilderness. Day in and day out, night in and night out, Jehovah was leading! He never slumbered nor slept. Anyone, looking out of his tent at night, might see the pillar of fire. That indicated that God was there! He was there moment by moment during the darkness of the night, watching over His people. In the morning they may have to decamp and move on to another encampment. God directed that; He was the Leader in that. Some young Levite might say, I carried this part of the tabernacle to the last encampment; I will not carry it now. Can you not picture that happening in the desert? That, and worse, happened. Another one says. Look at Aaron and Moses; they are everything; we are nothing in their eyes. You would not have

thought they would say that when they came out of Egypt, but God is leading them in the wilderness in a contrary scene to humble them. We do not like to be humbled. We rather like to be exalted, but God says. You need to be humbled; you need to be proved to bring out what is in your heart. That is going on in every one of us to bring out what is in our hearts. God, of course, is ashamed of us when it comes out. And the saints have to withdraw from young people, because of evil conduct issuing from their hearts. It is shameful! It brings dishonour! The saints cannot walk with them if there is the allowance of disobedience, worldliness and lust.

In due time Israel is led to Kadesh-barnea, and the spies brought back their wonderful testimony of the land; yet all Israel, except two men, turned against it and despised the pleasant land. They refused to listen to the gospel of heaven; and God told them they would be strewn in the desert. What was in their hearts was brought to light; six hundred thousand of them exposed by that one thing! And may I say to every young person here, it will be disclosed too, by something or other, as to whether you are keeping the commandments or not. God is concerned whether His commandments are kept or not, and He is leading His people to humble them, and to prove them, to know what is in their heart, whether they will keep his commandments or not. How many young people come through that test? Alas, for the number of casualties! The devil ensnares many by the world or other things, and their hearts are exposed — they are not keeping the commandments. It thus becomes a matter of public knowledge; it had been there, secretly, in the heart; now it is on the surface and apparent. God has done it. But then, if the testing proves that you *are* keeping the commandments, the heart of the Lord is pleased and the brethren are pleased, too. But alas! how many have their own way, with the sorrowful result as seen with the Israelites — their carcases were strewn in the desert!

The epistles to the Corinthians bring all this up, the apostle naming the different elements of sinfulness in the people. He says, for example, "Neither be ye idolaters, as some of them; as it is written. The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play", 1 Corinthians 10:7. One may say that is not idolatry; but that is exactly what the Spirit of God calls idolatry. They did that when Moses was absent from the camp. They sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play in idolatry; they had made the golden calf; they wanted to go back to Egypt, and to make themselves a captain. Many of us do not ask for a captain; each makes himself the captain and thinks himself competent enough to judge, so as to turn and go back to Egypt. This is a most solemn thing, because it is God leading His people and humbling them to bring out what is in their hearts, whether they will keep the commandments or not.

Well, I could say much more about this scripture because it is one of the most remarkable chapters in the Old Testament. It treats of the richness of the land of Canaan, also. In verse 16 it says, "... who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end (Deuteronomy 8:16)". That includes the beautiful land which is also described. There is no less thought in God's mind than to do us good, but He says, I will bring out what is in your hearts. He is not judging sin as in your heart; He will allow that to come out; He will bring it out by trial; but also, by giving you the manna to eat. He says. It is not that I want to expose you; I want to do you good. You may have to wait for it, for in truth it is the latter end; the chapter depicts the land. What good there was in it! What richness! That is the latter end that God had in view for His people.

Coming to the verses in Peter, we have a wilderness setting. The people are viewed as in the dispersion. The word "dispersion" implies an action of others; you do not disperse yourself. For example, the Emperor Claudius commanded all Jews to leave Rome, that illustrates how these things happen. Aquila and Priscilla were found in Corinth because of that edict; they were dispersed from Rome. And so in Acts 8, on account of the persecution, the saints were scattered from Jerusalem. That was a great trial! Peter speaks here of a fiery one; a terrible persecution that arose. These people are dispersed; they have been scattered from their homes, where they were born and brought up; they are dispersed by some power. The Lord had anticipated the day when Jerusalem would be compassed about with armies. One thinks of the brethren in Jerusalem in those days, when the Roman general came to attack and destroy it. The Lord had said, When you see that, leave Jerusalem. It happened in the year A.D. 70. The Lord's words were, "When ye see Jerusalem encompassed with armies, then know that its desolation is drawn nigh. Then let those ... who are in the midst of it depart ... for these are days of avenging", (Luke 21:20 - 22). The city of the great King was to be razed to the ground, and there it is until the present time. Although it is still called Jerusalem, having now a considerable population, from the Lord's point of view it is in desolation, and the Jews are carried captive, until the time of the nations are fulfilled. They are about to be fulfilled; they are not finished yet, and therefore Jerusalem is still in desolation and the Jews are in captivity. The "dispersion" had this character. Peter says, "Beloved, take not as strange the fire of persecution which has taken place amongst you for your trial, as if a strange thing was happening to you", 1 Peter 4:12. It was a fiery trial.

The first trial was in divine leadership, and it relates to the whole period of our sojourn in the wilderness - it covered the full forty years. We are apt to be

irksome under it, but God ordains trial to prove us, to bring out what is in our hearts. It is going on all the time. The Acts and the epistles show in many instances how God allowed the testings in the early days and how many went back. Take a man like Demas, for example. Paul, in writing to the Colossians, includes Demas in the salutation, chapter 4:14, but in writing to Timothy, later, he says, "Demas has forsaken me", 2 Timothy 4:10. Why did he forsake Paul? Because he loved the present world. How many have gone back like that! The Lord says, "because lawlessness shall prevail, the love of the most shall grow cold", (Matthew 24:12). We must be watchful that we do not allow the trial to cause our love to wax cold. Keep near the brethren. "Provoke one another to love and to good works (Hebrews 10:24)". That is a fine service! How necessary it is, for, as we have said, the love of the most shall grow cold. Continual pressure is apt to cause that, and particularly, if we stay away from the meetings. There is no surer evidence of love waning than staying away from the meetings. The circle of the saints is the circle of love; it is where love is: "*We* know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren", (1 John 3:14). The question is often asked. How do I "lay hold of eternal life"? Paul exhorts us to do so, (1 Timothy 6:12). Is it in the air? Not at all. It is among the brethren. And again "lay hold of what is really life", (1 Timothy 6:19). Where do you get it? Among the brethren. Keep as near as you can to them; and the more you desire to be among them, the more you have opportunity to do so. Eternal life is in Christ, but realised by the Spirit. Disregard of the assembly, the circle of spiritual affections, robs us of it. So that there is a great need of this warning. Constant pressure is apt to chill our love. Keep near the brethren; it is salvation. God says, "I will give salvation in Zion", (Isaiah 46:13); and eternal life He commands there, Psalm 133:3.

My point in this second feature of my subject is the trial of our *faith*. It took forty years to bring out what was in their hearts; God did it Himself. Every one of their hearts was exposed, whether they would obey God or not. God saw to that; and as I said before, six hundred thousand of them fell in the wilderness; they would not keep the law of God; they rebelled. But Peter speaks about faith: "the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes", 1 Peter 1:7. Maybe some of us have never thought that we have something in our bosoms more precious than gold. It is not *the* faith here, it is *your* faith; and God is trying that faith. It is not now to bring out the naughtiness of our hearts, but to bring out the faith that is in our hearts. That is what this testing is for. That is worth accepting. Look at that treasure in the morning when you get up; see if it is going to be any larger in the evening. The idea is increase in quality and quantity. And hence "the proving of your faith" — not the proving of your feelings or the naughtiness of your heart —

but the proving of your faith; the thing that God has put there. He says it is more precious than gold. It is incomparable in that sense. Gold is nothing to it; it perishes, but faith does not. It is a precious commodity; and God says, I am testing it; it is "the proving of your faith". I believe if we look into our treasuries daily we shall see how the matter stands. And God has in mind the future; that our faith may "be found to praise and glory and honour in the revelation of Jesus Christ", verse 7. You have some little thing there in the way of wealth, and God is testing you so that you should have it in abundance, and that it should advance in quality and quantity; even though it is tried by fire. A fiery trial is not easy to bear; it is apt to produce scepticism. Why does God allow this? I know of saints questioning the rightness of loved ones falling asleep. How serious! You may say, I prayed that he should not be taken away; but then God intended to take him, and our prayers should be based on God's will. I have been thinking lately of the many bases there are for prayer. One is the *will of God*. "My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; but not as *I* will, but as *thou* wilt", (Matthew 26:39). That is one principle. Another principle or basis for prayer is *promise*. If God has made a promise. He will stand by it; go to Him with the promises; He is ready to listen to you. Another basis for prayer is *God's love* for His people. He regards an appeal to Him on account of His love to them. Yet another basis for prayer is the sovereign *counsel of God*; God will listen to prayer based on that. I mention these things so as to help us in our prayers; that we may not be rebellious. We must pray in intelligence as to His will.

Peter, here, is speaking about faith. He says to the saints, addressing them as in the dispersion, "Wherein ye exult, for a little while at present, if needed, put to grief by various trials", verse 6. One is challenged by that in all this terrible thing that is current. Peter says of these people that were in dispersion, scattered from their homes, put to grief by various trials, "Wherein ye exult". That is what I want to know; am I able to rejoice in the pressure. And the passage goes on to say, "that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes, though it be proved by fire, be found to praise and glory and honour in the revelation of Jesus Christ". We are now in the making. This is a most remarkable time. For Christians, it is the great making time. God is making us — forming us — and the point I am stressing now is faith. Do I have any? The Lord would say to the true believer: *Your* faith. Not simply faith, but *your* faith. He said to the woman in Simon's house, "Thy faith has saved thee; go in peace", (Luke 7:50). He would say to you. You have it; look into your treasury and see that it is there. The fiery trial is intended to bring it into evidence and strengthen it, it is so precious. And it is to "be found to praise and glory and honour in the revelation of Jesus Christ": it is the

occasion, from our side, of the glorious scene marking the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. One has often tried to visualise the heavenly city. What a thing it is! It is a cube, composed of people of this kind, those who exercise faith now, and come under trial, that this precious thing might be effective and shine.

Well now, I go on to Abraham. I want to show how the Spirit of God treats this matter of Abraham's trial. The other two phases represent trials of all the saints. Abraham's is one man's trial; nobody else was tried like this, and I suppose I can likewise say that everyone of us has some trial that is his own. I have had one — indeed many — and each of us as he looks back on his history will, no doubt, find he has had a trial of his own. This was Abraham's trial. Certain things had happened; and as you look at the twenty-first chapter you will see particularly what did happen. I cannot go into that now, but it says, "And it came to pass after these things". Something happens in my history that is in view of such a trial; it is allowed that I should be equal to the trial when it comes. So the passage says, "And it came to pass after these things, that God tried Abraham, and said to him, Abraham! and he said, Here am I. And he said. Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and there offer him up for a burnt-offering on one of the mountains which I will tell thee of", Genesis 22: 1,2. This is a trial of affection. It is an act of faith. As we read in Hebrews, "By faith, Abraham, when tried, offered up Isaac, and he who had received to himself the promises offered up his only begotten son", Hebrews 11:17. It was the only begotten; the one in whom all the promises were vested; and Abraham offered him up. It was Abraham's trial. Isaac was the supreme object of Abraham's affections.

Now, dear brethren, what about this? I am tried in some matter of my affections. If I set my affections on some person or thing, God will try me as to it. He would ask. Is it more to you than I am to you? That is the principle. It is the keenest trial, you might say, of all, because you have no one to sympathise with you. It is *your* trial. It is between you and God. God says to Abraham, I want Isaac; I want you to offer him up as a burnt-offering. He does not mitigate the matter in the least. He says, "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, Isaac". The whole matter is stated in the tersest way by God Himself. It is intended to press the thing home on Abraham's affections. This is the object of your affections. He would say, and I want him; are you willing to let Me have him? or do you think more of him than you do of Me? Do you love that object so much that you will not let Me have him? That was the trial! "And it came to pass after these things", so that, dear brethren, if there be any little spiritual progress in our souls, you may be sure some

great test will come. "And Abraham" we are told, "rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up and went to the place that God had told him of", verse 3. I do not need to go over the verses; they are most beautiful, most affecting.

Now, it goes on to say, "On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar". Think of the position! Isaac speaking to him there; they went on and conversed together. And then it says, "And Abraham said to his young men. Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you", Genesis 22:5. He is not going to lose Isaac, that was not in his mind. He was ready to sacrifice him and he *did* sacrifice him, for he raised his hand with the knife to kill him on the altar, but God held back that hand. He said, "Abraham, Abraham! ... Stretch not out thy hand against the lad", Genesis 22:11. But what I want to stress is that the Spirit of God says, "he received him", Hebrews 11:19. In all these trials God intends us to *receive* something. In this case, Abraham received Isaac back from the dead; not simply from the altar, but from the *dead*. Well, if I receive him back from the dead, I may say I have him for ever; and that is the principle. It all merges in what we receive back from the dead; I get into the realm of resurrection; thus through divine testing the believer is gradually led into the realm of resurrection. Think of what Lazarus was to the two sisters in Bethany! "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died", they said, (John 11:21). They would retain him as before — Lazarus, born as their brother — but now they receive him back from the dead. Was there ever such a Lazarus? Did any other sister ever have such a brother? Now they have him, received back from the dead. God has in mind a state of things morally set up in resurrection; the great result of all this trial. We are not to be suffering all the time, but coming into the realm of resurrection where all is joy, eternally. This is a wonderful thought! One would like to be able to enlarge on it; but that is what is stated; Abraham received Isaac back from the dead in a figure. It would fill Abraham's soul with new light, so that after these things you get further great things as to him. In chapter 23 we are told that he buried Sarah, evidently in faith, for the field and cave which Abraham purchased was the burying-place of those who had faith in view of resurrection. In chapter 24 he sends out his servant for a wife for Isaac. It is the progress of faith, on the line of trial. God will bring out what He has placed in us according to its value in His own eyes, for He has in view "to do thee good at thy latter end".

THE RICHNESS OF THE LAND (JT 91)

Deuteronomy 8:7 - 10; Deuteronomy 10: 5 - 9; Colossians 2:1-4 Colossians 2:8-10

These scriptures speak of the richness of that into which we are brought, namely, the land, the word 'land' being used seven times in those verses in chapter 8 to call attention to the richness, the wealth, of that into which we are brought, not that into which we shall be brought merely, but that into which we are brought, for the land typifies our present portion. It is not exactly a type of heaven literally, that into which we shall be brought when the Lord descends from heaven, as we are told, and raises the saints from the dead, from sleeping, and changes us who are alive and remain; the land of promise is rather what we are brought into now, something to be understood, a place of great richness, a land which requires no imports. No nation in the world can be spoken of in this way, scarcely any nation, if any, is independent of the products of other nations. Our land is, as I hope to show in detail; there is no need of importations of commodities.

Now, in speaking thus, it is but right morally that I should refer to the one who tells us these things, for the Spirit of God loves to enhance in our eyes the vessels He uses, that we may have them in esteem if they be living, and hold them in reverential memory if they be gone; we are to remember them — "Remember your leaders", Hebrews 13:7 whose faith we are to follow. Moses, in a sense, is unique in this respect, whether we view him typically or personally, for the Spirit of God presents him to us in this double way, what he was personally and what he was typically. Scarcely anyone in the Old Testament more agrees personally with what he was typically and officially than Moses does — faithful, as we are told, in all God's house, one of whom Stephen, in his address, says, "This is he who was in the assembly in the wilderness", Acts 7:38. For forty years he bore with the manners of Israel in an adverse scene, a provocative scene, for the wilderness is provocative of our proclivities, it tends to irritation and complaint and revolt, even apostasy; hence the tribute to Moses, he was in the assembly in the wilderness, and retained his freshness and sympathies and love until the last moment of his life of 120 years. This book is written when he was about to die, and it is perhaps a fact unparalleled that he could write such a book, as you will observe the date given in chapter 1:3, "in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first of the month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel, according to all that Jehovah had given him in command to them" Deuteronomy 1:3 — he spoke according to orders. It is not here the oft-repeated, "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying ..." — it is the general outline of

all that the Lord had commanded him to give unto them, in the eleventh month of the fortieth year — as I apprehend, the last month of his life. What a man he was! and what an example for elder brethren, to retain all that they have received in their ministries from the outset, so as to bring it forward as needed at the end; nothing to recall, nothing to cancel, all pervaded by the true spirit of ministry to the saints, so that his speech remained to distil as the dew, it came down as the small rain at 119 years and 11 months. We may well take note of this, dear brethren, so that the elder may not discourage the younger, but rather enhance the ministry, enhance christianity indeed in themselves, in their own enjoyment of it; unsullied in their appreciation of what they have received from the Lord in earlier days, able to review it to the end, as the apostle Paul alludes to himself, "being *such an one* as Paul the aged", Philemon 9 simply such an one as Paul the apostle — he was that in surprising degree, as he tells us, nothing behind the chiefest — "laboured more abundantly than they all", 1 Corinthians 15:10 he says, and so he addresses a beloved brother, "being such an one", he says, "as Paul the aged". No allusion to any decrepitude of old age, for that could but discredit him, but "being such an one", he retained his freshness and affection such as had always been manifested in him.

Well now, thus are Moses in the Old Testament, and Paul in the New, examples for elder brethren to encourage forward the younger. Moses knew he was about to depart, for honoured servants are not taken by surprise if dissolution come, he was apprised beforehand indeed by Jehovah; and buried honourably, no one had such a burial as Moses, as we may say, God Himself was the undertaker, speaking reverently — dug his grave, I suppose; Jehovah buried him, no one knows where — such is the honour conferred on this great servant. We may well listen to him, especially young ones, listen to his description of the *Land*.

One is reminded of the gospel of Luke; it is a peculiarly buoyant gospel, indeed to be evangelical we must be buoyant, or we shall discredit the gospel — dolefulness ill-becomes a preacher of the gospel. Luke 15 is, I suppose, one of the best known scriptures, and one of its leading features is buoyancy: the shepherd rejoicing and calling others into the joy; the woman who lost the silver piece finding it, rejoicing, and calling others into the joy; the father of the prodigal rejoicing — others brought into it — "It was meet that *we* should make merry, and be glad". Luke 15:32. And this is merry-making, as it were, that is to continue, for the house is turned into a dancing hall, God, by His Spirit, graciously coming down to the thoughts of young believers to wean them away from the world's spheres of pleasure, to show how infinitely greater is the pleasure proposed in the gospel — pleasures for evermore. "As

well the singers as the dancers shall say, All my springs are in thee" Psalm 87:7, that is to say, in the sphere of the pleasure — Zion, the place of it. Barzillai had no taste for it, a warning to old brothers and sisters — lover of Christ indeed, lover of David, for he maintained him in the wilderness the other side of the Jordan and came over the Jordan with him, but returned back. He had grown too old, he said, for such enjoyment — what will he do in heaven? He will have to change his mind — no doubt he has. We have to anticipate, dear brethren, and not to come short now of what we anticipate; to show that what we anticipate is real, that we have the earnest of it, the Holy Spirit is the earnest of the inheritance. So that, when we go to heaven, there shall be no great change — there should not be. 'There no stranger-God shall meet thee' (76:10) — that heavenly scene, heaven literally, I mean, surely should not be strange to us. Beyond anything perhaps we may have anticipated, but in character what we anticipate, for we anticipate what we enjoy in principle now by the earnest; hence the music and the dancing. The elder brother had no interest in it at all, he was in the field, his heart full of envy, marked by inability to take in that holy scene of love. The word 'dancing', as I said before, is God graciously using a human term to win our hearts, to show us that He has everything the world can give, but in an infinitely superior way and of an infinitely superior kind. David is the leader in this kind of thing, dancing with all his might, but clothed with a *linen* ephod, he was perfectly sober, although you might say, in another sense, beside himself, but he knew what he was doing, the linen ephod means priestly sobriety — I know what I am doing; like the elders in Revelation, I always give an account of what I am doing, I know what I am doing, I give the reason for it. That is the sort of thing that begins now with full-grown people, and Deuteronomy contemplates such, it contemplates growth; we are at the confines of Canaan and we see the great servant with all his feelings and affections, and chapter after chapter brings before us the wealth of the land, but, on the other hand, warning us as to what prevents its enjoyment.

And so these four verses in chapter 8, perhaps more than any others in the book, depict this wealth, this wealthy land, the word, as I said, being used seven times, so as to fix our minds upon it. It is not a shifting scene, it is not the sands of the desert, it is *this land*, it is a fixed thing; and so he says to us, "Jehovah thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of waterbrooks, of springs, and of deep waters, that gush forth in the valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive trees and honey, a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness; where thou shalt lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose mountains thou wilt dig copper. And thou shalt eat and be filled, and shalt

bless Jehovah thy God for the good land which he hath given thee". You will see here, dear brethren, that spiritually there is no need of any importation, in that land we are sustained, self-sustained. The epistle to the Colossians is intended to preclude importations, telling us that there is no need of them — philosophy and vain deceit — no need of them — very appealing as they are to the modernist, the scientific man. All the creeds of christendom are, in some measure, leavened with philosophy; Colossians is to preclude all that, it is simply foreign merchandise, so to speak, which is utterly unneeded in the land. The apostle says, "I would have you know what combat I have for you ... and as many as have not seen my face in flesh". Colossians 2:1. One would be comforted with the thought that, in a generous way like the Lord Himself, the apostle looked down the history of the assembly, and included ourselves; certainly the Lord did; "them also which shall believe on me through their word" John 17:20 were included in His prayer. The apostle says, 'I combat for you'. What is needed in this respect, dear brethren, is, as it says, that your "hearts may be encouraged, being united together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the full knowledge of the mystery of God; in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge" — hidden from the gaze of the natural man, but to be entered into and enjoyed by us who believe, for whom he prayed. They are enjoyed in a certain practical state amongst us, a state of affection, a knitting together in love, and an understanding of the mystery of God in which is hid all these things, the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Wisdom and knowledge are stressed because of the danger that beset these christians, the insidious character of human wisdom and knowledge, "philosophy", as it says, "and vain deceit". 'Now', he says, 'you do not need those things'. He said that so that they should not be deceived; that is, he reminds them of his prayer for them, and all the treasures, "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" — *all of them*. The greatest Greek knew nothing of these things, they belong to the hidden wisdom, beloved brethren, "which God had predetermined before the ages for our glory" — think of that — "our glory". "Things which eye has not seen, and ear not heard, and which have not come into man's heart, which God has prepared for them that love him, but God has revealed to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God", 1 Corinthians 2:9,10. This is what is in mind.

Now, having referred to Colossians, I just dwell for a moment on these elements or products of the land so that we may have them before us, knowing them and enjoying them, becoming rigidly exclusive of all else because of them, because of their sufficiency, because of the variety of them, furnishing us fully, as the apostle further says, "ye are complete in *him*". In

whom? In Christ. Who is Christ in Colossians? It is a question of the Person. The "image of the invisible God", Colossians 1:15 he says in chapter 1, "for in him all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell" Colossians 1:19 — *all the fulness*. That is to call attention to the Person, to the greatness of the Person — that is chapter 1. In chapter 2 it is what all that is to us, that is, it is within our range, it is all the fulness of the Godhead, of the Deity — *bodily*, meaning that it is within our range. As John the apostle says, "that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes; that which we contemplated, and our hands handled" 1 John 1:1, referring to the Lord Jesus down here, referring to Him bodily; that all that God is is there, there to be available to us. What else do we need? Whatever wisdom there is is of God, it comes from God, and it has come within our range in that blessed Man, that blessed divine Person who became incarnate — "in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in him". Hence we are fortified in the enjoyment of these precious things against all that is outside — it is extraneous, we do not need it. Bad it may not be — that is not the point, it is that it is unneeded by us, the land into which we are brought furnishes us with everything.

So that the first thing is "a land of waterbrooks". How refreshing waterbrooks are! what beauty, what attractiveness they lend to a landscape! — a land of waterbrooks, that is the Holy Spirit manifestly moving, so that one does not need to draw things out from the brethren, the Spirit's activity is manifest. How attractive such a district or town where the saints are! — a land of waterbrooks, a land of such refreshments. And a brook has not only refreshment,

as suggested by water, but a sound to it; there is something about it that is peculiarly attractive and enhancing to a landscape. A land of springs of water, that is to say christians full of the Spirit, where things are not superficial, as the Lord teaches us in John 4. A land of deep waters, as the word 'depths' means — deep waters. They are indefinite, but the characteristic being 'deep', there is plenty there; the depths of God, we may say, searched out. How exclusive that is, as understood, of all that man can supply, the infinite resources of God in the Spirit. And, as it further says, "of springs, and of deep waters, that gush forth in the valleys and hills". The word is 'gush' — the richness, the volume, gushing out of the valleys and the hills, for God is the God of the valleys, as He is of the hills, and the water gushes out; no pumping needed, no drawing things with labour from the brethren. Well, that is the thought. Valleys are fertile — the saints viewed, I suppose, in that way, the action of the sun upon them; and the hills or mountains — the same people viewed as towers of strength; in either case the waters gush out, no hardness, no exaction, no taxation, there all is in liberty, all is furnished in richness and

fulness. Such, dear young people, is that into which you are brought if you have eyes to see and ears to hear, and sensitiveness. Such is the wealth of the land, and, as I said, it is a stable state of things — such is its wealth. Then we have fruit, too — "fig-trees, and pomegranates; ... olive-trees and honey". An address could be given perhaps on each of these items, the subject is inexhaustible. We are dealing with spiritual matters, with what we need spiritually, too, the rich supply.

Then the Spirit of God runs on, referring to the saints — a land of stones; they are stones — but what kind? They are of iron, they have strength in them; and we dig brass out of the hills, that is, *we* do that. Enjoying all these things — the means of judgment,

the element of judgment, is not wanting — we do that, we dig brass out of the hills. The land is not wanting in that. So that we eat to the full, we are satisfied, and the normal effect is that we bless, we become worshippers, we bless the One who gives it; that is, we are land worshippers, so to speak. There is worship in the wilderness, but there is worship also in the land. Worship in the land is out of the richness we have tasted, of the joy lavishly supplied by the hand of love. It is very attractive, where faith is, it is drawing in its effect; for ministry can only be to faith, without faith, the most spiritual ministry must fail, as it were. Where faith is in any little way in the saints, this is attractive.

Well now, I just want to show how, in chapter 10, there is movement in the light of all these things; that is the next thing. Colossians means prohibition; not simply heavy taxation on commodities, but absolute prohibition. Commodities are not allowed in at all, no such imports are allowed, they are rigidly refused. Now in chapter 10, as I said, the children of Israel took their journey (verse 6), that is to say, Moses here refers back to the second writing of the law in which there is no mistake made or discrepancy — no need to break the tables. The ark is there, Christ is there; everything now is there and we can afford to move, there is no breakdown again. That is the principle — we can afford to move; and they did move, and what comes out is that they move "to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters", that is where the journey led to. I fit in this, dear brethren, with what I have been speaking of in chapter 8, which is the Spirit's description of the land; chapter 10 is my coming to it. How do I come to it? Well, it is a question of the shining of the glory — of the covenant. It fits into the Lord's supper, to the saints in assembly; it fits in in a general way, too, that is "perfect love casts out fear" 1 John 4:18 — the covenant is perfect love. The tables are in the ark, and Moses says, "They are there ..." Deuteronomy 10:5 — there they are, there is no change. And then

there is a parenthesis, these two verses (6 and 7) are properly a parenthesis. This parenthesis anticipates, for us, some thirty-eight years; it is the principle of anticipation, like Ephesians 2 where it is said, we are "raised up together", and made to "sit down together in the heavenlies", Ephesians 2:6 not we *shall be*, but *we are*, that is, the future brought into the present — that is a great thought, it can only be realised by the Spirit; in the power of the Spirit the future is brought into the present, and I know I am in it. The passage begins with Sinai and Horeb, which was just a year (or maybe less) after Israel came out of Egypt. The parenthesis is at least thirty-eight years later. Why is this? It is that the glory has moved us, the shining of the glory in the face of Jesus has moved us — that is the covenant. "We all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit", 2 Corinthians 3:18. That is movement — "glory to glory" — one glory after another. What a way that is, what a shining way that is! "They go from strength to strength:" we are told elsewhere, "each one will appear before God in Zion", Psalm 84:7. It is a shining way. We walk through the valley of Baca, we make it a well-spring, the rain fills the pools. It is the perfect love of God coming into the heart, the glory shining, and I begin to move. Well now, God says, 'You have begun to move. I will bring in the new priesthood, I will antedate things for you'. It is a heavenly matter now. You say, 'It is a wilderness matter'. Yes, but a heavenly matter; it is a question of reaching the land of waterbrooks, that is the heavenly land. Whatever the geography may be, it is the heavenly land, that is the character of things, so that you get the waterbrooks. It is not a question of the sympathy of Christ in the wilderness now. Aaron dies, and the Spirit of God brings it in now to show us how much God thinks of a movement towards Him. That is the land of Canaan; God will have you in His own land; He says, Aaron dies. The chapter begins with Horeb — notice Aaron did not die at Horeb, he died at mount Hor; but he dies here; that is, the Spirit of God anticipates, for God would have us to get on to the line of the new heavenly priest, Christ in heaven, in other words, Christ having died and risen and gone into heaven. "Such a high priest became us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and become higher than the heavens". Hebrews 7:26. That is the priest, as if God would say, 'That is My thought. The wilderness is only a tentative thing, it is only My ways with you; My thought is what can be reached in a few days'. God says, 'I am helping you; there is a heavenly priest to sustain you there'. That is the thought, dear brethren, so that the thing should not be deferred, but I should enter now in the power of the new priest, the heavenly priest, by the power of the Spirit, into a land of waterbrooks. Then it says God took over the levites at that time, that is at Horeb, but all in connection with the heavenly position, for it is God's inheritance in the levites,

and they have no other inheritance but God. So you see, dear brethren, the reality of Canaan may be reached at any moment we are ready for it; it is a land to be entered into, God would have us to know we are sustained there, it has all we need and more, so that there is no lack of enjoyment.

May God bless these thoughts to us.

Deuteronomy 9

- DEUTERONOMY 9 (CAC 5)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 9 (JND 36)
- CHRIST AS KNOWN IN THE ASSEMBLY IN THE WILDERNESS (JT 99)
- CHRIST AS KNOWN IN THE ASSEMBLY IN THE WILDERNESS (JT 99)
- PRIESTLY GREATNESS (SMC 1)
- PRAYER, AS PROVIDING THE SOLUTION OF EVERY MATTER (WJH 7)

DEUTERONOMY 9 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 9

"Hear, Israel! Thou art to pass over the Jordan this day", is a remarkable introduction to such a chapter as this. For it is a chapter which brings out in dark colours what the people had been according to the flesh. If God fulfils His promises and brings to pass His purpose it is not in any wise because His people are better than others according to the flesh. If "the land" is possessed it is by the power of God (verse 3), and because God will deal with everything that is opposed to the knowledge of Himself, and will fulfil the word sworn to the fathers (verses 4, 5). Entrance into the land is the fruit of divine power fulfilling divine purpose. Israel according to flesh was utterly unsuited to inherit the promises, and this is equally true of ourselves, and God would have us to know it. Hence the instruction of chapter 9.

There is a marked contrast between chapters 8 and 9, we have not read a word in chapter 8 about the wickedness or failure of the people in the wilderness;

"all the way" is regarded as having been come through by Jehovah's leading and care. But in chapter 9 the stiffneckedness, provokings, and rebellion of the past are strongly brought out. The history of the people of God — *our* history — has, indeed, made manifest that it is not for our righteousness, or for the uprightness of our heart, that we enter in to possess the land. See verses 4 - 6. If it is brought about that we do so it is through God's faithfulness to His own promises and purposes. As to ourselves according to flesh we are a stiffnecked people; on our side we have again and again "provoked Jehovah to wrath". And this not merely as unconverted persons. "From the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came to this place, ye have been rebellious against Jehovah" (verse 7); this is since conversion, as we should say.

Every phase of our history has proved what we are according to flesh. It is humbling to think of it all, and God would have His people thoroughly humbled as to what they are in themselves. My flesh at the present time is the same flesh that has been the source of every bit of weakness, or wilfulness, or unbelief, or departure that has ever manifested itself in me. If I think of it I must feel that lowliness and self-distrust become me, and that dependence upon God is my only security.

At Horeb, within forty days of the covenant being made, they so provoked Jehovah to wrath that they owed their preservation from destruction entirely

to the intercession of Moses. "And Jehovah listened unto me also at that time ... and I prayed for Aaron also at the same time". Perhaps none of us have yet realised how much we owe to the intercessory service of Christ, to His advocacy. Not one of us would have continued in the divine way, or would have been brought through in any measure of faithfulness to the present time, but for that blessed service of faithful love. We thank Him for His *finished* work, but let us never forget His *unfinished* work — His ceaseless service as the Intercessor and Advocate! It is true of each believer, as well as of Peter, that Christ prays for him that his faith fail not. Every one who enters the land owes it to the faithfulness of God, and to the intercession and advocacy of Christ. There has been quite enough in our past history to convince us that it must be so. And this leaves all credit and praise where it rightly belongs. All the glory belongs to God.

If Israel quickly turned aside from the covenant, it reminds us how quickly we, in Galatia, changed from Him that called us in Christ's grace to a different gospel! Horeb, Taberah, Massah, Kibroth-hattaavah, Kadesh-barnea have all had their corresponding features in our history. How soon we left our first love, and allowed idolatry and evil teaching! All that has been in the past history of the church, and in its present condition also, shews what *we* are. And have we not personally seen many sad cases of breakdown and departure, the fruit of worldliness and self-will, which have all exposed our own natural tendencies? If the failures of our brethren have not filled us with a deep sense of what we are they have not rightly affected us. And, to come more closely home, have we not discovered in our own hearts much unwatchfulness, lack of the spirit of prayer, lukewarmness as to Christ and His precious interests, hankerings after the world, a seeking of our own things, not the things of Jesus Christ, risings of fleshly pride and various lusts? And all these things have been known to God even if they have not been exposed to our brethren We are to "Remember" and "forget not", all these things.

This is a very different remembrance to that of chapter 8: 2, but the same Voice calls us to both, and it is the Voice of the One who has not failed to exercise an unwearying intercession and advocacy which has prevailed on our behalf. "And I fell down before Jehovah, as at the first, forty days and forty nights, — I ate no bread and drank no water, — because of all your sin which ye had sinned, in doing what is evil in the eyes of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger" (verse 18). The Mediator of the covenant becomes the Advocate for those who so quickly depart from it! But for the intercession and advocacy of Christ where should *we* have been?

It is touching to see that our blessed Intercessor prays according to what is true in the mind of God concerning His people. If we lose all sense of it, He does not. Moses speaks of them as "Thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness ... . Remember thy servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ... . They are indeed thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out with thy great power and with thy stretched-out arm". When the people of God behave badly *we* are apt to forget that they are redeemed, but Christ never does. It is impossible that what the flesh is, even in the people of God, could invalidate the divine redemption that has been wrought, or the election and calling of God, or the ancient promises, or the fact that God's people "are indeed thy people and thine inheritance".

But, the very fact that these things cannot be invalidated, and that they form the very basis of Christ's precious advocacy and intercession, necessitates the judgment of that in which the flesh has manifested itself. "And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burned it with fire, and crushed it, and ground it very small, until it became fine dust; and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that flowed down from the mountain" (verse 31). The people had to drink it: the bitterness of anything idolatrous is always brought home to us. Indeed the intercession of Christ is often, I believe, answered by the discipline of God in a corrective way. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities" (Amos 3: 2). "Be not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatever a man shall sow, that also shall he reap. For he that sows to his own flesh, shall reap corruption from the flesh; but he that sows to the Spirit, from the Spirit shall reap eternal life" (Galatians 6: 7, 8).

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 9 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 9

Note here, the strength of the Lord with them in conflict with power greater than their own, but the history of the rebellion of their heart.

— 15 - 24. This goes by itself — a kind of parenthesis. Verse 25 takes it up from verse 14; verse 15 takes up Exodus 32:15, adding other cases of rebellion. There is a vast deal more as to Moses with God at the door of the tabernacle in Exodus, and above chapter 32: 31.

— 18. This is the second time, speaking simply historically,

in reasoning with them about their sins; it alludes directly to Exodus 34:28.

— 25. I think that here, "because the Lord said he would destroy you", leads him back to the first time, with which he then goes on.

CHRIST AS KNOWN IN THE ASSEMBLY IN THE WILDERNESS (JT 99)

Acts 7: 37, 38; Deuteronomy 9:7 - 9; Deuteronomy 9:18 - 29; Deuteronomy 10: 1 - 11

JT Attention is called to Moses who, as it says, was in the assembly in the wilderness, and the thought is that we might dwell a little on that this afternoon not simply the wilderness as applying to each individual among the saints, but how we are to be in it collectively and how, according to this type, Christ is to be known in the assembly in the wilderness. He is to be known in the assembly in heaven: God and the Lamb are said to be there. How He is to be known in the wilderness in the assembly is perhaps a thought not much before us, but Stephen by the Spirit alludes to it; having spoken much of Moses, he refers to him, "This is the Moses", and then, "This is he who was in the assembly in the wilderness". That is, it is a matter of how He is to be apprehended in the local assembly and how He is to be apprehended in the assembly as a whole in its wilderness setting. Deuteronomy, I thought, especially in the verses read, opens up to us what Moses was himself. It is a retrospective view; the Spirit, through Moses, goes back on the history, calling attention to what the people were under the different circumstances mentioned and what he was amongst them. That was what I had in mind for our consideration.

ESH The intercession of Moses on behalf of the people is very beautiful. Is that a suggestion of Christ in the assembly?

JT Yes. He is seen in an intercessory way, but he is also seen, as you might say, in an atoning way, throughout the book. God was not only angry with them, but He was angry with Moses. In Numbers He is angry with Moses because of Moses's own conduct, but not so in Deuteronomy; there He is angry because of the conduct of the people; so Moses is viewed vicariously in Deuteronomy and also in an intercessory way. It is a great and wide subject in regard to Christ's atoning work, but what one would like to reach is its application in the principle of it now. How are we to get on without "this Moses"? We should be just tossed about as a ship without a rudder or compass is in the storm save as we have "this Moses" in the assembly in the wilderness, and save as things are in His hands. Moses never lets things go.

Rem It is what Moses is personally.

JT Yes, Deuteronomy gives us the words of Moses in a certain position, and we have geography and time in this book. It says, "These be the words which

Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red Sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban ...", Deuteronomy 1: 1. It is at the confines of Canaan and after the forty years in the wilderness, but still in the wilderness: he represents Christ in the wilderness, that is, in the place of contrariety. Stephen draws attention to him in the assembly in the wilderness; that is what I apprehend we might be profited by, to apprehend what He is in the wilderness.

ESH Is intercession based on atonement having been made?

JT I think the fact brings out the exigencies of the position. Atonement was made typically in Egypt, but its application is acquired in the wilderness in that Jehovah was angry with Moses on their account.

Moses has to stand in the breach. There is constant occasion for anger, for, after all, "Our God is a consuming fire", but there is always Moses in the assembly standing in the breach.

Ques Have you in mind that matters of administration and discipline cannot be rightly carried out unless we recognise Moses in the wilderness?

JT I thought not, Moses in the assembly in the wilderness.

Ques Would it work out in the spirit of Christ as those who are intelligent in the assembly are with the Lord in this way?

JT I think so. 1 Corinthians opens it up to us "When ye are gathered together", the apostle says, "and my spirit"-that was the kind of spirit that was needed to deal with evil. There was no compromise with Paul's spirit. But, "with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ"-I think that gives what is meant. The history from Exodus to Deuteronomy inclusive brings out what the people were, and Moses reminds them here of that. He says, "Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness".

Ques What are we to understand by the wilderness here?

JT For our subject this afternoon, it began at Horeb; for the individual christian, it begins at the Red Sea as crossed. Horeb is where divine principles and requirements are formally introduced, that is where the conflict against the assembly begins properly; the assembly has the mind of God. The wilderness is the world, it is just where we have been in our unconverted days, the world of contrariety. That is, its principles are directly opposed to what is inaugurated at Horeb, or, as we may say, at Pentecost and in 1 Corinthians. It is a matter of the apostles' teaching and fellowship, how the saints are to be maintained in such a contrary element. But this Moses is in the assembly in that position; not only has He received living oracles, as

Stephen says, but He is there to enforce them. I think when Paul says, "With my spirit", he means that the spirit of authority must be there and there must be subjection if we are to get on, to prove what our Moses is to us in the assembly in the wilderness. In Hebrews He sings in the midst of the assembly, "In the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises", the Lord says; that is not in the wilderness properly, that is in the land, but our subject now is the assembly in the wilderness and how we are to get on in the wilderness in assembly with our Moses.

Ques Is that why Paul says, "I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud ... and were all baptised unto Moses", 1 Corinthians 10: 1, 2?

JT Yes, I think so; we are brought under his authority, and he manifestly had access later, at Horeb, to the holiest at all times. They were "living oracles", that is, immediate communications; immediate communications marked the whole wilderness period; hence the constant repetition of "Jehovah spoke to Moses saying ...". One can understand the freshness and power with which Moses would come out and speak the mind of God freshly received; but why should it not be so now? It is only a type of the present time, of the continued presence of the Lord in the assembly in the wilderness.

Rem So that the mind of God is being made known in a fresh living way amongst the brethren in the assembly.

JT Quite so.

Ques You referred to the anger of Jehovah being against Moses. What did you mean by that?

JT Well, the thought of the vicarious sufferings of Christ is brought in; the sufferings of Christ are not merely historical, they are ever present. How can God go on with us? It is only on that ground. Of course it is historical, but it is also a present thing, carried right through Deuteronomy, as you might say.

GAvS Is the assembly of God in the wilderness to be sustained by the sense, in its own practical experience, of how the Lord came into the conditions where He, having been tested and suffering in His own spirit, constitutes an occasion and reason why the people of God are being carried through it?

JT Yes, He encountered the thing here where He asserted the will of God. He was here in holy submission and carried every thought of God through infinitely; and then He took full account of the broken law in Israel's history, as entering into death. It is thus following Him that we get the vicarious thought, the Sufferer, the sufferings of Christ as He vicariously came under wrath. Well,

that is ever present, because the crooked ways of Israel in the wilderness are but a type of our own, of what is current; the sense of the vicarious sufferings of Christ is to be ever present with us. I do not think we get a true judgment of things otherwise.

Ques Is the assembly rightly held together on that principle?

JT I think so. There was present in Israel in the assembly in the wilderness a man who had endured divine wrath, in his measure. Typically it is Christ He was "angry with me". And this man who is speaking is in their midst. The sense of it is there.

Ques Should the thought of "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1: 7), be ever present with us?

JT Quite; the sense of what God is as against sin is never to be absent from us in wilderness conditions. So that he says here, "Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord. Also in Horeb ye provoked the Lord to wrath, so that the Lord was angry with you to have destroyed you. When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water". He brings forward what he endured; it is the presence of this man that keeps things alive, that keeps the right feelings present as to what was due to God. That is what is needed in every locality, to feel things with God.

Ques And to have these feelings in a suffering spirit, would you say?

JT Exactly, that is the point.

Ques Would you say the features that shone out in Moses should be seen amongst the saints?

JT That is what I thought we might reach. Paul says, "When ye are gathered together, and my spirit", that kind of spirit, the spirit of authority, yet the spirit that feels things with God.

Rem In reading Moses we realise he had feelings with God against evil.

JT That is exactly what comes out. He speaks of not eating for forty days and hungering and of falling down before Jehovah. Well, it is the present Moses who is talking, not an historic Moses merely; it is Christ present in this way. How can we maintain discipline otherwise? I thought we might see in chapter 10 how, with all this, terrible as the conditions were, Israel journeyed

spiritually. In the parenthesis, that is, verses 6, 7, "The children of Israel took their journey ... there Aaron died, and ... Eleazar his son ministered ... in his stead". And "from thence they journeyed ...", until they came to a land of waterbrooks; that is, I think, dear brethren, what is so beautiful and precious, that is, there is positive movement in presence of all this lawless conduct. And how important the maintenance of discipline and holy order is so that we might reach the land of waterbrooks and come in for the guidance of another Priest, that is, Christ in another way in relation to heaven. Why should there be that parenthesis? It is thirty-eight years historically after what Moses was speaking about-why should it be there? It is to encourage us in our maintenance of discipline as to what may be reached through it. The Israel of God is there, and God comes in for His portion, a Levite that He can recognise, and He takes up Levi for His inheritance at this point. So we have a dual state of things: the internal condition of things, and what God can delight in through our heavenly Priest, that is Eleazar.

Ques Would the land of water-brooks indicate the Spirit Himself active in ministry to the conditions of the people after they had faced the discipline of the wilderness?

JT That is precisely, I think, what is meant. We come in for positive ministry in movement in the Israel of God in the midst of all these things. It is to encourage the maintenance of discipline and divine order. You can see how Moses is being honoured in this wonderful spirit of intercessory love for the people that they might be preserved. You can see how God honours a man who comes forward and takes up matters and places himself in the front in suffering, accepting responsibility.

GAvS Would you say it was really the intensity of Moses's affection for the people that led him to go so specifically through the rebellions of the people, and,. having thus exposed them, bring them to the recognition of that, on the one hand, and the reception of the ministry in the power of the Spirit, on the other hand?

JT You can see how that works out practically in our meetings when discipline is maintained; as the apostle said, "My spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ". What ministry you get, refreshing things! and we are led into the land of the waterbrooks, which is, of course, Canaan in principle, though still the wilderness position; it is one of the features of Canaan. So I think Moses is honoured in this chapter in that God says, "Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first", as though it is the Lord's matter now. We come to apprehend how the Father has given all things into the hands of the Son, and we are well

off, for it is at this juncture, according to Exodus, that Moses comes down with his face shining; it is the principle of the new covenant.

Ques Would that answer to 2 Corinthians 3? The covenant is referred to, and then it says, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty".

JT I think so. That is what 2 Corinthians brings out, the liberty of the Spirit; it is through maintaining order and discipline. When the ark came to rest it is emphasised that there is nothing in it but the two tables of the covenant that Jehovah gave at Horeb.

Ques Would you say that the spirit of suffering that the Lord gave to Moses was a necessary accompaniment of the wilderness position if the two tables were to be carried all the way through in the sense of what God gave at Horeb?

JT I should think so, the spirit of the vicarious Sufferer. No one felt things as Moses did; he was a type of Christ personally. The point, I think, in our localities is being in accord with that, feeling things, and taking them on in relation to the gathering; and I think then God comes in, things are dealt with, and there is a refreshing ministry. Discipline is maintained in the assembly; were it not, there would always be a drag, perhaps the mere repetition of things; but we want water-brooks.

Ques What would you say the discipline is?

JT Well, dealing with evil. We are all under discipline personally, the Father disciplines us severally; but what we are dealing with now is Christ, our Moses, in the wilderness, and what is maintained collectively. The more we are with God the more discipline there will be, because we shall not be afraid to speak to one another. The deeper the love, the greater the knowledge of God in the covenant, the more readiness there will be to discipline one another, and then, if it be necessary, to exercise collective discipline, and to exercise it in a dignified way.

Ques Will you explain discipline in the assembly, and the other kind of discipline?

JT Well, each one who is with God has a judgment about every brother he knows; I have a judgment about every brother I know. I am sure Moses had; he knew the elders of Israel well, he had a wide acquaintance with Israel in the wilderness and he had a judgment about them. Well, my relations with that brother would be according to my judgment about him, and that is an advantage to me if I am a spiritual man. My relations with him, my attitude towards him, will be governed by my judgment about him.

Ques Elders who had experience with God and exercised rule were to be found in every city. Would it come in in that way?

JT It works out that way no doubt, but we have a judgment about one another. Think of Romans 16; what a judgment the apostle had about the brethren at Rome as we see in his salutations. His judgment was of their good qualities; that is all he mentions. But were you to ask Paul about Phoebe, for instance, 'Why are you speaking so well about her?', he would say, 'Well, I know her; she is in the church at Cenchrea, which is only a short distance from Corinth where I was for some months, and I acquired a high estimate of her'. Well, that is the basis of his commendation of her. And so throughout the list. He might have told you many things about this and that one: 'There are things I have serious concern about, but I have them in mind. I have had relations with this and that one'. If any of us come in for assembly discipline, then it is a question of the whole assembly, because, when Achan was stoned, *Israel* was to stone him, not the elders only; the whole assembly is to execute the judgment, and each one ought to have a knowledge of the person.

Ques Would not that principle enter into giving letters of commendation?

JT I thought so. What remarkable knowledge the apostle had of the different persons when he wrote to Rome; and were he to write to other companies, I suppose it would have been in the same way.

Ques There is a character of discipline that does not go so far as stoning; would you say a word about that?

JT Yes; but I think we ought to get clear about this matter of eldership, that is, whilst the younger, and necessarily the sisters, do not take part in the proceedings, they are in the thing; they have a judgment, or they are of no value whatever in the administration: unless we have a judgment we are of no moral value in the administration.

GAvS Is having a judgment of persons or things a part of the education towards eldership?

JT I think it is. How beautifully the neighbours of Naomi, for instance, spoke to her. They knew about her and about Boaz and Ruth; they knew Naomi, she was an old resident in the place: she is thoroughly in fellowship now, and they are altogether with her in the blessing of God. I think that is the way matters should stand; we know each other.

Ques Is that the attitude of John when he addressed his second and third epistles to the elect lady and to Gaius? He addresses them both as elders; he had a judgment about the conditions in the two places, had he not?

JT That brings out what we are saying, that a sister may have part in the administration of discipline.

Ques Was not Israel's stoning of Achan the outcome of what they had received through Moses as to the mind of God? Is that where the eldership comes in?

JT Quite so; the elders come into the knowledge of things through experience. The qualifications of an elder are generally moral. In the first epistle to Timothy and in that to Titus elders were to be appointed, but in Acts 20, they are made by the Holy Spirit. That implies first-hand knowledge definitely of the person; they are qualified. It is not merely a matter of years, but of moral qualifications, and the thing should come out in them formally, but then they are not the only ones who cast a stone.

Ques Psalm 19 speaks of the judgments of the Lord as being "true and righteous altogether". Would that characterise the judgment in a local assembly?

JT Exactly. The Lord said, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment", John 7: 24. If I am to cast a stone, I ought to have a judgment of the person and of the guilt.

Ques You mean instruction in what is pleasing to God?

JT Yes. What is the discipline? and what is it for? what are the principles governing it? Each case of discipline ought to leave its results in education. I believe that is how eldership is promoted.

Ques It says in connection with the sin of Achan that "Israel has sinned"; has that any bearing on the matter?

JT That is another side. It is the obligation of each of us, for the matter has taken place in the midst. The onus is on the company, and we can only clear ourselves by the execution of discipline.

Ques In the case of Achan, there was no confusion in relation to it; why is there often confusion with us in regard to these matters?

JT A meeting for discipline very often takes on the character of a meeting for deliberation. It is not an occasion for deliberation at all; it is for the pronouncement of the judgment of the Lord in the assembly. It is not a time for hearing evidence; it is a call for a spiritual, dignified announcement of the evil, the discipline that has to be executed.

Ques Judgment is that which is come to in the assembly meeting; is it reached there?

JT The matter has been diligently enquired into by the brethren in care; a so-called care meeting cannot reach conclusions, the conclusion is in assembly.

Ques But nevertheless you would go from the care meeting with a judgment arrived at in order that there might be the execution of judgment in the assembly?

JT Well, there can be no judgment arrived at in care other than what is tentative; administration belongs to the assembly only.

Rem Judgment cannot have a collective effect apart from the assembly, but in the care meeting individual judgments are found to be more or less in accord.

JT Yes, we reach a judgment tentatively, but our Moses is with us in the assembly in the wilderness, that is, where the saints are convened for discipline and the like. "Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them", I think would apply.

Ques Would not the matter of confusion that was referred to be due to a very large extent to the lack of an individual apprehension of the real character of things as detailed by Moses as he recited it to them in the wilderness?

JT We see very plainly his own feelings about this; but it is a mischievous thing amongst us to assume that the brethren in care administer decisions reached. The Lord does not like that; it is not our Moses in the assembly in the wilderness.

Rem The Lord is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints.

JT Just so.

Ques Should the accused person be present when the matter is taken up?

JT Certainly; if he can be induced to be there he should be there.

Ques And you would not get a judgment till he has given an answer or replied to the accusation?

JT I do not think there is any need for that. That raises another question, as to the priestly character of the brethren. The judgment of the assembly does not hinge on anything he might say; the brethren are acting with a perfect knowledge of things. It is not a court of deliberative judgment; that leads up to it; it is simply for the pronouncement of the judgment of the assembly; it is no place for deliberation. It is a dishonour to the Lord to have discussion of pros and cons when the assembly is convened for the administration of discipline. It is not a deliberative court where we have the witnesses, and the case is gone into. The apostles and elders, it says, came together to enquire into the matter, they reached a judgment, and it was ratified. "It has seemed

good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15: 28): to the assembly, that is final. 1 Corinthians 5 is a brief statement of the case; it is brief 'The case being such as it is, I have delivered such an one unto Satan; there are no witnesses to call; the matter is settled'.

Rem The apostle, in that way, has a judgment, but he links himself with the saints in pronouncing it.

JT Just so.

Rem A sense of the vicarious sufferings of Christ would enable us to handle these matters rightly.

JT That is the reason why I think we should pay attention to Moses's remarks about himself. If we have not a sense of the vicarious sufferings of Christ, I do not think we are qualified to exercise discipline.

Ques Do you look upon the assembly as being an executive body in this matter of discipline?

JT That is right; the deliberations are all tentative. The Lord is in the assembly to convey His thought of it; our Moses is always with us in that sense; He is there with us to convey His thoughts.

Rem That means you would not, as a matter of practice, have a meeting of that kind until all the deliberations were clear.

JT Quite so. That would rest on the priestly character of the brethren; the saints as a whole, sisters and all, have confidence in the brethren in the exercise of priesthood; they are to be relied on; heaven relies on them: "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them". Heaven has confidence in us in that light, so should all the sisters have too; but nevertheless there is that which the Lord so values in an administrative body here in carrying out the will of heaven that it should be carried out in a dignified way. Dignity attaches to the assembly as having the anointing.

Ques You would regard Christ, who is spoken of so many times in Corinthians as the Lord, as being parallel with the suggestion of Moses in these scriptures?

JT That is what I thought, exactly.

Ques I suppose it is important that if the assembly comes to a judgment, it is binding, even if we are not clear about it.

JT Yes, and if I am not with the brethren in it, it is a question of where I am spiritually. Why am I not with my brethren?

Ques Would you say that what led Moses to take up these thoughts was that he saw the people in relation to God? He could say to them, "Ye are my people", so he could form a judgment of the people as God would look at them.

JT Yes. I thought at the outset we are in danger of losing sight of the great gain of this movement of Israel as a thing concurrent with the exercise of discipline; this parenthesis (verses 6, 7) shows the gain there is and the incentive to maintain discipline, because why else should it be brought in here?

Ques Why is the death of Aaron brought in in that connection?

JT I think it contemplates that the brethren are coming to see Christ in His heavenly relations in the assembly. It is another Priest, what He is in the wilderness, entering into all these things with us. Moses is said to have married a Cushite or an Ethiopian; the Lord continued His marital relations with us notwithstanding the ugliness that comes out; He maintains His relations with us. But then there are the inner relations that are not ugly, but very beautiful; what He can see abstractly in His church, He can identify Himself with unreservedly and lead the true assembly spiritually into that land of water-brooks. It is Christ in another way, as the One who sings in the midst of the assembly, but it is brought in there, I think, to encourage us to maintain discipline, for as we maintain it we come into this.

FI There can be no movement apart from discipline.

JT I think that is right. It says, "The children of Israel took their journey"-they are able to journey-"from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera; there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's *office* in his stead. From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters". And then it says, "At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day. Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the Lord is his inheritance". I think all that is beautiful as the heavenly side of things, what we come into, and what we are in measure, I am sure, coming into; but we cannot come into it aside from discipline and the judgment that these chapters assert.

Ques Does Eleazar represent the service of Christ in assembly privilege?

JT That is as I understand it. It is more Hebrews 2, Christ singing in the midst of the assembly. It seems very encouraging that, in spite of all that is current outwardly, there is this inner state of things that the Lord is maintaining. Then

another thing that comes out is that God has His portion in spite of all these ugly things; He separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant. God is very particular; He separates this tribe so that the ark is carried; there are no irregularities at all. Levi represents spiritual intelligence amongst us: "To bear the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, to stand before Jehovah to do service unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day. Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; Jehovah is his inheritance"; that is, they are a heavenly people, it is the heavenly side of the truth that comes in here.

Rem And it is absolutely necessary that that principle of separation is established in the hearts of the people of God before they are able to support what is in the heart of Christ down here.

JT Yes. The tribe of Levi is the heavenly side, according to Joshua and Hebrews 12, "the assembly of the firstborn". What an exit that is from the public state of things contemplated in this chapter.

Rem The change of priesthood makes the priestly service here on earth effective.

JT Quite so. I find in my little experience amongst the brethren that after a care meeting where matters have been gone into and dealt with, and pronouncements reached in the assembly, there is usually more liberty in the Lord's day morning meeting. I think the Lord honours the taking a care of things, that they are not allowed to drag on, but are dealt with as they come up. God gets His part. Levi represents the saints viewed in their heavenly relations, the firstborn ones enregistered in heaven.

Ques We have here the peculiar mention of the ark of wood linking with the closing words of Nehemiah with regard to the wood-offering.

JT It is a question of the kind of humanity, I think, the new order of man; Moses saw to that, that it was there; it is not a mere theory, 'It is there', he says; the ark is there in its proper setting.

Ques Would the end of Matthew fit in with the thought of the Lord in the assembly in the wilderness, "Behold, I am with you all the days"?

JT That is it: "All the days", every day of the week there. When the brethren come together to see that things are adjusted properly, I believe the Lord always honours us and we reach the land of waterbrooks.

Ques Did not great prosperity follow Peter's taking up things in Acts 5?

JT That is an illustration of it.

Ques Should the judgment arrived at in an assembly meeting be announced to the saints gathered on the Lord's day morning?

JT What need is there for it, if the assembly is the assembly?

Rem Some have thought that perhaps because publicity has been given to the evil, publicity should be given to the announcement that such a person is no longer walking with us.

JT I do not think we should publish evil, or that the world is entitled to any knowledge of what goes on amongst us. Suffice it that the saints have a knowledge of what has been done, that they have a judgment about it.

Ques Should the one being dealt with be notified?

JT He ought to be there; if he is at all an honest man he would be there; certainly he should know what the judgment of the assembly is.

PRIESTLY GREATNESS (SMC 1)

Deuteronomy 9: 18 - 27; Deuteronomy 32: 1 - 4; Deuteronomy 33: 1 - 7

What is upon one's heart, dear brethren, in view of this hour is the thought of priestly greatness, I would like to draw attention to priestly greatness in Moses. There are other men in Scripture in whom the thought of priestly greatness is set out, but with special design I have selected Moses and the book of Deuteronomy, because the book of Deuteronomy fits in with the present moment, as we are about to go over, dear brethren, into the realm of God's choice for us. There is every right and title to refer to Moses as priest although officially he was not a priest. But yet in Psalm 99, it refers to him as a priest, it says, "Moses and Aaron among his priests," that is God's priests, "and Samuel among them that call upon his name," verse 6. It is a wonderful thing to be priestly, dear brethren, and I am sure that the Lord would help every one of us, young and old alike, to desire to be more priestly. And what is priestly suggests nearness to God. It is a great thing to come into contact with persons, brothers and sisters, who have to do with God, who live in nearness to God: you cannot help feeling something about them that is different. We may have all the knowledge of the truth that it is possible to get, but if it is held apart from priestly conditions and nearness to God there will be little power with it. And if the word tonight should create in all our hearts, oneself included, a greater desire to be more priestly, it will have served to a good end indeed, because every one of us has the capacity for being priestly as having the Spirit.

In the Old Testament, of course, the priesthood was vested in a specific family, Aaron and his sons;

in Christianity priesthood belongs to *all* the saints as having the Spirit. As receiving the Spirit we are divinely constituted and capacitated to think and to act for God, and that is a great matter in these days, dear brethren, in a world where everybody is thinking for themselves and thinking about themselves, it is important to be among those who are thinking for God and acting for God. And I would say in passing, you will find God acting for such persons, as Isaiah tells us.

In the book of Deuteronomy we get a life-sized portrayal of Moses in a unique way. Deuteronomy gives us in a very special way, the *man* Moses. It gives us the *spirit* of the man. It underlies priestly conditions - our spirits. It is one thing to be marked by certain external actions which may correspond with the truth, but we may be all wrong in our spirits. Moses was a remarkable man, and this book specially draws attention to the *spirit* of the man, the unselfish

spirit of the man and his thoughts of God. His priestliness lies in the way he thinks of God and speaks of God, and in the way he thinks of the saints and speaks of the saints.

Now in the first passage that I have read I want to refer to him in that crisis, a unique crisis, at the very mountain of God, and the remarkable way that Aaron is before him, a prince in Israel, and the priestly feature that marked Moses in that critical hour when the enemy seemed to have gained the day, but where the intercessory service of Moses, wonderful type of Christ, intervenes for the salvation of Aaron and of the people. It was a difficult moment: Deuteronomy helps us to go over the ground and see all the way that God has led us. It has not been an easy matter for God, speaking reverently, dear brethren; if it had been a question of ourselves with one another we long ago would have had done with one another, but this book unfolds to us how God bore with them. As Paul says, "he nursed them in the desert," Acts 13: 18. The unbelief, the murmurings and the rebellion. What Deuteronomy would help us to see in enlarging on the journeyings is the greatness of the mountain of God, that lying behind all these journeyings and all God's operations in relation to them, in view of bringing them into the inheritance, is this great stable position, the elevated position that the mountain of God suggests. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God, Hebrews tells us. God is God and this book reminds us of His government, and how serious it is for any one of us to resist any light that God may give to us as to His mind and to His thoughts and as to the disposition of His heart. This book is to sober us in view of going over, in view of finishing with the wilderness side altogether, and therefore we get touches in this book that we do not get anywhere else. And I think we can say that at the present time, dear brethren, in some little way we are getting touches that we have never had before, and especially is our attention being drawn to what the saints are substantially, what the ministers are substantially. And a great feature of a man of God is not his ability to draw you into reminiscences of his own spectacular exploits, but to draw you over to God's side and to impress you with the greatness of God, and the greatness of His mountain. His purpose which stands fast, in order that you might see what lies behind *all* the humbling circumstances of our desert path.

Moses was a great minister, a wonderful minister! He could fill a place in ministry that nobody else could in his day, and yet the remarkable thing at the close of his life is that he is not dwelling on what he once was. He is not dwelling on the mighty deliverances that God had wrought through him and by him instrumentally. The Psalms give us an insight to Moses. What is he speaking about in his closing days? Is he just dwelling in reminiscences? No. He had pitched the tabernacle according to divine direction, and all the details

connected with its structure he had to do with, but he is not living in that, he is not living in the greatness of his ministry, as it says in Psalm 90: the prayer of Moses, the man of God: "Lord *thou* hast been our dwelling-place in all generations," think of that! How many there are that would dwell on their own exploits, would dwell on the help they have got in divine things, it may be. But what a poor thing it is after all! If God is pleased to use any of us, brothers or sisters alike, we can thank Him for it, but it is a poor thing to live in it and to dwell in it. Moses, one of the greatest ministers of all time, outside of Christ, lived in God, he dwelt in God. As John writes in his epistle, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God." Who loved the saints like Moses? Wonderful type of Him he foreshadowed, our Lord Jesus Christ. He was prepared to die for the brethren in order that they might be carried through. Does that spirit mark us, dear brethren? Is that the outlook of our minds and our hearts? Prepared to go out? Prepared to lose our lives in view of the brethren? What a wonderful man is Moses, he says, "Lord, *thou*!" - the emphatic 'thou' - "*Thou* hast been our dwelling-place in *all* generations," not one or two or three but in *all* generations.

I have no doubt that Moses would think of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as well as the children of Israel in referring to the generations, for he alludes to them here, he says in the portion that we have read, "Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not at the stubbornness of this people...", he refers to God on the high level of His promises, he would remind God of His promises, which is another priestly feature of the man, as Isaiah says, "Ye that put Jehovah in remembrance."

What a wonderful thing! How God delights, dear brethren, to have us put Him in remembrance of His promises, the high level of His thoughts, the heavenly line of His thoughts, suggested in the reference to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Think of the variety of experience that entered into the lives of those three patriarchal men! Think of what God was to them! And Moses reminds God of these men over against the stubbornness of the people. I believe God was very pleased with Moses at this time in that relation. Another thing about Moses emphasising his greatness is the way that he can accept the discipline and government of God in regard to himself. Three times in the beginning of the book, once in the end of the book, does he refer (for the book is his) to the government of God because of the way he spoke in a certain circumstance. He is not covering up anything in regard to himself. He is clear and transparent as to all that he was in his ministry and in his movements with the people of God. He has got nothing to hide, there is no opaqueness with Moses. He relates to us in detail the displeasure of God with regard to the matter in which he broke down. And, dear brethren, who of us here would

dare to say we have never broken down! But it is a wonderful thing to see how this book rises above *all* the breakdowns. God is above the breakdowns. Moses is above the breakdowns, and he carries on, holding God, as I might say, in priestly power to the light and the blessedness of His promises.

It was a critical time. Moses was up on the mountain and God had been giving ray after ray of light in regard to His pleasure, with regard to the world of which the tabernacle was a figure, because the first sanctuary is a picture and a type of the vast universal system in which God's glory is displayed in Christ. And ray after ray of light as to that wonderful world was being unfolded on the mountain, and yet we are reminded in Deuteronomy of what was taking place below. What a humbling lesson, dear brethren, what a humbling experience! God by His power had brought the people to Himself, prepared to do the best for them, to bring them to the best and choicest thoughts that love had for them; but the working of unbelief in the scene here below - think of what it was to God! We all have to learn the lesson that *that man* will *never* do for God. There is only one thing that God could do with that man, the man of sin and shame, the man of unbelief, the man of murmuring and rebellion, there was only one thing that God could do with him, and that was to remove him judicially for ever in the cross of Christ. And He has done it, blessed be His name, and the gospel is to help us to come to the change of man, that we are no longer going on in ourselves with the man that has been linked with the history of sin and shame, but we are going on with a Man that is the Centre of God's world, the blessed Man that the ark, the beginning of the tabernacle system, speaks of, the Centre and Head of God's world.

Well, Moses had to come down - we have to face these conditions here below, we cannot go on, on the mountain without the people, Moses would say. That would be the language of the heart of this great man of God in his priestliness. We *cannot* go on without the brethren! Are any of us trying to go on without the brethren? Are any of us thinking that we are above the brethren and that we can go on without them? Moses would help us as to this. He comes down, he sees what had happened, he could not do what the Lord Jesus Christ did, he had to break the tables of stone, he could not bring in redemption for the people, wonderful man as he was, that prerogative belonged to Christ and how wonderfully *He* carried it through. But it says of Moses as the *full* bearing of the crisis bears in upon him, "I fell down before Jehovah *as at the first*," notice that! It was not the first time, dear brethren, that this man of God had been with God about matters, he says, "I fell down before Jehovah as at the first, forty days and forty nights - I ate no bread and drank no water." Oh, how like Jesus he was! How like the One he typified he was! Think of *His* forty days in the wilderness without bread and water. He who could have commanded

that the stones should be made bread, but in the perfection of His holy humanity, having come into the place of obedience to God, and dependence on God, He would not take Himself out of it, and He answered the tempter, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." What a situation that was. But think of Moses, a man of like passions as we, corresponding with Christ in this great relation! Dear brethren, we shall be like Jesus in glory, as one has said:

> "Like Jesus in that place,
> Of love and light supreme," (64:5)

but what about being like Jesus now in all the difficulties and crises of the hour in the testimony, for it is one crisis after the other. The whole matter of the testimony at the present time is full of crises, and we want to consider, dear brethren, the attitude and the spirit that marks us in these circumstances, as to whether we are like Christ. We want to be like Him now, in spirit and in our ways, drinking into *His* spirit and grace as Man, so that we are like Him in crises like these. He says, "I ate no bread and drank no water, because of all your sin." Think of this man's love for the people! Think of his love for God! In this section there is the mountain of God; chapter after chapter refers to it, the mountain, it is casting its shadow over the whole position - the rights of God in holy love to a people He has redeemed by grace and by power from Egypt and from the enemy's thrall - He has a right to the people. He has got a right over us now. The mountain is casting its shadow over us now, dear brethren, at this time as we are together. God, in other words, is *asserting* His rights to us. He will not let any of us go. He will not leave us to go on without being reminded of His holy rights - the rights of His love to have us, to have us for Himself, for His pleasure *now* and forever. And if we dare to do despite to these rights, we are only but courting the government of God, a serious and solemn thing. This book tells us about it in no uncertain terms.

And this matter of fasting, what do we know about fasting, dear brethren, in crises? What can we say about it? What can we say about denying ourselves? You know there are people abroad that profess links with God and they carry on fasting but they have really got nothing vital in their souls; but here we are with all the light and wealth of the purposes and counsels of God, and what do *we* know about fasting? How much there is that we could deny ourselves! That was Moses, and a mark of his priestliness, it enters into his priestly constitution, his ability to deny himself in view of the people and their condition. How God must have been pleased with Moses, as He always is pleased with the attitude of mind and heart in any brother or sister that is

prepared to fast, to deny themselves, in view of God's rights, the rights of His holy love being secured. Think of David, think of Daniel, think of Nehemiah - all these men of God - think of what they knew about fasting! That is what enters into this matter. He says, "I ate no bread and drank no water - because of all your sin which ye had sinned, in doing what is evil in the eyes of Jehovah." God loves persons who are prepared to hold themselves to this principle of self-sacrifice and self-denial that the rights of His love might be maintained.

And it says in verse 19, "For I was afraid of the anger and fury wherewith Jehovah was wroth against you to destroy you." I would say in passing, dear brethren, that while we are in Christianity, in the dispensation of grace, we must not forget the fear of God. The fear of God is a wholesome thing. It is a great matter to see men and women who are marked by the fear of God. How many there have been before us, we who are younger, in the line of the testimony, who have feared God. And the testimony has prospered on account of their fear of God - Moses, great man as he was, living in nearness to God, had the fear of God before his eyes, as he says, "I was afraid of the anger and fury wherewith Jehovah was wroth against you to destroy you." We shall not, any one of us, turn lightly to sin or to the world, or to anything connected with man's doings if the fear of God is before our eyes. The man we were reading about last night had got a touch as to the saving grace of Jesus, he says to the other man, "Dost thou not fear God?" What a word for every one of us - do we not fear God? Young people, I say to you tonight in soberness, it is a great thing in early years to cultivate the fear of God, it will be a preservative all your life as you develop and grow in it. And he says, "And Jehovah listened to me." I think that is beautiful, dear brethren. Think of a brother or sister in priestly power going through like this in a crisis in Barbados, and God would listen to them. He says, "Jehovah listened unto me" - Moses knows it, you see. He is not haphazard about it, he does not say, "I think" - he knows. Any man or woman that goes through things with God, they know if they have got the ear of God, and *Moses* knew it, he says, "Jehovah listened unto me also at *that* time." What time? All this time of crisis when Moses was marked by the spirit of Jesus in relation to the people. And notice what it says, "And with Aaron Jehovah was very angry to destroy him." Oh, what a word this is! Aaron was a prince in Israel, he was a man with a remarkable place and position, but we must remember that God in the jealousy of the rights of His love is not going on with anything in any of us, however great we might think we are, whatever position we may fill. After all, dear brethren, we always have to bear in mind what J.N.D. said in regard to Barnabas, that all the weight of a man's godliness adds to his sin when he falls. Sometimes people, you know, excuse

sin by saying, he was such a godly man or such a godly woman, but *all* the weight of that godliness adds to his sin when he breaks down, as it says here, "With Aaron Jehovah was very angry to destroy him." Think of what a crisis it was! The whole priesthood was threatened and it says, "And I prayed for Aaron also at the same time." He is not only praying for the people generally but he is praying for Aaron specifically, and that is a great thing, dear brethren, to pray for one another specifically, especially if any of us breaks down, to mention one another, each by name, in any given crisis.

And he says, "I prayed for Aaron also at the same time." It is one thing when a brother or sister is not going on right to give them a word. We are very good at giving them words, but I wonder if we are as good at praying for them? It is a good thing to back up a word publicly to them with prayer in private for them. So Moses is praying, he is interceding. He might have thought, as some men might think, Aaron might get ahead of me, God might put him in my place, but not Moses. Moses was the kind of man that says, "Would God that *all* the Lord's people were prophets," and that is the spirit of true greatness. You will find that distinctively in the ministry at the present time, that true greatness lies in the lowliness of the vessel, and the desire to make room for all that is in the assembly. It is a great matter, dear brethren, notice what it says, "And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burned it with fire, and crushed it, and ground it very small, until it became fine dust; and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that flowed down from the mountain," verse 21. Now this is one of the added touches in Deuteronomy. There are a number of them. You young brothers and sisters, as you have time, look into the book, read it carefully. Read it once, twice, three, as many times as you can, you will find great help for your souls in the book. You do not get this in Exodus, you get it in Deuteronomy. After *all* the wilderness journey is over we get this added touch as to the brook that flowed down from the mountain. As if in the very place of the breakdown of the first man, of the people in relation to their great sin, in the very presence of the mountain - typical of the holy rights of God in His love - there is this suggestion of grace flowing to carry away the fruits of unbelief and independence of God. What a touch, dear brethren! It is a Deuteronomic touch, reminding us that in the very presence of the severity of the government of God, in the very presence of His anger, the touches of His grace appear. The brook that flows down from the mountain reminds us of what is available to carry off in its stream the fruits of the workings of infidelity among the people.

Now I would pass on to speak of the second portion that we read. It is not a crisis now. Moses is a great minister. His priestly greatness underlies his ministry. He is not only marked by priestly greatness in a crisis, but he is

marked by priestly greatness when it comes to ministry, because the test of all ministry is as to whether it leaves an impression of the greatness of God. You will find if you study a man of God, a man marked by priestly greatness,

that there are two impressions that he will leave on your spirit - he will leave an impression as to the greatness of God and an impression as to the greatness of the saints. I would counsel each one of us as to that. It is a great matter to speak well of the brethren. It is easy, you know, to speak wrongfully of the brethren, to find all the fault we can with them, but it is a great matter to be with God in priestly greatness and to speak well of the brethren, and that is Moses in Deuteronomy. And in this passage he leaves an impression on our souls as to the greatness of God. And what I would point out in regard of this passage is the fluidity that marks the man. You know, when we get older it is a great thing to be fluid right to the end. The danger is always in crystallisation, but the more we are with God, the more we are marked by priestly greatness, the more fluid we will be. You know it is a wonderful thing to see persons who are well on in years and to see how they are in the main stream. Some of us were visiting a beloved brother known to you all on this island this morning, and what spiritual fluidity marks the man, the freshness and fluidity that marks the man! Instead of crystallisation, instead of saying, Oh, well! Twenty or thirty years ago we had such wonderful times and wonderful ministry, but things are different now. It is a great thing to move all the way with the stream in which divine Persons are moving. Not to say 'the former days were better than these,' but to be in spiritual fluidity, flowing in affections and in thought in these wondrous streams that make glad the city of God, "God's exhaustless tides," as J.N.D. refers to them.

Now in this portion Moses says, "My doctrine shall drop as rain, my speech flow down as dew. This is the lawgiver that is speaking. This is the man that with such authority and power led the people out of Egypt, through the Red Sea,

into the wilderness, and brought them to the mountain of God. You might think Moses was a hard man, he was an arbitrary man, but Deuteronomy would give us a view of the spirit of the man, he says, "My doctrine shall drop as rain." Think of the gentle influence of the rain and what it means to this earth. What it means to the saints, the people of God in this relation! "My speech flow down" this is the man that God had to speak to and discipline because he spoke so hard to the people, because of the hardness of his speech. Notice how he has faced the whole matter, and he has got the gain of it, as it were he is with God in the matter, he has got the whole gain of it, and his speech now is flowing down as the dew. He is in accord with the

mediatorial system, what is coming down from God to men, the heavenly influence of the dew. You know this was the man who said he was not eloquent and could not speak. He did not want to do what the Lord wanted him to do. Many of us have been like that. We have hindered God perhaps taking us on, but God went forward with Moses and Moses got the gain of it, and here he is saying now, "Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth!" (verse 1). It is not a question of Pharaoh now, the sphere is far extended - the heavens and the earth. This is the man that could not speak, who said he was not eloquent! Spiritual mellowness is a great thing. In the Song of Songs it speaks of the fig tree mellowing her winter figs. A wonderful thing to see the mellowness that belongs to old age, the ripened fruits of old age. How we thank God for experience amongst us. We younger brethren always want to remember that we could never buy what the older brethren have. They have got experience and we have not got that, and it is a great thing in the things of God, mellowed and ripened experience. Think of what Paul says being such an one as Paul the aged. He says that in the epistle to Philemon, and if you read that epistle you cannot help but see that Paul's doctrine is dropping as the rain, his speech is flowing down as the dew, and as small rain upon the tender herb. Onesimus was a tender herb, one who had newly come into the truth. His master had difficulty about him, but Paul solved the whole matter as he distilled the influence of heaven. It is a great thing to find a brother or sister coming into the room and distilling the influence of heaven, especially when things are not going too well, and it is all a part of priestly greatness.

I finish now with a word as to chapter 33. I might say in passing from chapter 32, that he says, "For the name of Jehovah will I proclaim," not the name of Moses, "Ascribe greatness unto *our* God! He is the Rock, His work is perfect, for all his ways are righteousness: A God of faithfulness without deceit; Just and right is He." What a word after all the Deuteronomic coverage of the failure and breakdown along the way. But the mountain is looming above it all, the rights of God in holy love for a people He had redeemed by His power. And now a finishing word as to priestly greatness in Moses. What is he doing in chapter 33? He is blessing the people. Blessing the children of God, the children of Israel, before his death. Think of his priestly greatness, he not only can leave an impression as to God and His greatness upon our spirits, but he will leave an impression as to the greatness of the saints. And he says, "Jehovah came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them." Now I want you to notice, dear brethren, that he is not referring to the matter of what took place in Egypt or the Red Sea, the prophets tell us that God brought them out under the leadership of Moses from Egypt, and through the Red Sea and into

the wilderness, but Moses leaves that side. "Jehovah came from Sinai," that is, the mountain is in his mind - *God's* rights in holy love in relation to the people, those rights of God of which He is so jealous. It says, "He rose up from Seir unto them; he shone forth from mount Paran. And he came from the myriads of the sanctuary"; Moses saw not the unbelief of the people, but God shining forth on the people like the blessing of the Nazarite, in Numbers 6. And it says, "From his right hand went forth a law of fire for them." Oh, that law of fire! God round about His people protecting them. Why should we fear, dear brethren? Our God is round about us, the law of fire is for us, to protect us. We do not need to be afraid of the law of fire. It may involve discipline and suffering, but the rights of God in His holy love are behind it. You remember hour in Genesis 22 where God is testing Abraham, that it says, Abraham took the knife and the fire and both of them went on together. It is not an easy matter to face the knife. The knife is the dissecting side, the fire is the consuming side. We do not like the dissecting side, when things are laid open, and motives exposed in the discipline of God, but Abraham took the knife. He was prepared for every dissecting movement on the part of God, he took the knife and the fire. And Isaac, type of you young people, *he* is in the matter - they went both of them together. Think of Isaac alongside of Abraham, and the fire, and the knife. Let us not be afraid of the sufferings, the testings of the present time, because God is in them, it is His law of fire.

I desire that we might all emulate Moses, the man of God, in his priestly greatness!

Chapman Street, Bridgetown, Barbados.

PRAYER, AS PROVIDING THE SOLUTION OF EVERY MATTER (WJH 7)

John 11: 38 - 44; Genesis 18: 23 - 33; Deuteronomy 9: 12 - 19; 1 Samuel 7: 5-10; James 5: 16 - 18; Daniel 2: 14 - 23

I have read these scriptures just to bring out this thought, that there is no situation so dreadful but it can be met if only we get the divine ear. I speak first, and rightly so, of our blessed Lord. What a situation confronted Him! One that He loved was in the grave; had been dead four days, and the stone was at the mouth of the grave. How is a situation like that to be met? I know, of course, that the Lord meets it by the power that is in Himself inherently as "the resurrection"; for He says, "I am the resurrection," John 11: 25. But the other side is that He is heard. He stands in the presence of that situation, and He lifts up His eyes to heaven and says, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me; but I knew that thou always hearest me." No one else could say that — "I knew that thou always hearest me; but on account of the crowd who stand around I have said it." He says this that we might get the gain of what He is doing; that we may understand that the situation, however dreadful, can be met if only we get the divine ear. Martha says, "Lord, he stinks already, for he is four days there," verse 39. However dreadful the conditions may be in any town, it can be met if we can get the divine ear. The word to us is, "I am Jehovah ... is there anything too hard for me?" Jeremiah 32: 27.

What is it, dear brethren, that makes it possible that we should be heard? Well, firstly, it is as we are entirely committed to the will of God in any matter. If we will accept that in our measure, He will hear us. The Lord Jesus said personally, "My food is that I should do the will of him that has sent me, and that I should finish his work," John 4: 34. The Lord approached this matter in relation to the will of God, and He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God," verse 4. He is committed to the will and glory of God at all costs. I would like to say this to you, That there is nothing impossible in any locality if we will commit ourselves solely to the will of God and His glory. If that is really and truly governing us, God will listen to us and give us what we ask. John says, "And if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him," 1 John 5: 15. The Lord says, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me," then He says, "Lazarus, come forth," verse 43. The position seemed utterly impossible, but it was met by One who was heard.

Now let us consider men of like passions with us, whom heaven heard. If God was prepared to hear them, is He not prepared to hear us? Surely, if God was

prepared to hear Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Daniel, then He is prepared to hear us. Indeed, the situation that exists today, the privilege, the blessing, and the food, is the consequence of some one being heard. There are those, one says humbly, to whom heaven listens; and we all want to come into the ranks, in every locality, of those who have the divine ear.

So we have Abraham. God is standing there listening to Abraham, and communing with him;

Abraham making requests and God listening from point to point, as Abraham travels downward from fifty to ten. The communion is only stopped when Abraham stops. God did not break it off. Abraham went as far as he felt he could go, and then he ceased; and God was ready to grant him every request. Now let us enquire, What is there in Abraham that thus secured the ear of God? — for he was a man like us. The position was that a whole city was threatened with destruction; and in that city there were brethren. There was Lot — Abraham's brother — and his household; and that city was facing imminent destruction, and Abraham prays. He is not part of Sodom; he dwelt in Mamre. He is entirely outside, and free from the atmosphere of Sodom. He has judged in himself what is in Sodom; so that as he draws near to God who is about to turn those cities into ashes, he says, "I, who am dust and ashes," Genesis 18: 27, which means that I have judged in myself what you are going to look into in Sodom. Now God will listen to that man. Abraham spoke to God in his prayer, as much as to say, I have been in the fire and reduced to ashes in myself what you are going to judge in Sodom. God listened and He will listen to us if we are apart from what is evil in any place, *as having judged the thing in ourselves*. Now I commend that word to every one. We may pray and pray and pray, and God will not hear us if we pray as superior to the persons or the place involved. But if we pray as having judged in ourselves what God abhors, then God will listen to us and give us what we ask.

Now we come to Moses. What was imminent in his day was that a whole nation was to be destroyed; not only a city but a nation. God says to Moses, "And now let me alone, that my anger may burn," Exodus 32: 10. "Let me alone." Did it not suggest that Moses might not let God alone? — that Moses might intervene between God and the judgment? God says to him, "I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation." What an appeal, dear brethren, to the human heart that was! But Moses does not let God alone; he said to God, "Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, For misfortune he has brought them out, to slay them on the mountains, and to annihilate them from the face of the earth?" Exodus 32: 12. and in another place he says, "lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because Jehovah was not able to

bring them into the land which he had promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to kill them in the wilderness," Deuteronomy 9: 28. Again he tells the people, "I stood upon the mountain according to the former days, forty days and forty nights; and Jehovah listened unto me also at that time," Deuteronomy 10: 10. What a wonderful sight that is! — a man intervening between God and the judgment of the whole nation. God had said, "Let me alone," but Moses pleaded the name and glory of God. He was free from any self-interest, God had offered him personal glory, but Moses said, No; Your name will be affected, Your glory will be tarnished; and he tells us that "Jehovah listened to me also at that time." What we may learn, dear brethren, is that if we are free from self-interest, self-glory, self-seeking, and have God before us and His glory, God will listen to us in any matter.

Samuel is another man whom God heard many times. His very birth was on that principle "asked of God" is the meaning of his name.

What was imminent in Samuel's case was that the Philistines would get control of Israel; that what is natural — man's mind — would supersede what is spiritual. The Philistine represents the natural mind dominating and controlling the realm of what is spiritual, and it was imminent that the people would fall into their power. Israel were greatly afraid, and they come to Samuel and say, "Cease not to cry to Jehovah our God for us," 1 Samuel 7: 8. In another place Samuel says, "far be it from me that I should sin against Jehovah in ceasing to pray for you," chapter 12: 23. He said this even in spite of what they did in rejecting him. Now, with the Philistines at the door — and how many times the Philistines stand at the door, dear brethren, in our day — and it looks as if the power of the natural mind would sweep through the land and what is really spiritual, emanating from the Spirit of God, would be set aside. But Samuel prayed, and how does he pray? He prays, dear brethren, as wholly dependent. There is the Philistine with his giants, and his great head and his mighty weapons and his coat of mail, and Samuel is praying with a little suckling lamb in his hands, presenting it to God — a suckling lamb that could not live without a supply from another, the very personification of dependence. If there is a truly dependent man, consciously needing resources from Another, from God, from Christ, God will listen to that man. Jehovah answered Samuel, "and Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were routed before Israel," verse 10. We have seen it in our day, thank God! — some great thunderings in the Philistines' camp, consequent upon a Samuel drawing near to God in true dependence in the spirit of a suckling lamb, pouring water out before God in the acknowledgment of absolute weakness, and God in heaven listens and

answers. I suggest these thoughts that they may serve to stimulate our hearts to prayer and to conditions that God may hear us.

Of Elijah, James says that he was a man of like passions with us, so it is intended to be a word of encouragement for us. James tells us that Elijah "prayed with prayer that it should not rain; and it did not rain upon the earth three years and six months," chapter 5: 17. He saw conditions in which it was imminent that the whole nation would pass over to idolatry and apostasy. That is what was threatening, and Elijah discerned that the only thing that would save them would be a period of intense discipline. So he prays earnestly and the heavens were shut up, and a period of great privation came upon Israel. It was to save them from apostasy, that is what Elijah prayed for, and he himself was prepared to suffer with them. He did not go about blaming the people, complaining, and comparing that area with another area. He suffered with the people, thankful to accept what there was by divine ordering — day by day, morning and evening, dependent on the ravens. Then the widow with a little meal and a little oil maintains him, but Elijah suffered without murmuring. If it meant a period of leanness for Israel, he was with them in the suffering, in order that they might be brought back to God.

Then he prayed on another occasion. He was now in a little meeting, so to speak, where there was only a little, maybe, but it did not waste. The meal did not fail or the oil either till the Lord gave rain. They may not have had wonderfully good times, as we speak, but they had enough; and there is always enough if Christ and the Spirit are recognised without any complaints. In that locality, the widow's son dies, and the child is laid on Elijah's bed; and he goes up and prays. Just think of that! Here is a dead child. What can anyone do? It says, Elijah prayed. What did he say? He asked God to send back that child's spirit, and his spirit *did* come again, but before that blessed result was reached, the mother owns her sin. The root, dear brethren, of death coming into a place is the sin of those responsible. The mother says, "Art thou come to me to call mine iniquity to remembrance, and to slay my son?" 1 Kings 17: 18. The loss, too, of families is due to the sin of the parents, and there is no hope. You cannot pray until that is owned. Unless those responsible in any situation are honestly prepared to come right into the open and own their sin, it is impossible to really pray. When she acknowledges it, then this man of prayer kneels down and asks God to send life, and He does it.

I believe, dear brethren, in every locality where we mourn the loss of families, if the parents particularly will take on the shame of the sin as their own sin, then we have a basis on which the saints can pray. God will send back the

spirit into the dead body and make the child to live. But while we put off the responsibility, or ignore it, prayer is hindered.

"He prayed again," James says, "and the heaven gave rain, and the earth caused the fruit to spring forth." He prayed at the sacrifice, "Answer me, Jehovah, answer me, that this people may know that thou Jehovah art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again," 1 Kings 18: 37. And the fire comes down from heaven and consumes the sacrifice. And then he goes up again and prays with his head between his knees for a season of bounty and prosperity, and the heavens gave their rain; first in a very small way — a cloud as big as a man's hand to begin with, but it is heaven operating consequent upon the prayer of Elijah.

The secret of all this with Elijah is that though entirely unknown as to his previous history, it was known to God as being right. If we want God to listen to us, then what is secret, known only to God, must be right or else we cannot get the divine ear.

Well, Daniel also was a man accustomed to pray. When threatened with being cast into the lions' den, he opened his window towards Jerusalem three times a day and "prayed and gave thanks to God as he did aforetime." He gave thanks as well as prayed. Such a man was Daniel! In this scripture the trouble that is imminent is that all wisdom is to disappear. All the wise men are to be slain. What a terrible thing if in New Jersey there was not a wise man left. That is what the devil would do, dispose of every trace of wisdom. Daniel speaks to his three friends, and they ask God for something that humanly is utterly impossible. Nebuchadnezzar had had a dream, and he had forgotten the dream, and he asked them to do the impossible, or he would slay them. How often an impossible situation presents itself, but Daniel and his friends go to their houses and pray, and the language of Daniel afterwards is magnificent. "I thank thee, and I praise thee, O God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me already what we desired of thee; for thou hast made known unto us the king's matter," chapter 2: 23. What they had prayed for was granted to him.

Such a man is listened to in heaven. Why, dear brethren? Well, there are many reasons, no doubt, but one thing that is said of Daniel is that they could not find any fault with him except in relation to his God. Those presidents who were jealous of him, they had looked into his matters, they had gone to his office, they had gone to his home, and they had been through his ledger. They had been through his public matters in relation to the government, and they admitted that all was faultless. There was no hope of getting a charge that way. And, dear brethren, we want to take that home. If we want to be heard,

our public responsibilities must be right; as our business and family matters are gone into, things are found to be right, for God sees everything. Daniel was faultless on all these matters. He and his friends were separate from the course of the world around them, living on pulse and water; that is to say, finding Christ sufficient for their food. If we are not satisfied with the pulse and water, and want the king's meat, and prefer the food and joys of this world, we may have them; but heaven will not hear us. I commend Daniel to every one here, if we want heaven's ear, we must have the pulse and water for food and drink; that is, Christ and the Spirit sufficient to build constitutions fairer and fatter than the king's meat ever can. And then, things that others can investigate publicly must be right, as they were with Daniel.

You will see, dear brethren, that all these situations represent conditions that are impossible to men, but there is nothing that God will not do for His people in any place, in any locality, or for any brother or sister, there is nothing that God is not ready to do, if we pray. But on our side, Can He listen to us? Have we conditions to entitle us to the divine ear? John says, "And if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him," 1 John 5: 15. May the Lord help the dear brethren in this town to get the divine ear as to matters that have troubled them, and provide a moral basis for God to listen.

Deuteronomy 10

- (Deuteronomy 8)
  THE RICHNESS OF THE LAND (JT 91)
- (Deuteronomy 9)
  CHRIST AS KNOWN IN THE ASSEMBLY IN THE WILDERNESS (JT 99)
- DEUTERONOMY 10 (CAC 5)
- THE LAW OF GOD (FER 13)
- THE LAW OF GOD (FER 13)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 10 (JND 36)
- PRIESTLY SERVICE WITH REGARD TO THE ASSEMBLY AS CONVENED (JT 40)
- STANDING BEFORE GOD (JT 47)

DEUTERONOMY 10 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 10

If God is to have a people for His pleasure, as redeemed and answering to His love, it must be brought about, as a result of His own work in them, and of their abiding in Christ. And this is set forth typically in the chapter now before us.

We have seen what Jehovah proposed in the covenant through the mediatorship of Moses. What answers to it for us is the revelation of the love of God in His beloved Son. That love could not be satisfied without an answer to it being produced in His people. It would not suffice that the covenant should be made known as in the heart of God concerning His people; it must, necessarily, for His pleasure, be made good in their hearts. But chapter 9 has proved that this has not been the case naturally either with Israel or ourselves. On the contrary, stiffneckedness and rebellion have marked us. Then how can God fulfil His promises, and the purposes of His love, and secure what His heart desires! We must admit that it has all failed on the line of what is natural, but God would have us to understand that it can be secured on the line of what is spiritual. This is true both as to Israel and ourselves. Four times in the first four verses of this chapter we have reference to the "first" tables, and the "first" writing. We know that "the first" in Scripture refers to the natural, "the second" to the spiritual (1 Corinthians 15: 45 - 40). Everything connected with the natural man breaks down; all on that line is perversity and rebellion. So that Moses was constrained to cast the first tables out of his two hands and break them before the eyes of the people (Deuteronomy 9: 17).

Moses himself was typical of Christ as the One who could carry the covenant unbroken; the two tables were in His two hands. But there was no answer to it in man after the order of Adam fallen. The death of Christ made manifest that all was hopeless on that line, for if men could answer to God's pleasure what need that Christ should die for them? The hopelessness of the situation in that connection was demonstrated when the "two hands" of Christ were nailed to the cross. His being made a curse for the people was the most solemn evidence that the first tables were broken. It was the declaration that they were under the curse of a broken law, though He, in wondrous grace, was made a curse for them.

But when we come to the second "two tables" an entirely new thought is introduced. Moses was to hew for himself down here two tables for Jehovah to write upon. It suggests a divine work in man wrought under the hand of Christ as Mediator and Intercessor. The Gospel of Luke presents Him in that twofold

character, and we see Him in that Gospel working so that God might have "good pleasure in men". That is the theme of the praise of the heavenly host in Luke 2: 14. Proverbs 8: 30, 31 stands connected with this: "Then I was by him his artificer", — as it may be translated: see note in New Translation — "and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men".

Christ as the Wisdom of God had the joy of contemplating men, not as fallen and perverse, but as those with whom His delights could be, and He was God's Artificer to bring it about. Those who came under the Hand of Christ were divinely fashioned so that the covenant might be written upon them. "His hands and his feet" (Luke 24:40) cover what is presented in Luke's Gospel. "His feet" would refer to His blessed movements here, making God known in infinite grace, setting forth the covenant as it was in God's heart towards men. But "his hands" suggest the thought of mighty touches of divine skill on the souls of men, so that they might come into correspondence with God, and be responsive to Him. If Christ touches a man morally that man becomes impressionable Godward; there is an undoing of the works of the devil; there is something to shew the skilfulness of the Hand that has touched him. We could not think of Christ touching anybody without some evidence being left of His handiwork.

Moses hewing the tables is a type of Christ as God's Artificer, fashioning men for the good pleasure of God. At the end of Luke we see the result; men with their understanding opened to understand the Scriptures, men just ready to receive the promise of the Father, and to be clothed with power from on high, men "with great joy, and ... continually in the temple praising and blessing God". These were not men after the flesh — fallen and perverse — but men such as Christ and the blessed God could delight in. They were not morally of the first man, but of the second Man out of heaven.

Each of them was expressive of the truth that "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit". And we see them in the beginning of the Acts with the covenant written on them — knowing God's love and loving Him, and loving one another. They were then suitable for "the land"? which is, indeed, "the habitable part of his earth".

God has told us how He will cleanse Israel morally from all their uncleannesses and from all their idols. "And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and keep mine ordinances, and ye shall do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and ye shall be my

people, and I will be your God" (Ezekiel 36: 24 - 27). God will by His own work prepare the heart of Israel to be divinely written upon, and when it is so prepared He will fulfil the word in Jeremiah 31: 33, 34. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and will write it in their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people". All that in which they failed naturally will be secured in them spiritually by the work of God. I believe that the second tables, hewn by Moses, have a typical reference to this.

Paul applies the figure of tables divinely written upon to saints of the present period when he speaks of the saints at Corinth "being manifested to be Christ's epistle ministered by us, written, not with ink, but the Spirit of the living God; not on stone tables, but on fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3: 3). By divine working human hearts become "fleshy tables" on which Christ writes with the Spirit of the living God so that men carry in their affections the impress of what God is as revealed in grace. The new covenant is consummated,

as to the spirit of it, in those who know God through Christ the Mediator, and who love Him and love one another. But this is the fruit of divine working and teaching in a people quickened spiritually by the Lord. "The Spirit quickens ... Now the Lord is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3: 6, 17).

Believers now have "the Spirit of the Lord" — the Spirit of that glorious Man who is the Mediator of the new covenant. There is thus "liberty" to take up in holy affections what pertains to the covenant. Only such a people could truly enter into the land, or take up their inheritance in it in a spiritual way for the pleasure of God. It was not — it could not be — made good in Israel at that time, for it awaited the coming of Christ, and the closing up in His death of all that was connected with man after the flesh, and the gift of the Spirit from Him as risen and glorified. But it was set forth typically in the second tables that God would write in such a way as to secure what was in His own mind and heart. The covenant was utterly broken in connection with what man is naturally, but it will be divinely and permanently written in the heart of Israel in another day by the gracious working of God. And the spirit of it is made good today in those on whose hearts Christ writes, and who "looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3: 18).

The "ark of wood" suggests the preservation of the covenant — in contrast with its being broken — in a suitable vessel. It was so perfectly in Christ, and everything hangs upon that. It was written of Him "in the volume of the book", "To do thy good pleasure, my God, is my delight, and thy law is within my

heart" (Psalm 40: 7, 8). But He cherished and preserved it as the true "ark of wood" that He might make it the law of the "great congregation". The divine intent was that what was true in Him should become true by divine teaching, and by the presence of His Spirit, in the whole of God's Israel.

But when we think of God's "good pleasure" or "law" *as in the heart of Christ* what an immense expansion is given to it! We are at once carried far beyond *the letter* of "the ten words". The letter, applied to man in the flesh, only gave the knowledge of sin, and was a ministry of death and condemnation. But *the spirit* of the covenant was the knowledge of God as a Redeemer, Deliverer, and Saviour-God — as One so known by "thousands" as to be the Object, on their part, of love and obedience. The spirit of it was that all blessing should come in on the principle of God having His place with His creature, and that God should be known as the Source of all blessing. No right-minded creature could wish that blessing should come in on any other principle; indeed it is morally impossible that it should do so. For God must be God, and the creature must be in the place that becomes it. Otherwise all would be confusion. But see how wondrously God has wrought! A Divine Person — the Son — has come into the world saying, "Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, thy will" (Hebrews 10: 7). All that God delights in for the blessing of His creature man has been brought in on the principle of love and obedience as in the heart of Christ. And the law as put in the inward parts of Israel and written in their heart, under the new covenant, will be the law as cherished and preserved in the heart of Christ. It will be the knowledge of God as forgiving and as bestowing upon them all the good that is in His heart.

It is of the utmost importance that we should think of the "good pleasure" or "law" of God as in the heart of Christ. Christ coming into the world as the obedient and righteous One brought in the good pleasure of God as to man in the full extent of it, and this in reference to all that man was as a sinner. We learn from Psalm 40 that it meant the bringing in of God's righteousness, and faithfulness, and salvation, and loving-kindness, and truth. See Psalm 40: 9, 10. God's thoughts toward us "cannot be reckoned up in order ... they are more than can be numbered" (Psalm 40: 5). The covenant, as we know it according to the spirit of it, is a ministry of righteousness and of the Spirit, and of God's innumerable thoughts of blessing as set forth in Christ. Our sins are purged, never to be remembered any more; we are sanctified and perfected in perpetuity through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Hebrews 10 enlarges on this as the outcome of God's will being taken up in Christ. God's innumerable thoughts of blessing are established in a way that glorifies Him, and fills believing hearts with joy and praise. We know the will or pleasure of God by seeing it made good by Christ. He has gone into death so

that all that was in the will of God for our blessing might be brought into effect.

The three great prophets, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah, bring out what we have been considering. Ezekiel shews how tables are prepared for divine writing; Jeremiah tells us of the writing on them; but Isaiah develops most fully how everything depends on the coming in of Christ, and on the pleasure of God being secured in Him. All hangs upon the Virgin's Son, Immanuel (Isaiah 7), who becomes the Servant upheld by Jehovah, and delighted in by Him (Isaiah 42: 1). "Jehovah had delight in him for his righteousness' sake: he hath magnified the law, and made it honourable" (Isaiah 42: 21.). We read, "The pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand" (Isaiah 53: 10). The Ark of the covenant is spoken of as God's strength and glory. See Psalm 78: 61; Psalm 132: 8. It typifies Christ as the One by whom God causes His counsel to stand, and does all His pleasure. The covenant is available for all the Israel of God as made good in Christ. It will never be understood, or rightly taken up, save in that way. So that everything depends now on our abiding in Christ; it is thus that the covenant will be preserved in its true power in our souls. The unction which we have received teaches us to "abide in him"; and John adds his personal exhortation; "And now, children, abide in him, that if he be manifested we may have boldness, and not be put to shame from before him at his coming ... Whoever abides in him does not sin ... He that says he abides in him ought, even as *he* walked, himself also so to walk" (1 John 2: 27, 28; 1 John 3: 6; 1 John 2: 6).

The ark as seen in Exodus 25 is typical of Christ personally as the One by whom all that is in the pleasure of God will be carried into effect in the moral universe. God and His will are to be supreme, and all has been secured by Christ coming into Manhood and taking up the will of God in obedience and carrying all through perfectly to the glory of God. But I think that the "ark of wood" as seen in Deuteronomy 10 would speak of Christ as the One in whom all that God would bring about *for His pleasure in men* has been patterned. The land can only be entered upon spiritually as what was true in Christ becomes true in the saints. Obedience and love as learned in Christ are to be characteristic of all those who are His. I believe this to be the point of view of the Spirit in Deuteronomy, where possession and enjoyment of "the land" is the subject. "The ark of the covenant, covered round in every part with gold" (Hebrews 9: 4) is Christ in His personal and unique glory, but it seems to me that the "ark of wood" is suggestive of Christ in that aspect in which what is true in Him can also be true in His saints. It suggested that God had His own thoughts in reserve, and that, He would, in due time, secure them, first of all in Christ, and then through Christ in those who should abide in Him as having

His Spirit. One would cherish the thought of this even if we have a humbling consciousness of how little it is so practically.

When John speaks of the "old commandment, which ye have had from the beginning", he is referring to what was true in Christ; but he goes on to speak of "a new commandment", and says of it, "Which thing is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light already shines" (1 John 2: 7, 8). I think the "ark of wood" in Deuteronomy is typically expressive of the "new commandment" as that which being true in Christ can also be true in those who abide in Him. It is striking how John puts the saints, as it were, in Christ's place, and says of them what he had said of Christ. We are more ready to believe that the thoughts of God are secured in Christ than we are to recognise that, by the work of God, what is true in Christ becomes true in those who are His. But the elect of God are sanctified to the obedience of Jesus Christ. The one born anew can say, "For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man" (Romans 7: 22). And it is through the "obedience of faith" that we receive the glad tidings. Where there is obedience, righteousness, and love, there is moral correspondence with Christ as the "ark of wood". The covenant will be made good in the heart of Israel in a coming day, and surely the spirit of it is made good in the saints in this, the Spirit's day. Or are we to accept that there will be a fuller result for the pleasure of God in saints who are of Israel than there is in saints who are of the assembly?

John would shew us where the commandments are made good; he would say, like Moses in Deuteronomy 10, "and they are there". John does not speak in terms of the covenant, but he gives us the substance and vitality of it as made good in a company who know the love of God, and who respond to it, and who love one another. Such keep the commandments of God; what is true in Christ is also true in them; indeed John says, "that even as he is, we also are in this world". The people of God thus take character from the "ark of wood", and become the expression here of God, and of what is pleasing to God. A vessel is secured in which all that pertains to the covenant can be cherished and preserved. The typical teaching which follows in the book of Deuteronomy can only be taken up spiritually in the light of this. It can only be taken up in virtue of divine work and teaching, and of abiding in Christ.

A parenthesis is introduced in verses 6 and 7 mentioning circumstances which took place historically long after what Moses had been speaking of, but which are brought in here by the Spirit of God to call our attention to two things of great importance. First, the necessity for the priestly service of Christ in view of the land being entered and possessed. Aaron's exercise of priesthood was

limited to the wilderness, but Eleazar is a type of Christ as Priest in relation to entrance upon the inheritance. Aaron represents Christ as exercising priesthood in relation to wilderness needs and weaknesses, but Eleazar represents Him as Priest in relation to the inheritance. Joshua was to stand before him, and he would enquire for Joshua "by the judgment of the Urim before Jehovah" (Numbers 27: 21). Eleazar is a type of Christ as Priest in relation to all that which, from the Deuteronomic standpoint, can be described as "good things to come" (Hebrews 9: 11). As the true Aaron He can sympathise and succour in all wilderness needs, but as Eleazar He has complete knowledge, according to divine light, of "the eternal inheritance", and of how we should go out and come in to acquire possession of it. He knows as "high priest of the good things to come" how to allot to all Israel, and to each tribe, their appointed place in the divine inheritance. It is an aspect of His precious and continuing service which we do well not to overlook. The military exploits of Joshua without the priestly direction of Eleazar would not have sufficed to secure to the heirs of promise the enjoyment of the inheritance. And we need Christ as "high priest of the good things to come" — things that have now come, and can be known as spiritual realities — if we are to have present enjoyment of them.

Then the "land of waterbrooks" speaks of a region where there is the flow and activity of the Holy Spirit. The people themselves do not often bring divine thoughts before us; it is generally far otherwise; but the incidents that occurred on their journey are often freighted with rich meaning. And this "land of waterbrooks" to which they came immediately after the transfer of the priesthood to Eleazar was a remarkable anticipation of "the land" as described in chapter 8: 7. It speaks of the copiousness and variety of the refreshings of the Spirit as known even on the wilderness side of Jordan. God is pleased to give to His people manifestations of the Spirit in the assembly viewed as in wilderness conditions, as in 1 Corinthians. He gives ministry in freshness and power there that His saints may be incited to move forward energetically into that which is peculiarly the domain of the Spirit. To experience the activities of the Spirit as described in 1 Corinthians would be a great inducement to go on to know what His activities are amongst the saints viewed as over Jordan. There are thus two great encouragements brought before us in this remarkable little parenthesis: the thought of Christ's priestly service with reference to acquiring possession of the inheritance, and the thought of the Spirit as an abundant and perennial Source of refreshment and fertility.

Then we get in verses 8, 9 the separation of the tribe of Levi. "The tribe of Levi" represents the element that, is distinctly "for Jehovah" (Exodus 32: 26), and which preserves what is of God, and what is due to God, They

consecrated themselves to Jehovah, and brought on themselves a blessing. The overcomers all through have been the true "tribe of Levi"; they have risen superior to what was natural; they have been able to gird on the sword, and to shew that God and His things were more to them than the influence of nature. What should have been true of all Israel was realised in Levi, and Jehovah took them in a peculiar way for Himself. They represented in Israel something which is greater than the inheritance, namely, the direct service of God. This was given to them as peculiar distinction and privilege, and they remained as a separated tribe, not participating in the inheritance like the other tribes, but representing in all Israel what was due to God; and to His holy service. The inheritance was held by the people largely that it might minister to them, and that the service of God in their hands might be fully maintained.

Their service was threefold — "To bear the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, to stand before Jehovah to do service unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day". These things are distinguished for us from the inheritance, and they represent what the inheritance is intended to support, as we shall see later in this book.

"To bear the ark of the covenant of Jehovah" would represent priestly ability to sustain the ministry of that infinite wealth of divine grace which is enshrined in Christ as the Ark of the covenant. The apostles were true Levites; they carried in their holy service the strength and glory of God as shining out in fulness of grace and truth in Christ. They were ministers of Christ, and, as carried on their shoulders, there was competent new covenant ministry. As sustained of God, they did not stumble, like David's oxen, nor did they allow the Ark to fall into Philistine hands, and their service is a model for all the "tribe of Levi". Nothing can be more precious and holy than the ministry of Christ in the glory that attaches to Him as the Ark of the covenant. This is indeed greater than the inheritance, for it is the shining forth of the glory of Him who gives the inheritance, and the Giver must be greater than the gift.

Then "to stand before Jehovah to do service unto him" refers to sanctuary service — ordering the lamps and the shewbread, burning incense, presenting offerings and sacrifices, and carrying on the service of song. We are apt to think that what serves man is more important than the service of God, but this is not so. The result of our being in the good of what God has given to us will be that we shall have tithes and offerings. We shall minister fully to the "tribe of Levi", and the service of the sanctuary will be sustained. The inheritance is bestowed in order that there may be a result for God in levitical and priestly service.

Then, finally, "and to bless in his name" would indicate that God will have the last word, and that word is always a word of blessing for His people. If He is served according to what is due to Him in His house it will surely result in full blessing, according to the greatness of His Name, flowing out upon His people. It is no small part of the privilege of the "tribe of Levi" to be able to express towards His faithful people the blessed thoughts that fill the heart of God toward them. It is the glory of His Name to be known as blessing.

These things are distinguished for us from the inheritance by the separation of the tribe of Levi, to whom they pertained, from all the other tribes, and by the fact that "Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; Jehovah is his inheritance according as Jehovah thy God told him". Our Instructor would remind us that, wonderful as the inheritance is, it is bestowed in view of God being served according to His pleasure, and that He would delight to be to us greater, and more to be gloried in, than all He gives. Jehovah was Levi's inheritance, and he was separated to represent in Israel what was due to Jehovah in holy service. We must not think of the tribe of Levi merely as representing certain persons distinguished from others as God's servants, but as representing a spiritual condition and service which the inheritance has to support. God would have us to be concerned, not only about the possession and enjoyment of the inheritance, but about His holy service, and the maintenance of all that is due to Him. He would have us to remember that the inheritance is not everything, but that it is given so that it may yield support for "the tribe of Levi". He would have us see to it that what that tribe represents is maintained and ministered to in ourselves and in others. This is the first mention of the tribe of Levi in this book, but we shall find that it occupies an important place in the subsequent teaching.

We are again reminded in verse 10 of how much we owe to the intercession and advocacy of Christ. It is a persistent service of faithful love which He carries on through the whole period which is typified by the "forty days and forty nights" of Moses intercession. Many a secret unrighteousness that might have developed into open failure or public departure has been the occasion of His advocacy, and in result has been judged, and our soul has escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler. In the remembrance of this we may well be constrained to take up, in our measure, a similar service. "If any one see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life, for those that do not sin unto death" (1 John 5: 16).

Probably many of us have owed our "life" not only to the advocacy of Christ, but to the asking of some brother! I wonder how many brothers owe their "life" to our asking? Sin is a serious matter for it is morally death; but in a

brother it brings into exercise the advocacy of Christ, and the asking of any brother who sees it, and on this ground "he, shall give him life". Instead of the brother who sins being cut off, or permanently lost to the brethren, he gets "life"; he is restored, and retained for the enjoyment of spiritual good, and for the companionship of the brethren.

At the moment to which Moses refers here the people, on their side, had lost all title to the land, but Jehovah listened to the intercession of Moses, and said to him, "Rise up, take thy journey before the people, that they may enter in and possess the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give unto them". What a testimony to the grace and faithfulness of God, and to the fact that His people owe all to His mercy through the Mediator and Intercessor! Many of the people sinned unto death and fell in the wilderness, but those who went in and possessed the land did so on the ground of God's faithfulness to His promise and oath, and on the ground of the intercession of Moses. To speak in John's language, God gave them life.

Christ, as the true Moses, would remind us of how much we owe to His intercessory service. I believe it is due to His intercession if any of us have "life" to enter into the purpose of God, after all that has happened in the history of His people. Every bit of faithfulness has been the result of Christ's intercession. "At that time Jehovah separated the tribe of Levi". "That time" was when Moses prayed; and I have no doubt that whatever has been distinctively for God has been secured and maintained by the intercession of Christ. The overcomers "unto this day" have been thus maintained; He prayed that faith might not fail. But for the intercession of Christ *everything* would have broken down in the assembly, but through His prayer something has been maintained for God, and will be to the end. As we learn this it turns us more simply and wholly to Him; He gets a very great place with us; we do not trust in ourselves or our own faithfulness; *we believe on Him*.

Christ as Mediator has brought the light of God to us; as Intercessor He sustains His saints that they may enter into it, and answer to it. Such are the conditions of weakness on our side that we could not be self-supporting. Indeed the creature will never be self-supported; even in condition of glory in eternity all will be sustained in virtue of God being all in all, and Christ being Head, and the Spirit all-pervading.

One loves to regard every bit of faithfulness, and holy separation, and devotedness that has ever appeared in the assembly as the fruit of the intercession of Christ. Our Moses would bring home to us how dependent we have been, and are, on His intercession. It is good that we should linger on this. None of us would have ever got the victory over natural influences, or

would have had the things of God preserved in their preciousness in our hearts, if Christ had not prayed for us. If "we more than conquer" it is "through him that has loved us". When Paul asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" he is thinking of the love in which He intercedes for us at the right hand of God. None of us could face the pressure: or resist the seductions, if we were not sustained by the intercession of Christ. The very fact that we have the Spirit is in answer to His prayer. "And I will beg the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth" (John 14: 16). Then the Spirit in us becomes an Intercessor (Romans 8: 26, 27), and we ourselves become marked by an intercessory spirit. It is not learned or self-sufficient people that get on spiritually, but persons who are marked by prayer and supplication.

It is deeply touching to know that such activities begin at the right hand of God. Every spiritual movement in our souls can be traced to the intercession of Christ, and then we become characterised by prayer. And even our prayers derive their efficacy from His service on high, for as the Angel-Priest of Revelation 8 He has "a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might give efficacy to the prayers of all saints at the golden altar which was before the throne". It is blessed to think of spiritual movement's as beginning at the right hand of God, and being worked out through prayers which go back to be presented there as efficacious through the incense which Christ adds to them. All that pertains to the covenant is worked out in this way, and only thus will "the land" be entered upon and possessed.

Now God is to be feared, and loved, and served, and obeyed in the light of His sovereign love and choice, and the pleasure which He has in His people. "Jehovah took pleasure in thy fathers, to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you, out of all the peoples, as it is this day" (verse 15). "He is thy praise, and he is thy God, who hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen" (verse 21). Now the heart must be circumcised, the will and lusts of the flesh cut off, so that the blessed character of God may be reproduced in His people.

Much is said of the greatness of God, but the tenderness of His grace is magnified. "Who executeth the judgment of the fatherless and the widow, and loveth the stranger, to give him food and clothing. And ye shall love the stranger; for ye have been strangers in the land of Egypt". I think at least ten times in this book the widow, the fatherless, and the stranger are mentioned as subjects of care. It shows how God would have His people to enjoy all that His love and purpose have conferred on them in a spirit of grace and consideration that is like His own. There will always be among the people of

God opportunities for the expression in a practical way of His own gracious character. And He delights, too, as the last verse of the chapter shows, to multiply His people. On the first day of the assembly's history He added three thousand souls, and how many saints there are on the earth today it, would be hard indeed to tell!

THE LAW OF GOD (FER 13)

Deuteronomy 10:1-15; Deuteronomy 10:21,22; Romans 12

I have referred to these scriptures as giving the two poles in regard to the will of God — the principle in each passage is the same. In Deuteronomy it is the *expression* of that will, in Romans 12 it is our *proving* of it — but a great deal comes in between. I want to take up both thoughts and to shew how we prove the will of God. It is extremely important to recognise that we are here for the will of God — grace has wrought in us in that direction.

The first chapters in Deuteronomy are a recapitulation of what had taken place in the wilderness. The Spirit of God by Moses moralises on the wilderness and the dealings of God with the people there. Chapter 10 speaks of the tables of stone being put in the ark, and we get the divine principle underlying the commandments. Moses brings that out here to Israel. The declaration of God's will was a most important point in the history of the world. There was not the declaration of God's will to Adam save in that he was forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; but that was not exactly a moral law, it was in a sense arbitrary. Then God gave promises to Abraham, but that was not the declaration of His will in regard to man. When He had delivered a people out of Egypt we get a distinct declaration of God's will. God saw fit to give such a declaration, and that *must* stand; the writing was there, though it was put in the ark, but what God wrote *must* stand, because it is the declaration of His will. The law consisted in ten commandments for the most part prohibitory. You want to get under the letter of them, and then you find that love underlies them — love does no ill to one's neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Man should love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. Those are the two principles of law, and underneath that there lay the love of God; the law of God is love. The Lord had loved their fathers, and this had been brought out in His ways with the people. God's law is to rule here on earth, The two tables written by God were put into the ark, but the will of God had been declared, man was himself to be ruled by the love of God, and, in response, to love God with all his heart and his neighbour as himself. You cannot understand the wisdom in the dealings of God unless you take into account the principle underneath them, and that was *love*. Love was to govern on the earth.

In Psalm 40: 6 - 10 there are two great ideas — one is the ministry of Christ on earth, and the other the work of Christ. He declared God's righteousness in the great congregation, but He also said, "Thy law is within my heart;" there was the doing of God's will in love, that which was to govern in the universe

was hid in the heart of Christ. He suffered in order that the righteousness of God might be declared. In the death of Christ man was removed, all that man was morally. But the cross was the revelation of the love of God. It would not have been possible for the love of God to be revealed except in the removal of that which was offensive to God; this was removed in order that God's law might be declared. The law was the ruling principle of love, which came out in the sacrifice of Christ. In the doing of God's will Christ revealed what was in God's heart.

The cover of the ark was the mercy-seat. God speaks to man in Christ. God is to be all in all, for He has been vindicated in regard to all that is contrary to His will.

In the reference to Psalm 40 in Hebrews 10: 1 - 10, we are told of the removal of a first thing to establish the second. The old man was removed, and with him the whole system of offerings that applied to him. The man offensive to God has been removed in the death of the righteous One, and Christ has presented in place of that man the love of God. The Son of man must be lifted up because God so loved the world. Now by the will of God we are sanctified. The first thing that reaches us is the testimony of God's grace. God presents Himself to us, not imputing sins. God has set to work to save man, He has established His kingdom in the heart of man; the kingdom is established to this end, that man may be placed in security from the god and prince of this world. God's kingdom is opposed to the authority of darkness ("Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world"), it subsists that man may be practically delivered from the power of the enemy. God has His own end in that, and that is to bring the soul under divine teaching. When God has given the sense of security in the power of the Holy Spirit to the believer, He begins to instruct that soul, to impart the teaching of the new covenant. God makes that heart conscious of His love; it is a great thing for the heart to know that. That love is in increasing activity down here, and will never rest until it has us in God's glory and according to His glory. Your heart is brought under divine teaching in order that you may be sanctified. The knowledge of divine love is the practical power of sanctification down here — no one is sanctified except in the knowledge of divine love. The knowledge of divine love makes you a son of God. We are thus set apart to God, and understand what the will of God is — all that is contrary to Him has been removed in the death of Christ, and what has been commended in the death of Christ sets man apart to God for priestly service. We are sanctified to God while down here.

The two tables of the covenant were put into the ark for the time being. Christ comes out, in due time, and declares the law of God. We are sanctified by

what has been declared in the death of Christ, set apart by the knowledge of His love. There are two classes of people in the world — one acquainted with the love of God, and the other not knowing it, but walking in the line of their own wicked will.

When we come to Romans 12: 19, 21, we have the *proving* of God's will. The first thing is that you are transformed, you have got practical deliverance from the great world system, and your mind is conversant with the love of God. Love is now the ruling power of our life down here. The one who proves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God is not conformed to the world. The next thing is that in the presence of divine love we get a true estimate of ourselves. No one ever gets a right measure of himself except in the presence of the love of God. We learn there our nothingness:

> 'O Keep us love divine, near Thee,
> That we our nothingness may know,
> And ever to Thy glory be
> Walking in faith while here below'.

Then we come to be here for God's will, we become capable for it. That path has been introduced by Christ.

Effective service for Christ down here is as we learn our nothingness in the presence of love divine. The next thing is that you recognise the existence of one body in Christ, and that we are members one of another. Each member is to wait on his particular obligation to the body. Everything is new, we are put into that in which we had no place before. When I understand that, I begin to wait on my business — that is, in regard to the body of Christ down here. The love of God regards the body of Christ, the eye of God rests on that, it is that which God has formed to His glory, and each of us has a place in that body. If you are a teacher you are to wait on your teaching. You will do a thing in the very best way, even if it be shewing mercy. You are to carry out in the best way the function which God has given you in the body of Christ down here, because you are governed by divine love. A teacher commands the love of the saints because he is governed himself by divine love.

Shewing mercy with cheerfulness is a great thing, you do everything in the best way in the light of divine love.

Christ could denounce the Pharisees, because He was the perfect expression of divine love and wisdom down here. I could not.

In verse 9 we have the admonition, "Let love be without dissimulation". While each one has to wait on his particular function in the body, we have here a

general exhortation; love can be without dissimulation in the christian circle because everything there is governed by divine love. Love could not have come out in the death of Christ had not righteousness been vindicated, and now in the power of good we are to overcome evil. If we have to meet evil we are enabled to overcome it in the power of good, and not to meet evil by evil. It has been the divine principle all the way through, God overcomes evil with good.

I trust you will ponder what I have been saying and apprehend the course of God's will in the world, and how we come out here, transformed by the renewing of our mind, to prove that will. The work of the gospel is making men acquainted with the love of God so that they may be liberated from everything here to be here for the will of God.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 10 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 10

— 1 - 9. I take these verses to be all a parenthesis, and verse 10 to connect directly with chapter 9: 29, showing that after the apostasy of Israel, the law (but now in the ark), the priesthood, and a land of rivers of waters, and levitical service with no inheritance but the Lord, was set up a system of patient grace in Israel. The death of Aaron showed, through Eleazar taking his place, that the priesthood continued, as did the service of Levi in the land which is the subject of this book, not merely in the wilderness in which all this was set up.

— 1 - 11, takes up the standing of the restored people. The basis of it all is laid in Exodus 34:1 - 9, which stands by itself, passing on (verse 28) to Moses, with the people — a mediatorial condition and government, see verse 27.

— 6, 7. Compare Numbers 33:37, 38. There is no difficulty here.

PRIESTLY SERVICE WITH REGARD TO THE ASSEMBLY AS CONVENED (JT 40)

Deuteronomy 10:6,7; Hebrews 7:26; Hebrews 8:1,2

Ques Does the covenant furnish a background to priestly service?

JT It does. It is a question of love existing, so to speak in volume, that is, God from the divine side. The priestly order is to bring about a state of things amongst the people of God, a state of liberty, a state of joy. God showed it to be His mind and heart for His people as having brought them to Himself. Exodus 20 speaks of the thousands of those that love Him, but then He proves in the covenant that He was worth loving, that "*We* love because *he* has first loved us", 1 John 4:19. Then Exodus 21 brings in the Hebrew servant, the type of Christ in extreme lowliness in bondman form, and the basis of love in those circumstances. He says, "I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go free" (verse 5). That is ascending love, horizontal love, and descending love, and plenty of it, as you might say, although in one in bondman form, in conditions that did not tend to promote it. There were limited conditions, but there would be love there in one Person ascending, and moving out, and coming down. It is the "length and depth and height" of that love — quantity, so to speak. I think that is the basis, in a practical way, of the exercise of priesthood — one who says that he loved his master and wife and children and would not go out free but stays there for ever on the principle of love. Because of love, He would stay there for ever. And then that same Person in another type is seen in an ennobled way in Aaron — the same Person. The Hebrew servant is a type of Christ, and Aaron is a type of Christ in a very exalted way. He is the brother of the mediator, a man with a history, a man known to God for years back. So in Exodus 28, you have Christ, not as a bondman but as a noble exalted Personage with all the habiliments of dignity and glory, Priest unto God. These two types, converging as they do, bring us to the exercise of priesthood in a dignified way. "That he may serve me as priest", not as a slave, but in the priest's office, but then we have the basis of love to witness to it. That, I think, is properly introductory to the service of priesthood in the assembly. When we come to Moses' account of things in Deuteronomy, it is looking back, for Deuteronomy is retrospective, written after things had intruded, when things had been known by experience. At the second giving of the law Jehovah, when Moses had prayed to Him in the mount, told him to hew out the stones *himself* and to make the ark of wood *himself*; when all this was effected, these two verses are brought into the history, happening, as they did, about forty years, or twenty-five years, or

eight years after, but they are brought in not because of any historical connection but in a moral connection, for you have a state of things where God hands over things to a man who is at liberty to hew stones and make the ark, and who does it all. God has a man now that is entirely trustworthy; as a matter of fact, Moses had become a wonderful type of Christ. He offers to die for the people at that time that they should not be wiped out or destroyed. So we have Moses himself representing Christ in the way of sacrifice. He would rather be blotted out of God's book than that they should be blotted out, and he fell down forty days and nights before Jehovah. So God gives him the opportunity to hew out the stones and make the ark, which he does. And then this remarkable link is brought in, that Aaron dies and another priest comes in; that is to say, we have a change of priesthood — a change of law — Eleazar is now the priest, and that is the side we ought to get on to — what Eleazar means or represents.

Rem What you have been saying fits in with the scripture we read in Hebrews.

JT That is right — "For such a high priest became us". The saints are viewed now in their exalted status.

Ques Does "Hew for thyself two tables of stone like the first" (Deuteronomy 10:1), refer to the people of God as a new generation in which all this is going to be effected?

JT That is right; it is writing material, impressionable material.

WB-w What is your thought in referring to the Hebrew servant and Aaron? Is it the idea of seeing them set forth in Christ personally first before bringing in the saints?

JT Yes, quite so. How wonderful to see the greatness of the Priest, because a priest marks off the people — "such a high priest became us". You are not inferior — not that we need Him personally, but the dignity of the saints requires such a great Person, and that brings us on to an entirely new level.

CAM So the change of priesthood seems to be very wonderful in that way. I suppose it would be right to say that the whole system is according to the Priest. If we took any system and knew the priest of it, we would have an idea of what kind of thing it was.

JT That is right. Hebrews brings out the greatness of the priest, but it brings out also the greatness of the people "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling", Hebrews 3:1.

AFM What is the idea of the second verse we read in Deuteronomy, "From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of water-brooks"? Is there something in that?

JT Yes, that is a great thing — a land of water-brooks. That is where we want to get, where there is plenty of power and refreshment. The land of waterbrooks corresponds to the land of Canaan. It is that kind of land. They had reached it, you will observe. Aaron dies and is buried there, and Eleazar, his son,

exercises the priesthood. It is not simply that he received it but he exercised it. The thing goes on; there is no lapse. When Aaron died, Eleazar exercised the priesthood, another priest who is to be associated with Joshua as Aaron was associated with Moses, but he is associated with Moses for a while, until Moses dies. Aaron and Moses die and authority and priesthood from the standpoint of personal support cease. We come into what is collective in Eleazar who exercised the priesthood in the stead of his father. "From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of water-brooks". They journeyed. That is the way this is to be; the Spirit of God brings out that where you have these conditions, there is movement. A priest suited to this movement brings it in.

JS A land of waterbrooks indicates the spiritual resources of the place.

JT That is what we should have before us in coming together in assembly, that we reach a place of waterbrooks. It is very refreshing and sweet.

WB-w In Numbers 3, it reads that Eleazar and Ithamar exercised the priesthood in the presence of Aaron their father; in Deuteronomy, Aaron dies, and Eleazar takes it up. What is the distinction?

JT Well, Eleazar is high priest now. He could not be that while his father lived. He represents an element of our relations in the church. Whilst his father lived, he is a spiritual element amongst the saints, but that element increases when his father dies, just as Joshua in a military way increases. We see him in a little way in Exodus 17, but he increases. I think he, with Eleazar, becomes a great leader. He is to take the people in and put them in possession of the land.

ANW Are you viewing Eleazar in verse 6 as another type of Christ or as one of Aaron's sons?

JT It is Christ in another way.

JS Would you say that in Exodus 21 the Hebrew servant and Aaron merge so that we have the spiritual result in Eleazar?

JT I think so. It is only to get the mind fixed because the Holy Spirit teaches us in our minds. Thus He links the thing up. So if you get the Hebrew servant in your mind, you see the element of love is there even in limited circumstances, in the circumstances of a slave.

WB-w In Numbers, Eleazar and Ithamar represent the saints more; whereas in Deuteronomy, Eleazar represents Christ.

JT He does; when his father dies.

AFM Would you say how far Aaron takes us? We have Moses and Aaron, and then they go and we have Eleazar and Joshua.

JT We have leaders in the New Testament. Moses and Aaron run together in Romans and Corinthians; that is, the authority in the Lord runs on to Jordan. The priesthood of Aaron runs on to Mount Horeb before we come on to Romans 8, which is the springing well, but the authority of the Lord runs through.

ARS Why did the priesthood of Aaron run short of bringing them into the land? Is that because of the breakdown?

JT It is not so much that. The breakdown in Deuteronomy is because of the people, not because of Moses. The breakdown in Aaron and Moses is not mentioned. It is because of the people in Deuteronomy — "Also Jehovah was angry with me on your account" (Deuteronomy 1:37). It was because of them; therefore it is governmental, but then you can see that it is overruled and fits into the divine economy. Authority will never take you into heaven; it will never take you into the land. It is spiritual power that is needed there. Aaron stands more for what is external; whereas, Eleazar is more Christ viewed as the spiritual Leader. It is a spiritual thing.

Rem You expect to go on with Eleazar beyond the point of Moses. Eleazar enters into the land.

JT Moses goes a little further. He goes to Mount Pisgah, but Aaron dies at Mount Horeb. That element stops. Of course, you have the Spirit immediately after Aaron dies, but not the Spirit as you see Him in Exodus 17, but the Spirit as a springing well recognised by the people.

Ques And then Eleazar goes beyond the death of Moses, too. You are coming to that later on?

JT Yes; he goes on and takes them in under Joshua, but bear in mind this is all Christ, whether in Moses, Aaron, Eleazar or Joshua; only Moses and Aaron

are Christ in authority and external support, whereas Joshua and Eleazar represent an inward thing.

CAM I think that greatly helps. The priesthood seems to have two functions, one in connection with a need and the other toward God. In connection with this change in the priesthood, is it right to feel that this matter of compassion and need really comes to an end in the saints, and there is a spiritual power that gives the priesthood a greatness it never had before?

JT That is right. If it were possible for any of us to be carried into the eternal state of things, we would understand all this very simply because we should see there is no Aaron, for there is no need of anyone being touched with the feelings of our infirmities. We have none. We have no sin to deal with. There is no need of the priest in compassion, but there is need for spiritual power there, and that spiritual power is God's.

Ques Do you connect Eleazar and the idea of a new generation in Numbers with our thinking on spiritual lines?

JT That is right. The new generation comes in early after Numbers 11 after Kadesh, and they are the ones that go in, and Eleazar and Joshua are the ones that take them in.

Rem They are numbered later on.

JT Yes.

AFM Is the priesthood to be viewed as passing into the eternal state or is it in connection with a provisional order of things?

JT The priesthood of Aaron is external, and in a certain sense, Joshua and Eleazar drop it; that is, the thing gradually diminishes. The more we get into the presence of God, the more the external order of things wanes; there is no need for it.

ANW The priesthood diminished, you mean?

JT Yes, where there is nothing inferior and no sin and where all is perfect, we do not need a priest. The Person is there in whom they are set forth, but then they are not in evidence. You are there in such power yourself.

AFM How do you connect these thoughts with "We have such a one high priest", Hebrews 8:1? There is the provision of the Priest, the Minister of the tabernacle which the Lord has pitched and not man.

JT That brings us on. We are on our feet now, and we are going to serve God. It is a wonderful thing that we can so regard Him in that He has us to serve Him.

ARS Do the sons of the new generation correspond to the saints of the present time?

JT They correspond with you, with all that attaches to you as a man of flesh. That correctly disappears. You become unconscious of it in spiritual power. This is not recognised, it is not so easy for all of us to follow, but it is a most important thing if we are to act on assembly lines. The Jordan means the complete ending of all flesh and blood conditions. "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", 2 Corinthians 12:2. He was there.

ARS Is that new ground?

JT Well, it is — "if any one be in Christ, there is a new creation", 2 Corinthians 5:17.

AR We have to learn not only to come under Joshua but under Eleazar.

JT Just so. Joshua is the military leader, where it is a question of power; Eleazar is a more refined thought.

WB-w In the last chapter you get both the death of Eleazar and Joshua. Would they carry us only a certain distance?

JT That is right. The thing becomes attenuated the further you go. You are not needing it; you are there in power yourself.

CAM That greatly helps. The nearer I am to God, the less actual the division of things. There is hardly anything about eternal things to be found out.

JT It is taken on trust. They are to be found out — "Things which eye has not seen, and ear not heard, and which have not come into man's heart, which God has prepared for them that love him", 1 Corinthians 2:9.

FHL Do you think a term such as "priest" disappears in Aaron or in Eleazar? I suppose the thought of love carries through as in the Person of Christ Himself. I was thinking of your quotation — "rooted and founded in love". That carries on through.

JT That is right. The love of Christ remains; indeed, all the fulness of God remains. There is no need. You are sustained there in spiritual power. It is a question in Ephesians 3 of the Father's Spirit in the heart, the inner man, that you may be fully able to apprehend with all saints. "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named, in order that he may give you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power by his Spirit in the inner

man; that the Christ may dwell, through faith, in your hearts, being rooted and founded in love, in order that ye may be fully able to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height", Ephesians 3:14 - 18. That is the idea. It is not the support of the priest; it is love, it is the Father's Spirit in the inner man making us powerful.

ARS I suppose the nearest that the children of Israel ever got was under Solomon?

JT Exactly. If you just eliminate the years that elapsed between Joshua and Eleazar and David and Solomon, you get a clear view of it; and we are entitled to do that because these verses in Deuteronomy 10 eliminate forty years and bring the two things together. We are entitled to do that because David and Solomon are the final thought — "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance" (Exodus 15:17), takes in David and Solomon.

JEH In that connection it was said the priests were not able to minister.

JT Yes; when you come to Solomon, there is power there for them.

Ques Does the priestly service cease in time?

JT I think it does. God says, I want this whole scene for myself.

AFM Where God shall be all in all.

JT Yes; that is the thought.

Ques At what point of time was the Aaronic state established? Was it when they were actually anointed?

JT We have different accounts of that. What is to be observed is that the first proposal is the priesthood; so that we are all to be priests. That is a thing to be noticed. God has not given up that thought. We are all to be priests. It is a nation of priests, He says. Subsequently one person is taken up, but the divine mind was that we are all to be priests, and as a matter of fact, all christians are priests; the divine thought is "a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ", 1 Peter 2:5.

ARS I understand about our all being priests in this dispensation, but in the past dispensation it was generally the tribe of Levi, and nobody could be a priest unless he belonged to that tribe.

JT These subsequent developments are to bring out other things. God has given out that you are all to be priests. He has not given that up. Then He wants to show what the thing really means, and for that He brings up Aaron, the brother of the mediator. And then the next thing is that the family of Levi

is taken up. "At that time Jehovah separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, to stand before Jehovah to do service unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day. Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; Jehovah is his inheritance, according as Jehovah thy God told him", Deuteronomy 10:8,9. Now Christ as the High Priest is depicted in Aaron. He is a great personage and they anoint him, but then you have a family as well as priests, because in Deuteronomy and Joshua, the Levites are all priests. It is a family of priests, and everyone of them is a son, a first-born; that is another thing. These features are to bring out other things. They are to bring out the greatness of the priestly family, and the greatness of Christ as their High Priest.

Ques Do you not think that this anointing of Aaron and his sons occurred very early because it was evidently soon after the anointing of the tabernacle? Does the idea of the priesthood not come in to the thought of the Supper in its early setting?

JT It does. We need Aaron as such. Everyone does as he leaves his house to come to the assembly. He needs the support of Christ. We have children to look after, and that causes anxiety and worry and irritation and we need Christ in that aspect; as we sit down together, we need Him, and then alongside of that, you have the authority of Moses because it is the *Lord's* supper, the dominical sphere.

Ques What about the eating? Is that priestly, more?

J.T. You mean the Supper?

Ques Yes; according to Matthew, the thought is eating; in Leviticus 8, the thought is eating. Is it appropriation of Christ in the Supper, more what we do in a priestly way?

JT Well, it is. It supports us, for it strengthens us. Matthew and Mark would give that side. We are supported — "This is my body" — not 'This is my flesh', but *my body*. We are supported by that food. It is a collective idea. It is food that nourishes us but it is a collective idea, that we know how to be among the saints. It is not food for life, but food for the assembly, to give you a constitution to take a place among the brethren so that you might be able to sit down quietly and silently in power, as appropriating the body as food, "Take, eat: this is my body", Matthew 26:26. That gives you a constitution to be in the assembly in power as of the body. You grasp the whole thought of God and you take account of the saints sitting by you as making up the whole; you are sitting with them.

Ques That would be Matthew's presentation of the Supper?

JT Yes, Matthew and Mark both say, "Take, eat".

CAM I should like to refer to something you said about Leviticus 8. It appeals to me that what we have in view is something that is going to broaden out and fill the whole universe.

JT Yes; the tabernacle means that. It was the figure of the universe. It was anointed and Aaron was anointed in relation to that.

CAM It is difficult, otherwise, to bring the calendar into Leviticus 8.

Ques Does not Leviticus 8 really precede the other offerings?

JT Oh, yes; you have not got the priest. It is after the offerings are finished that you get the priesthood anointed, but then they are seen as officiating before that in chapter 1.

Rem You could not have authority unless that were established.

JT That is right; the chapter morally comes in first. The offerings, of course, were to furnish the priests and build them up so that they were fit to be anointed.

WB-w The idea of eating and drinking gives you a spiritual constitution. Does that bring you under Joshua and Eleazar now?

JT We must not bring in a calendar because properly this leads us into eternity. Time enters into it at the beginning because it is the first day of the week, and "When the hour was come", Luke 22:14. Time has to do with it, but it is to eternity. God begins with time. He graciously comes into time. God came out from eternity into time to lead us out from time into eternity.

CAM The line of the hymn 'Eternity's begun' (94:1) has a meaning only with regard to us.

JT Not as regards Himself.

Ques Is the thought of the sanctuary on the way to eternity?

JT Yes; the calendar is quite right and very important. It is right to be on time and not be late at the Lord's supper — to be there in time, and to be there in subjection, suited to it as well. The official priesthood of Aaron and the authority of Moses are needed in all that. But eating of "my body" is to give you a constitution for the collective position, that I may have my place collectively and know how to sit with my brethren. I must have power to do that. I believe that is what the food in Matthew and Mark is for. David built inward: it does not say how far. The suggestion is unto God. John's gospel leads in that direction, particularly in regard to the assembly.

WB-w Do you make a distinction between the assembly in the wilderness, and the assembly over Jordan? — would the assembly in the wilderness be the provisional side, and over Jordan the eternal setting?

JT That is right.

WB-w Is the priesthood principally connected with the assembly in the wilderness?

JT That is right. "This is he who was in the assembly in the wilderness", Acts 7:38. We have to learn Christ in that way. We have to learn Him in the land, too, which is Colossians. That is another position. In Ephesians, God has "raised us up together, and has made us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus", Ephesians 2:6.

WB-w In the assembly in the wilderness, is it largely a measure of approach? In the land, you are set. You are not approaching; you are before God. Is that a different idea?

JT The thought of approach is in Ephesians, too. In Hebrews it is, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness for entering into the holy of holies by the blood of Jesus, the new and living way which he has dedicated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh, and having a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, sprinkled as to our hearts from a wicked conscience, and washed as to our body with pure water", Hebrews 10:19 - 22. You can see the force of that as applying in the wilderness setting; but in Ephesians, "For through him we have both access by one Spirit to the Father" (Ephesians 2:18); we have no blood, no washing, and no high priest. It is through Him — through Christ.

WB-w Before that it says, "but now in Christ Jesus *ye* who once were afar off are become nigh by the blood of the Christ", Ephesians 2:13.

JT You go back to the high priest there.

JTJr Would that fit in with the tribe of Levi here that stands before Jehovah?

JT Yes; the whole family in that way are drawn near; they are there to bless; they are standing before Him.

ANW Are both these movements upward — to do service to Jehovah and to bless in His name?

JT I suppose blessing in His name is a general thought. They are like God.

ARS With regard to what you said as to sitting down in power in the assembly, does that precede drawing near?

JT I think so. We draw near as together.

ARS We ought to come together in power. Is that the idea?

JT Yes, and then we move upward, which is a question of the power that is within us. If there are a few spiritual brothers and sisters present, they will get the wave of power, and everybody in the assembly will be affected by it. I think God loves to spread out. So here the whole tribe of Levi is brought in. In Numbers 4 when they are presented to Jehovah, He stipulates they are reserved from thirty to fifty; but when they are presented in chapters 8 and 9, He lowers the age to twenty-five. God loves that kind of people, and He would increase the number. I believe that as there is power in a meeting, the number with us increases.

CAM It seems to me in that connection that the matter of music, for instance Mr. Darby's hymns, has a definite place. If we were to have to express those ideas in praise, we would have the greatest difficulty, but there seems to be a place for such expression in hymns.

JT Quite so. As regards the inward movement, if we eat the body, if we appropriate the body of Christ, we get the idea of the whole thought. The whole assembly comes into your mind; it is great enough for it to be included in your mind, and you say, I would not wish to go without them all. You want to get them all. Of course, we may have to say, "all Israel present"; but still you want *all Israel*, and so you get in Ephesians "has raised us up together". All the saints come up together. There is no such thought as individuals going up by themselves. They should find an answer in the assembly. It is moving together.

AR There is no such thing as a broken idea, even in connection with the two and a half tribes that would have stayed on the east of Jordan.

JT Just so. You might say, The two and a half tribes did not go in; the nine and a half had to go in by themselves: but the scripture is very particular about that. They did go in, forty thousand of them, and they had their names there in Gilgal like the rest. There were twelve stones set up in Gilgal.

Ques Do you think there was a great deal to be adjusted in Luke 24, that the Lord was adjusting it on the line of His priestly service, bringing them into accord?

JT That is right. He was getting them all together. It was priestly service to get them all together.

CAM And in John 20, eternity has begun with Mary.

JT That is the thought. John 20 is particularly inward; Luke 24 is external. There it is the assembly gathering, but you do not have gathering in John 20. It is "where the disciples were", that is, the persons; the further on you go, the more you see the greatness of the persons.

AFM I should like to ask where you would place the Lord Himself. If we have our movements upward to God, what particular place does the Lord occupy with regard to us; for instance, we have in Ephesians, "For through him we have both access by one Spirit to the Father", Ephesians 2:18?

JT It is the instrumentality of it. I think Hebrews comes in too. We have, first of all, "such a high priest became us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and become higher than the heavens". That guarantees that He can lead us, He can take us up in the Spirit now — in the body, presently. Then it says, "Now a summary of the things of which we are speaking is, 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 and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord has pitched, and not man". Such a summary would always go back to chapter 2. We *have* Him now; He *became* us. We have Him now, and we appropriate Him as active in the assembly. He is the Minister. He is available for us. He is on our side, and we appropriate Him; and in that way, I think, there is room to lead us. As I appropriate Him, it means I want to go on in the service. I want to enter in to the Father, and He is there and acts for us.

WB-w Does the first verse of chapter 8 refer to Him where He is and the greatness that He has on the throne and the second verse to Him in the tabernacle as Minister down here?

JT Quite; the first is just to bring out His greatness; He is available to us here, but then the tabernacle is not a material one, it is spiritual. It is an entirely spiritual environment now, and hence we are to be spiritual.

FHL How far does the apostle John go in referring to the kingdom?

JT That does not go so far as this. It is the kingdom there. You understand how it fits into Revelation, where you do not get what we are speaking of properly. What we are speaking of now is properly seen in substance in Colossians and Ephesians.

Rem But still connected with the idea of priesthood and priestly service.

JT Yes, but the "minister of the holy places" is the great wide thought when the Lord takes on the service and is available to us for our part in it. He will take on Israel by and by, too, but He is available to us now.

AFM Does that involve relationship in praise,

like Hebrews 2:12 — "I will declare thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises"?

JT Certainly it would. When you hear a brother give out a hymn or give thanks in the spirit of adoption, the Lord is operating and you follow that line, that lead. It is the power that worketh in us; the thing is to follow that. So one can say "Abba Father" in the power of the spirit of adoption. The power of the Minister of the sanctuary is operating in that connection.

JTJr You do not want to disturb that.

ANW Where would you place the Minister of the holy places and the true tabernacle?

JT I think it is a great general thought of Christ going on to the Father.

WFK Do we need priestly service when we enter into sonship?

JT That is a question. You are still in flesh and blood condition and it is easy to lapse back into what is natural, but the power of abstraction is what is required, the spiritual power of abstraction.

Ques Do you link the thought of the priesthood with the thought of the Father at all, the thought of going into the Father?

JT Yes; He is Son of God, you know. The spirit of adoption is "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *these* are sons of God", Romans 8:14. The power is in yourself; you are able to do it yourself. You do not get the priesthood mentioned at all in Ephesians — not that the thing is not there of itself "For through him we have both access by one Spirit to the Father", Ephesians 2:18.

Ques How far does the thought of the sanctuary go? Does it come in in Eleazar's service in Canaan?

JT Well, the sanctuary will always be necessary. It is only mentioned because of the state we are in. It means that it is a holy place, which would not be necessary at all if sin did not exist. It will have no place in eternity where there is nothing amoral.

Ques Does the thought of priestly service go beyond the thought of the sanctuary?

CAM Would it be right to say that the priestly element has a reference peculiar to this earth?

JT I think so, always. It alludes to our position and state in flesh and blood that necessitates it.

APT With regard to John, if you had been there you would see that the idea of priesthood would have a very small place in your mind. You would see the Lord in all His dignity and how we are there with Him and ascend in His presence. Do not you think it is possible to get into that and enjoy it even now?

JT That is the point we are at. If only we can abstract ourselves in mind and affection to enter into the conditions of eternity, then we shall see what we are talking about. You do not need these things there. You do not need authority as expressed in Moses, or priesthood as expressed in Aaron. There is no sin, no wrong thought. You see you do not need them, and therefore as you see the thing in your own mind as He is there before you, you see what you are yourself and what the saints are. I think that is the way to get at it. If I could transfer myself to the eternal region then I could come back into the assembly and know what to do. That is the idea.

ANW I want to ask whether John 20 fits in with Hebrews 2:11, "For both he that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren". Does that not come very near John's gospel?

JT It does. Even John 20 and this passage in Hebrews 2 contemplate us as still here. The bulk of Scripture relates to what we are here, serving in our flesh and blood condition, but if we were to visit the eternal regions, we could see that what is necessary here is not necessary there, and the more you enter now into what is there, the less you are conscious of these provisional things.

WB-w Is it not important that we take new ground after the bread and wine and the collection box have been passed? I take new ground in my mind. Is that not a very important thing?

JT It is, that is the reason I am stressing it. The thing is to move out in our minds and affections; so that one has to be intelligent as to what governs the eternal position you are in.

WB-w To be practical, a brother will get up after the breaking of bread and speak to the Lord about His coming into this scene; whereas He is not in this scene at all.

JT Very few of us do take the new ground. That why we do not get on to the assembly. You have, for instance, one brother speaking about the Lord coming into this scene; another will give out a hymn about the Lord having been in it; another will give out a hymn to the Father, and another to the Lord; and so we are losing, we are missing the great end.

WB-w That is because the brethren are not intelligent about taking new ground in their minds.

Ques Does that not show the importance of what we are talking about right now? When they went to the Mount of Olives, they could have been talking on the way a lot about the environment of Jerusalem, the hatred, etcetera, but priestly service at that time would free them and set their minds on what lay before them immediately.

JT Yes; I think that is right. The Lord helps us, but your mind is the thing. Romans 7 is "*I myself* with the mind". The mind is the great dominating thing the Lord has given us. Now the Lord says, 'The ground has changed'. It is well to stick to that.

CAM "Come, see the place where the Lord lay". It is where the Lord lay. Beyond that everything is changed.

JT Yes; you are to get into the company after that. In the company, I never lose sight of my mind — "*we* have the mind of Christ". The mind seizes the position and holds to it, and the Holy Spirit supports us in it. That eliminates all this oscillation that we are speaking about. The mind stops all that; it is not suitable.

WB-w Colossians is, "Set your affection on things above", Colossians 3:2. It is an order of things above. It is not a wilderness setting of things. It is over Jordan.

JT That is right. You know what to do. The mind dictates what to do, and the Holy Spirit supports you. The mind takes in and grasps the thing, and the Holy Spirit supports you in it.

JS The Lord's message to Mary was, "I ascend".

JT That should regulate her mind and the message would regulate their minds.

AR Some refer to the emblems after the Supper.

JT The covenant love is in the Supper, and it is well to give it full scope because it sets us all free for family affection, that is to say, the affection we have for one another, for the Father, and for the Son. That is the next thing. Let our minds get in action and go with it, and the Holy Spirit will support us.

AFM You would not hurry from the covenant love to the family side?

JT No; Matthew and Mark would rather keep you to it. The Lord spoke about it after they drank into the cup. The Lord would open up what it means.

JS Would a hymn be based on covenant love?

JT I think so. It fits in nicely.

Ques Would speaking to divine Persons relative to the covenant and what follows be a priestly line?

JT Yes.

ANW The covenant is a wonderful thing. We are to love God with all our minds.

JT That is a thing I do not believe one in a hundred thinks about. The renewed mind is a spiritual thing. Let it control.

Rem The eyes of your heart would be the mind controlling the heart.

TH Is that why the two ran together? Peter and John went on running but they both arrived at the same end in speaking to God and the Father.

JT What you find there is their minds were at work. Mary's was not. She missed it. She had a great heart, and she had tears, but their minds led them. They took account of the handkerchief; they took account of the cloths, the way they were. Peter and John would say, Those cloths are just in the position that they were on the Lord's body; He could not have been stolen away. That is spiritual power. He got out of those cloths for they are undisturbed. Mary missed all that. It was their minds. They believed before she did.

Rem It is very refined, "renewed in the spirit of your mind".

WB-w There is another point we passed by in connection with taking part after the Supper. Some think you should never refer to the Lord's death because it is a past thing.

JT You mean after the breaking of bread?

WB-w Yes, after the Supper. Some think you should not refer back to the Lord's death any more.

JT I think Matthew and Mark indicate that the Lord lingered over it. He told them after referring to the covenant — not before. He told them what was meant, and I think it is an indication that we are to dwell on it, but then never to forget that the Father is in mind.

ARS After you have gone on to the Father, you would not go back?

JT No.

JS There is an oscillation in going back.

JT I think the thought of dwelling on covenant love is before that, because you are dealing with a company.

ANW Say a word about the two imperative necessities the Lord stresses in speaking to the woman — "They who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth", John 4:24.

JT It is truth. Your spirit is free, you are not occupied with forms, although forms may have their place, but worship does not consist in that. The Colossians had the order but they were in danger, nevertheless. I think your remark comes in there — "in spirit and truth". You have the spirit of things. Your spirit enters into that, and the spirit is all that enters into the worship of God. And then truth is the great regulating principle. I was speaking of the man that is abstracted. I believe it is meant to control us.

RDG Do I understand that after we have partaken of the emblems, our minds are to be affected to catch the divine thought and carry it through?

JT I think so. If a brother speaks of the spirit of adoption, we want to take that up. The Lord is saying something in it.

JS The Lord would give the lead in some spiritual brother.

JT Yes, and if you bear in mind that all that goes on is in us.

AFM We have had the thought of worship. The Lord does not worship but He praises, and we praise. Would you differentiate between those two thoughts as regards ourselves?

JT Well, I suppose you may. You are moving towards a person with great admiration and feeling. Well, praise does not go that far. Worship implies more action inwardly.

JEH Is it praise not expressed?

JT Yes, the attitude of the mind as known to God.

Ques In the Old Testament, the word "praise" comes in a great deal; for instance, "Praise Jehovah"

in Psalm 146. Is worship primarily connected with this dispensation, do you think?

JT Oh, no. Sometimes it is used in a very general way, including praise. For instance, if one went to Jerusalem to worship, that was a general thought. They were just going to serve God. The word in the New Testament almost always means that I prostrate myself towards a person, not slavishly, but with affection and intelligence.

AFM Used in the Old Testament, it means to bow down. "And I and the lad will go yonder and worship" (or 'bow down'), Genesis 22:5. Do you not think that in a hymn we might give out there would be the accompaniment of worship, too?

JT Surely. It is a question of the state of your mind. The Holy Spirit is the power that works in us. We are the musical instruments, so to speak. It is the state of your mind and heart. God sees the attitude of your heart. The word means you are toward Him.

CAM It is a wonderful thing in that way that the more spiritual we become, the more personal everything is, the more wonderful the saints become as persons.

JT That is what John has in mind — great nations, great persons.

Ques What is the difference between worshipping the Lord and worshipping God?

JT Well, in worshipping the Father, you are worshipping God, but it is more the family touch.

GH Worship may be silent, but praise must be heard.

JT Quite so. And "God is a spirit" is another thing. It is a remarkable thing but angels are said to be spirits, too. Still He allows Himself to be called that. It is to control us so that we may not be material in our worship. To Whom am I speaking? I am speaking to a spirit. That challenges me. I can understand speaking to a man, but what about speaking to a spirit?

Ques When the Lord says "to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God" (John 20:17) is that not God as over all?

JT Yes. I think "my Father and your Father" is a family thought. "God" is God in Himself, more, although we are sons of God, too.

Ques Is there not an aspect of God that goes into eternity in the idea of the covenant?

JT Oh, yes, but the covenant is just to assure us. It is on account of our weakness. We would have no need for it if it were not for that.

ANW Does that idea of God go beyond the thought of Father? I mean the eternal aspect is going to be marked by God being all in all.

JT And "to him who is God and Father" (1 Corinthians 15:24); that Person is God, too. That helps.

Ques In Revelation 21 it is sons of God. Is that eternal?

WB-w Is Father more a relative expression?

JT Well, so is God. What is there that isn't relative?

CAM Is it not remarkable that the Lord put the word "my Father" before the word "my God"? We might have put it the other way.

JT Yes; I often think of that — "my Father and your Father".

Ques Is the thought in this dispensation the relation of sons to the Father?

JT Yes, you come to God, too; but "the Father seeks such as his worshippers" (John 4:23); that perhaps presents the most delightful thought.

JS God is a spirit, but the *Father* seeks such to worship Him.

WB-w "God is a spirit": is that relative or abstract?

JT It is relative. You could not apply it to God in an abstract sense. The word spirit is just "wind" or "breath". We have to be careful. You could not think of that being applied to God except in a relative sense. In John, He allowed Himself to be called that — the actual word, I mean. What the word means is what He is, but then what do I know about what that means? I have to think of the substance of God, what He is essentially. The word "spirit" does not tell you that.

AFM 1 Corinthians 8:6 is very wonderful to us christians in the light of all the revelation of God. "yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom all things, and *we* for him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ".

JT How beautiful that is, "one God, the Father". He is not beyond us in that sense — the Father.

WB-w Does "God" in Genesis 1 refer to what is relative or abstract?

JT No; there is nothing but what is relative. That means power. It is power of the Supreme One in view. And the first man that lived, like Adam, would say, 'Think of God'. He would help you to think of Him, and something would correspond in your mind with what He is — Elohim. Somebody called Him that. It means that He is the all-powerful One. He is the all-supreme One. It must be relative. He is not supreme to Himself or to other Persons. He is supreme to us.

APT "He that draws near to God must believe that he is", Hebrews 11:6.

JT That is right.

GH God being all in all — what does that mean?

JT That is what He is aiming at, everything that is in your heart and every heart in the universe. He is aiming at that through redemption.

STANDING BEFORE GOD (JT 47)

Zechariah 6: 4,5; Zechariah 4: 13,14; Jeremiah 15: 19; Jeremiah 35: 18,19; Deuteronomy 10: 8

What is in mind is to enlarge on these scriptures as presenting the important thought of *standing before God*. It is seen in Zechariah, where God is said to be the "Lord of all the earth". It is hoped, by the Lord's help, first to call attention to these "four spirits of the heavens", as they are called in Zechariah 6, and these "two anointed ones", also standing before the Lord of all the earth, in chapter 4. Then in Jeremiah 15, to remind us of the danger, as in this attitude of standing before God, of becoming discouraged, being complainants (whether verbally or in our hearts) as if God were unfair to us. Fourthly, how young people come into this favour through obedience, especially to parents; and finally we may see the great privilege afforded to us as priests, that we may stand before God and minister to Him.

The first is of peculiar importance at the present time, as embodying the idea of government, the four monarchies seen in this chapter under the heading of horses being spoken of as "the four spirits of the heavens" Zechariah 6: 5. This is a unique explanation, but one which is to be noted, in view of the apparent danger in some quarters of disregarding governors: those whom God has appointed to maintain things, in His government, pending the return of Him to whom the government belongs — the King of kings and Lord of lords — that is to say, our great and glorious Emperor, still rejected, is about to take unto Himself His great power and reign. These four powers designated here as the four spirits of the heavens are, from the very designation itself, evidently appointed of God. Be they Babylonians or Medes or Persians or Greeks or Romans; be they what they may personally, they are designated in this way by God, and all who love God and who know Him should know His mind respecting them; give thanks to God for them; pray for them; for our very existence here in testimony, as we shall see in the later scriptures, depends upon them. So the prophet rightly asks about them, and young people would do well to follow the example of Zechariah, and inquire about these horses viewed in this remarkable way as the four spirits of the heavens. Four is always, I may say, universal, and not only at a given moment, but also in the sense of an extended period. They have come down the centuries to us, and we are under their protection in this very hall today. It is the authority of God in fact, not only the permanent thought of the heavens ruling, which is the primary thought of God, but the spirits of the heavens. How God can make men — themselves unbelievers it may be — represent the *spirit* of the heavens is a matter of great interest, but He does it. He makes them serve Him indeed,

beyond what they themselves might be able to describe or admit. God has them in hand. The figure here is the horse, a very serviceable creature, but one that may easily get out of hand, as some of these monarchies have, but God has the power to control. We are exhorted as christians not to be like the horse or the mule, who have to be kept in with bit and bridle. Young people are like that sometimes; indeed, older ones too, but God has the means of control: we pray for that control, and we prove that He has that control, so that the very spirit of the heavens is around us in the sense of government, which is an assuring fact.

Then correlative with that, there is the question of "all the earth", not merely a particular country, specially favoured. There are those of us who consider our own particular country or countries, and pray for them and rejoice in their prosperity, but the spirit of the heavens would enable us to think of *all* the earth. The Lord Jesus, we are told, is seen coming down from heaven with the rainbow on His head, and He puts His right foot on the sea, and His left on the land, and cries as a lion roars, meaning that He has power to take these things up, and is about to do it. He is already putting in His claim, by the testimony. It is our business to make it clear that the right is His; but still He died under these powers — under one of these monarchies — the apostles were martyred under its power also. It is all a question of the government and the wisdom of God in it, so that He might complete His testimony. His testimony involves His patience — how long He could wait — His patience in the gospel, and it is a very great matter that the gospel should go on to the end.

So we have these two "sons of oil". We may have no part in the government — save through our prayers — but we certainly, as I assume, take on this second designation, namely, the "anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" Zechariah 4: 14. The four spirits of the heavens make the testimony of these two a possibility and, dear brethren, it is our privilege to occupy this place of testimony. Thank God, we do take it up a little, but one would urge the great importance of taking our places under this heading — two anointed ones, or, as the margin reads, *sons of oil*; typically, persons who are developed in the thought of the Spirit. How important at this juncture that we should read Scripture, read it in the spirit of it, as the Holy Spirit gives us understanding, that we should understand what this oil means! It is the Holy Spirit, as I said, not as the earnest of our inheritance, but as seen publicly in us, the correlative witness to the rule of the four monarchies. The service of these two sons of oil is to continue. How this thought enlarges us as to the little we may be doing!

These two sons of oil, as you will remember, are seen in later years — in the book of Revelation — and indeed they run through the testimony from that time to this. It is a question of *adequate* testimony in the power of the Spirit, namely, that the preaching, the teaching, or the service, whatever it may be, is done in dignity; not as imitating current religious ways, but in the originality of the mind of God, as carrying conviction with it as of God. The apostles insist in their testimony: "*We* are of God". Is it too much to suggest that there should be some representation of God at the present time? Surely not. I should be ashamed to be on earth save as in some way representing God. Man is made in His image, after His likeness. What is it for? To be representative. Man is God's image and glory even as a creature, but what I am speaking of now is the dignity put upon us by the oil, by the Holy Spirit "sent down from heaven". It is not only that one has the Spirit, but that one is characterised by Him.

In Jeremiah we have one of the most honoured of the prophets. He says to God: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy words were unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by thy name, O Jehovah, God of hosts. I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor exulted: I sat alone because of thy hand; for thou hast filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable? It refuseth to be healed. Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a treacherous spring, as waters that fail?" Jeremiah 15: 16 - 18. No one of us would speak to God in that manner, I am sure. We might tell Him of our appropriation of the Scriptures, as Jeremiah does; he says: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them", referring, I suppose, to the book of the law found in the temple, in the days of Josiah. Jeremiah would assiduously read the holy roll, read it with deep interest; but then he had evidently been losing in his soul in spite of this; he actually says to God: "Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a treacherous spring, as waters that fail?" It carries with it, of course, the marks of the dispensation in which these words were uttered, but still, God is God, and could not but feel such words, for God is true. And it is a great testimony (among many other things in the epistles to the Corinthians) that God is faithful. Whatever appearances may be, let us never falter, especially those engaged in the divine service; let us never falter, for God is faithful, and not only so, every promise of His is yea and amen in the Son of God. We can rest in that.

It is clear that Jeremiah failed, and if any of us fail in the same way, conversion is necessary. It is well to be reminded that "our God is a consuming fire" Hebrews 12: 29, and any failure marked by bitter complaint, spoken or unspoken, whether against God or against the brethren, will not pass unnoticed. So the word "return" (verse 19), is addressed to Jeremiah by

Jehovah at this juncture. If you are to stand before God again, there must be a turning round, and so God goes on to say to His servant: "Thus saith the Lord, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me" Jeremiah 15: 19. That is a word that ought to appeal to every heart that has known, if not now, but *has* known, what God is to the witness. Jeremiah was a witness, a most remarkable witness, and God says: "If thou return". The need is great, dear brethren. If there is one here who has turned away, who once proved the faithful support of God in service, God is saying to you, "Return"; and this word, "If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me", shows that you will not have to go all the way alone, God will meet you. God will meet the returning servant. I am not now speaking of a prodigal, for Jeremiah was not that. He was a failing servant for the moment, but God would have that settled with him, and it would be on the principle of returning. And then God says: You will not have to come all the way, I will meet you and *bring* you. He says: "then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me" Jeremiah 15: 19.

Jeremiah, then, would be engaged perhaps in a more difficult service. It will be a question of persons,

of being faithful to persons. Servants who turn aside, but become restored, sometimes make the best ones. It was said to Peter: "when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" Luke 22: 32. The need is great, as I said, and so the further word is, "if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth. Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them" Jeremiah 15: 19. Maybe someone here has been with them. It may be you have found your place among the opposers of the truth. You must never be with them again. "Return not thou unto them"; the word is, "Let them return unto thee", Thus you give them a lead in returning, and you will have power to help them. You will have your place restored. One thus restored will be a greater servant than he had been. You will never again turn aside complaint, or join the opposers of the truth. You will save them, you will separate the precious from the vile, and what could be more honourable than to be as God's mouth? It bears on a title accorded to Christ, who is the Word, One who not only speaks the word of God, but He is God's mouth. Can anything be more desirable in service than that? And what a need there is for it!

Well now, I go on to chapter 35, to speak to young men and young women here. The passage refers to the Rechabites, a remarkable family. They are brought in here by God as representative of His mind. Their way would ensure that their father, Jonadab, should never be without a man to stand before

God. Where is the father who does not desire such a result from his careful discipline and training of his children? It is a question of coming generations, dear brethren. God works on that principle, the generations of the godly, how they are to be *continued*, how men of God are not to fail of a man to stand before God. Who is there here who is old, who would not cherish the thought that as the Lord takes him, as he goes to be with the Lord, he has left behind a man that can stand before God, that God accords that privilege to? I hardly know anything that pleases one more in moving about amongst the brethren than the presence of young men, sons of godly men, holding the ground that their fathers held. The work of God has taken this form peculiarly. It always marked the work of God, and the need for it now is great: the continuance of generations carrying on the work of God, which their forefathers had been used of Him to further. The primary parent in this sense never fails of a man to stand before God. It is a matter for serious attention. What is said is: "Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you: Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever" Jeremiah 35: 18,19. How stimulating these thoughts are as to the young! Do they not imply that parents should become more energetic as to their children? The world is bidding for them, and the governments need them too; but there are God's rights, which must always come first, and these have to be inculcated in the house, in the household of faith, and the children are thus honoured. "Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever", Jeremiah 35: 19.

Well, finally we have the priesthood. As one proceeds in this service one is increasingly impressed with the thought of the extent of the area of our service. It is universal. Our outlook is to be universal in whatever little service we may be occupied: preaching in the streets, or in the meeting-rooms, or ministering the word to the saints, the outlook is the whole field. "The field is the world" Matthew 13: 38. It is a question of God's rights on the earth and it has to go on, however few and feeble, this is the outlook — to stand before the Lord of all the earth.

Now priesthood is more inward. One can understand that these four spirits of the heavens standing before the God of the earth, are at His bidding. Indeed, the thought is that they are going forth from before Him. They are ever active as under His control. If it be the two sons of oil standing before the God of all the earth, we are also at His bidding. It is a question of what has to be done. A right of way is secured through redemption for His service. What has to be

done is to be done in the dignity of the oil. However little there may be it has to be on that line.

Now, as to priesthood, I read from Deuteronomy. It says, "At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day" Deuteronomy 10: 8. Levi in Deuteronomy includes Aaron, of course. The whole of the Levites are called priests in this book, and also in the book of Joshua. That is to say, the priesthood has a wider bearing than in Leviticus and Numbers, but then it is Levi, and Levi means *united*. It would point to what God is helping us in — the idea of unity, that we are linked together in a vital way in the service of God and His testimony. What underlies it is the idea of union with Christ. How attractive all this is! May God grant that it may be so to us! He is calling us into it, this inner thought. "At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi" Deuteronomy 10: 8, so that he might stand before Him. It bears on what is so much before us now, namely, the service of God. It is a question of standing before God. The Lord Himself as risen is seen *standing* in the midst of the brethren. Stephen sees Him in heaven standing. It implies that we are not waiting to be served. We are ready to serve. We are on the alert to serve, and to serve after the divine manner, not as is customary in the general profession, dear brethren. Let us reject at once and for ever all thought of copying what is around us. It is a turning away from the truth. It is the assumption on the part of unconverted men to be priests to God. I do not say that it is wholly so,

but that is the general fact; whereas all believers, having the Spirit, are priests, and God is calling upon us to be priests in a true practical way. He separated the sons of Levi, and there is the thought of unity in the name; and according to this book, and especially Joshua, we have no earthly inheritance. I have been speaking of the Lord of all the earth. It is now a heavenly matter. Think of having access to the heavenly regions! It is not simply because I am a priest, but because I am a son, that I have access to the heavenly regions.

The apostle Paul says: "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise" 2 Corinthians 12: 1 - 4. He was not called up there to serve — he was caught up "to the third heaven"; then he says, "caught up into paradise". The one is *elevation*, the other is privilege and blessing; unspeakable blessing, unspeakable ecstasy belongs to that place. Paul

understood that, but he says: I did not know whether in the body, or out of it. It was special; we cannot build much upon it beyond that it was special. It was not the position of those who fall asleep through Jesus, it was a special circumstance.

The matter of priesthood is to be faced by us all; we belong to those whom God has separated; as He says, "the Lord separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day" Deuteronomy 10: 8. That is, the thing went on, and we may thank God that in our time it goes on; and God is stressing it; He is stressing His service in the assembly; and that in it we are to know what to do at a particular time. Normally the priest knows; it is the function of priesthood to lead in this matter. The priest knows what to do. The privilege of this belongs to every christian, young and old, and God would press it upon us that the whole range of divine service is open to us. He has separated us to stand before Him, to be ready as the opportunity comes, and to know what to do. As we get in Mary of Bethany, she had what was needed at a given moment. She had kept it for the day of the Lord's burial. What spiritual understanding she had! It was a pound of ointment, pure, the best that could be found. It was not in an alabaster box according to John's account. *She* was the box; she loved our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption. How important that is for young people! As we see with Joseph, a young man, he was preserved incorruptible. The enemy sought to corrupt him, but failed. And so we are to flee youthful lusts, and "pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart" 2 Timothy 2: 22, to have part in this service for God, to stand before God — ready to function suitably as opportunity offers; having what is needed and, like Mary of Bethany, knowing how to use it; hence the house is filled with the odour of the ointment.

Deuteronomy 11

- DEUTERONOMY 11 (CAC 5)
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DEUTERONOMY 11 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 11

This chapter ends that part of the book in which our attention is called to the lessons of the past. Those who have reached the position contemplated in Deuteronomy have had personal knowledge of three things. They have seen the overthrow of the world-system and its ruler; they have been the subjects of God's dealings in the wilderness; and they have been taught by a terrible example that God will not tolerate insubjection to Christ. It is in the light of these things having been known that we are to love God, "and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his ordinances, and his commandments continually" (verses 1 - 9).

The world has been fully exposed by its rejection of Christ. "And this is the judgment, that light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light; for their works were evil". There is not the slightest change as to this; it remains true "unto this day". The presence of the Spirit demonstrates that the world is in sin, that it would not have the righteous One, and that its ruler is judged. And this is true of the Egypt-world — the world of human resource and wisdom. Many who would judge the Sodom-world, or perhaps even the Babylon-world, are ensnared by the Egypt-world. "The princes of this age" are the great intellectual leaders who give no place to Christ as the Wisdom and Power of God. We are told of the Egyptian Benaiah smote, that he was "an imposing man" (2 Samuel 23: 21), and when men get a reputation for learning they become "imposing". The conclusions and deductions of scientific men get weight because they have a show of being based upon diligent investigation of facts. But very often they leave entirely out of account the greatest facts of all.

The wisdom of this world never gives any place to God's wisdom. It never considers that Christ was God's Wisdom and Power for creation, and for establishing the laws by which "all things subsist together". Still less does it think of Christ as God's Wisdom and Power for redemption, or for the bringing about of God's pleasure in a universe where all things shall be headed up in Him. Paul says of "the rulers of this world" that they "come to nought". If all men are under death as the judgment of God upon sin, and this has been demonstrated by Christ dying for all, what does it make of all man's cleverness and learning? He is a sinful creature — proved to be such by his desire to live upon his own resources, and to put God as much out of his thoughts as possible. The death of Christ has proved that, apart from Him, and from His death, there is no hope for man. Man with all his wisdom comes to nought,

even as the army of Egypt did when the water of the Red Sea flowed over them. This is never to be forgotten.

Then the fate of Dathan and Abiram is a solemn warning to all within the Christian profession to beware of being rebellious against the authority of the Lord. They were insubordinate, and they were swallowed up. Spiritual safety and prosperity largely depend on the rights and authority of Christ as Lord being practically owned amongst His people.

The description of the land in verses 10 - 12 is of the deepest interest; the contrast with Egypt is strongly marked. Watering with the foot as a garden of herbs would speak of human labour and effort with a very restricted result. There was nothing spontaneous there; no free flow of the Spirit. On fleshly principles, which rule in Egypt, all is laborious, and there is a small result. That is pretty much how things are carried on in the religious world, even where there are good intentions. One cannot deny that there is much earnest labour, but what is the spiritual result?

"But the land, whereunto ye are passing over to possess it, is a land of mountains and valleys, which drinketh water of the rain of heaven, a land which Jehovah thy God careth for; the eyes of Jehovah thy God are constantly upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year". There is nothing artificial or formal about "the land". It is a diversified region, where the all-various grace of God in His people manifests itself fully and freely. The preachings in the Acts were under such circumstances as to preclude any studied preparation. The preachers were prepared rather than the sermons An old and honoured servant of the Lord, in answer to the question, What shall I study? said, Study well these four words, "The flesh profiteth nothing"! The preachings in the Acts were "water of the rainq of heaven"; the streams flowed down in copious blessing. How definitely the Apostles presented Christ as crucified, risen, and exalted at God's right hand! How wonderfully they quoted and applied the Scriptures! How pointed and powerful was their dealing with men! There was a spiritual naturalness, if we may so say, a simplicity, freshness, sobriety and order in all that they said which made manifest that they preached the glad tidings "by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven". All true ministry is in the power of the Holy Spirit, and it tends to promote fruitfulness in the land. It is good to remember that "the land" is our divinely allotted portion; it ought not to be an unknown territory to believers. It contains "Things which eye has not, seen, and ear not heard, and which have not come into man's heart, which God has prepared for them that love him, but God has revealed to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God ... But we have received, not the spirit of the world,

but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which have been freely given to us of God: which also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, communicating spiritual things by spiritual means" (1 Corinthians 2: 9 - 13).

We may gather from what Moses says elsewhere that "the rain of heaven" is suggestive of spiritual ministry. He says, "My doctrine shall drop as rain, my speech flow down as dew, as small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers on the grass" (Deuteronomy 32: 2). "The land" is characterised by this in contrast with the foot-labour of Egypt. A ministry which is the product of the labour of the human mind will never be spiritual in character, and it will inevitably become more and more corrupted by the thoughts of men. Spiritual ministry flows from Christ as Head, and is the product of the activities of the Holy Spirit. We see it, in the ministry of the apostles, and any ministry which is spiritual will correspond, in its measure, with the apostle's ministry.

Verse 14 speaks of "the early rain and the latter rain". Both are necessary if there is to be fruitfulness in the inheritance. The early rain comes to prepare the ground, and to start the growth of crops, and the latter rain falls to bring things to maturity. God delights to give a ministry that will promote spiritual fruitfulness. The ministry of the apostles may be regarded as "early rain" given to start everything that was of God, and for God, into fruitfulness here on the earth. But "the latter rain" comes to bring the crops to maturity, and I have no doubt that during the last hundred years the Lord has been giving a ministry which tends to this. It is a time of "the latter rain" — a ministry which has definitely in view the perfecting of the saints, so that there may be a result which is in keeping with the wondrous thoughts of God before the saints are translated. Such a ministry necessarily corresponds with what was at the beginning.

There is "a land which Jehovah thy God careth for; the eyes of Jehovah thy God are constantly upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year". God has thoughts for His people which are worthy of Himself; He has loved men in view of their having life eternal (John 3: 16).

The inheritance is the fruit of the love of God; John says, "See what love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God". And Paul in writing to the Colossians says, "Giving thanks to the Father, who has made us fit for sharing the portion of the saints in light". That is the inheritance. It is the full thought of divine favour for men, the wealthy place of blessing in Christ, in whom all the rich thoughts of God have been secured. The love of God ever cherishes the inheritance for us and cherishes us for the inheritance;

the youngest believer is entitled to take that home to himself in all its blessedness. Persons who are heirs to a great inheritance usually think a good deal about it; but what inheritance can be compared to ours? We are not incompetent to take it up; the Father has made us fit — or competent — to take it up, in the divine nature. According to Ephesians we have "obtained an inheritance, being marked out beforehand according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory". It is purely a question of God's sovereign love, and of where it has given us our portion. He cares that we should know what it is to be risen with Christ, and to dwell together as brethren in unity, apart from lawlessness, hatred, idolatry, and all the death and dearth of this world. There is a region where divine pleasure dwells, where the love of God is known, where His Son is the Object of faith and love, where the Comforter abides, and the brethren love one another, where eternal life is given to those whom the Father has given to the Son. This is the land which God cares for, and on which His eyes are continually. The question arises, Do we care for it? Do *our* eyes rest upon it continually? It is evident that it will be so if we have fellowship with God.

God would use the writings of John to attract our hearts by the report of eternal life as manifested in His Son, and by shewing us the moral features of those who have it. Those writings present eternal life to us as something to be *consciously known and possessed now*. It was a distinct word of the Spirit to the assemblies when a beloved servant of the Lord said in departing, "Let not John's ministry be forgotten in insisting on Paul's". Thank God, it is possible for us, in spite of all the ruin around, to move together in the family affections of the children of God, and to enjoy together as brethren a "land" which is vastly different from anything that exists in the world. We can occupy a region that the blessed God is deeply interested in. The heart of God is set upon men having eternal life. It has been before Him from the outset, and it has continued before Him all through the centuries of the assembly's history, and His eyes are upon it still as that which His love has purposed for men. There is everything about the inheritance to make it supremely attractive. God would allure us; it is a matter of intense concern to Him that we should be attracted by what He cares for, and that our eyes should be on the things that His eyes are upon. Israel fell because they did not hearken to the word which spoke to them of the inheritance — the promised land.

Obedience and love are the conditions on which "the land" can be possessed and enjoyed. It is noticeable how frequently the word "commandment" is used in John's writings; indeed the word, in a Christian sense, occurs in the Gospel and Epistles of John much more than in all other New Testament writings. It

stands over against the lawlessness which is natural to the human heart; to come under "commandment" is to be completely delivered from lawlessness. How could one in lawlessness have eternal life? But the keeping of commandments flows from love; the gospel by revealing the love of God puts a spring of love in our hearts which would never otherwise be there. Then it is also true that the saints are begotten of God, and as such they love Him, and they love those begotten of Him. His children are manifested in this way.

The result of being under commandment as loving God is that rain is given in its season; there is no lack of ministry to promote spiritual fertility, to bring about the perfecting of the saints. "And thou shalt gather in thy corn, and thy new wine, and thine oil ... and thou shalt eat and he full". Satisfaction is the result of cultivating the inheritance under favourable conditions. Spiritual diligence is needed in the divinely given and fruitful land. There will be neither harvest nor vintage nor store of oil, if these things are not looked for and laboured for. It would be a poor thing to assume to possess the land if we do not gather in its produce!

The three things mentioned here are brought together in Psalm 104: 14, 15. "Bringing forth bread out of the earth, and wine which gladdeneth the heart of man; making his face shine with oil; and with bread he strengtheneth man's heart". How strengthening to the heart it is to be fed upon Christ as the "corn" of the land! He has been brought forth out of the earth in resurrection power, having "annulled death, and brought to light life and incorruptibility", that God's "purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time", might be made manifest (2 Timothy 1: 9, 10). All that was in God's purpose and grace for men has taken form in Christ as the risen One so as to be food for us as verified in Him. He is the great expression of divine faithfulness — every promise of God is made good in Him. That is the food of the saints as in the land. Psalm 37 says, "Dwell in the land, and feed on faithfulness"; that is the corn of the land, it is the bread that strengthens man's heart. It is the faithfulness of God to His own promises. There is not one word that God ever committed Himself to in the promises that He has not secured in Christ risen; the sure mercies of David are there; that is the food of the land. It is what Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 1: 18 - 20. "Now God is faithful, that our word to you is not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, he who has been preached by us among you (by me and Silvanus and Timotheus), did not become yea and nay, but yea is in him. For whatever promises of God there are, in him is the yea, and in him the amen, for glory to God by us". That is outside wilderness life; it is the corn of the land. We are to gather it into our spiritual store and feed on it.

"*Thy new wine*" is typical of the joy that belongs to the kingdom of God. That, too, has its place beyond the reach of death, for the Lord had death before Him here, but He looked beyond to drinking of the fruit of the vine in the kingdom. I have no doubt it is figurative of the joy which is connected with the favour of God being fully known. Grace is a joy to the heart of God. We read that new wine "cheers God and man" (Judges 9: 13). The Lord Jesus gives us a taste of the joy of God in grace, and of His own joy in making it known, in Luke 15. The kingdom of God is where He has His own way in the perfect grace of His heart, and where men are brought under the sway of His grace. In "the land" there is a continual fresh gathering in of the joy of grace. Grace as known in "the land" is spoken of in Ephesians. "To the praise of the glory of his grace" (chapter 1: 6); "the riches of his grace" (chapter 1: 7); and "the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus" (chapter 2: 7).

Then *the oil* speaks of the peculiar richness of what is found in the Spirit. "Fatness" is connected with the olive both in the Old Testament and the New. "Let your soul delight itself in fatness", is, I have no doubt, an allusion to what lies in the Spirit. The "root" of the olive tree (Romans 11) would be faith in Abraham which counted on God, but the "fatness" of it lies in the Spirit. So we find that the blessing of Abraham has come to us in Christ Jesus "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3: 14). Everything taken up in the Spirit has peculiar richness; it makes man's face to shine (Psalm 104: 15). The word for "oil" here means "to shine"! The brethren truly shine as they "dwell together in unity" according to Psalm 133 "Like the precious oil upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, upon Aaron's beard, that ran down to the hem of his garments; as the dew of Hermon that descendeth on the mountains of Zion; for there hath Jehovah commanded the blessing, life for evermore". The gain of "the land" is that these things are acquired; spiritual strength and joy and character attach to those who become possessed of them.

"Thy corn, and thy new wine, and thine oil", convey to us that as in the inheritance, and as making its cultivation, under the blessing of God, the business of our hand, there will always be fresh crops coming in as "the produce of the field, year by year". Things never become stale; there is continual freshness about every new crop. It is not that the produce is of a different kind; we do not want novelties; *they* are noxious weeds. But while there is no change in the character of it — it is still corn, new wine and oil — it is being continually acquired in a fresh way.

It is a serious thing not to have rain; it leads to perishing "quickly from off the good land which Jehovah is giving you" (verse 17). A spiritual ministry cannot be looked for when hearts are deceived, and yield to corrupting influences. Where there is general departure from the right ways of the Lord "the rain of heaven" is withheld, and what is preached and taught largely takes the character of what the people want to hear. Nothing could be more solemn than this, and it accounts for much that is going on today. It is not that erroneous teaching caused the departure, but departure of heart from God on the part of His people leads in His governmental ways to their being deprived of "rain" and left to the influence of what is pernicious. We have to "take heed" to the beginnings of departure, for the enemy's workings are very insidious and deceptive; he brings in what is idolatrous in a very subtle way.

In the absence of spiritual ministry "the good land" is lost as to all practical gain of it. How few today are enjoying the produce of "the land"! How few have even any definite thought of what "the land" represents as a spiritual region which can be entered and possessed and enjoyed, through the favour of God, at the present time! Is it not true that the professed people of God as a whole have been deceived, and turned aside, and that they have "perished from off the good land"?

The land is properly the sphere of life; it is where saints live in the blessed conditions which God has established in His love. After all, vital Christianity is a simple thing: it lies in the affections. Paul passes by knowledge almost in a slighting way; he says, "we all have knowledge", and declares that it puffs up. But he adds, "if any one love God, he is known of him". If our affections have found their Object and Centre in God — and He has revealed Himself in grace and love to that end — it will bring the pleasure of God into every detail. It will be in the heart and soul, in the service of the hand, and in the very countenance. This is how the affections move as in the bond of the covenant. We love because He first loved us; it was He who set all in motion by revealing His own love.

The fellowship of saints according to John — that is, as walking in the light as God is in the light, and as in the joy of that eternal life which has been reported to them — very much answers to "the good land". It is enjoyed together by the holy and faithful brethren in Christ. It may be intruded upon, and wholly forfeited in a practical sense, by the allowance of what is idolatrous or lawless. Therefore the "words" are to be laid up in heart and soul, and are to be a sign on the hand and frontlets between the eyes (verse 18).

The knowledge of God and of all that lies in His will, should always have place with us and govern us. These things are not to be Sunday matters only, or

reserved for meetings; they are to appear in us continually. It is right that Christians should be known by their very countenances and general bearing. How often we feel that it is so; we see a person we have never seen before, and feel sure he is a believer. An old brother used to say that some ought to carry a board on their backs to say they were Christians, for otherwise nobody would know it! Such persons have not frontlets between their eyes!

The things of God are to be household topics; our very houses and gates are to carry the impress of them. When people come into our houses they soon form a judgment as to what are the interests which are cherished there. Our "gates" have an important place in this book: they refer to what comes in and what goes out of our houses. You may be sure that *something* is written on all our "gates!" Now what *is* written there ?

The children are to grow up under divine teachings and impressions. It is a deep exercise to read in Judges 2: 10, "And also all that generation were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them, which knew not Jehovah, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel". What an exposure of the conditions in Israel! What an uncovering of household secrets! Where had been the teaching of the children? Where the all-pervading influence of Deuteronomy 11: 18 - 20? Alas! it had not been there. Some may say, But we bring our children to the meetings; they will learn and be impressed there. Neither meetings, nor any other instruction, can take the place of divine impressions in the home. What goes on in the meetings will not have moral power if it is not supported in the households of the saints. Children may forget what they hear in meetings and Sunday Schools, but I do not believe that the oldest man can forget the impressions made upon him by the home piety of his parents. It is by such hallowed influences being passed on "that your days may be multiplied, *and the days of your children*, in the land which Jehovah swore unto your fathers to give them". The fact that the next generation did not know Jehovah, nor His works, is solemn evidence that the public weakness and departure which so soon manifested itself in Israel had its origin in individual heart and soul departure, and in the households of God's people ceasing to be what they were meant to be — the very citadel of piety.

God has ever in mind the continuation of things. Young people are growing up amongst us: what kind of impressions are we giving them? Are we furnishing them with something more excellent than what is in the world? Their education, and necessary contact with others, exposes them to Egyptian influences. How important that the household influences should be of God! Moses is an example of one who got such impressions from his parents that all

the wisdom of the Egyptians did not damage him. It would be well if we gave young people the impression of great satisfaction. When I was a boy I remember a brother coming to my father's house, and I said to myself, I wish I knew all that he knows! But another brother came, and he made me feel, I wish I had what he has! There was an impression, not of mere knowledge, but of substance and satisfaction. That is what tells on children as well as others.

God would have our days and the days of our children, "multiplied ... in the land". We may ask ourselves, *how many days* have we spent in the land? It is a great joy to spend even an *hour* with the brethren, when one can say of it with some confidence that it was spent "in the land".

A remarkable expression comes in here; "as the days of the heavens which are above the earth" (verse 21). It suggests the heavenly character of life in the land, corresponding with John's Gospel and Epistle — what is heavenly in character realised down here on earth. When eternal life is brought in publicly the Father's will is to be done on earth as in heaven. There will be correspondence between heaven and earth. How good to be moving on spiritually in such a way as to be conscious that we are in harmony with what is going on in heaven! Good is supreme there, the will of God is there, the love of God, and the mutual flow of holy affections! And such is the character of life in "the land".

As we move on in obedience and love God will dispossess every adverse power before us. Satan has filled the world, and the human mind, with thoughts adverse to God, but all are to be dispossessed. It is beautifully set forth in the apostle's words, "For the arms of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful according to God to the overthrow of strongholds; overthrowing reasonings and every high thing that lifts itself up against the knowledge of God, and leading captive every thought into the obedience of the Christ" (2 Corinthians 10: 4, 5). Not a single thing is to be left in possession that is opposed to the knowledge of God, or that is inconsistent with the obedience of the Christ. The objective and the subjective come together here; the knowledge of God and the obedience of the Christ — that blessed Man who never opened His heart or mind to anything that was not of God. We can safely and fully commit ourselves to every thought of God which we derive from Christ; we need not be on our guard there. Whether He sets forth God in grace or government, in boundless love and mercy, or in the unsparing and eternal judgment of evil, we can open our hearts unquestioningly to it, knowing that we shall never find that we have been misled.

Then, on our side, we have a perfect Model and Pattern in the obedient One, whose every thought was in accord with God. Every misconception of God,

every idolatrous influence, every thought of self-pleasing and disobedience, came in from "spiritual power of wickedness in the heavenlies", and it is all to be dispossessed. God's purpose is that His people should be completely victorious over every adverse power, and that they should stand in the possession and enjoyment of all that is in the thought of His love for them. The youngest believer should encourage himself to say, That is the will of God concerning His people, and I must not content myself with anything less.

"Every place whereon the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours; from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the hinder sea shall your border be". The whole scope of what can be held from God, and for God, now comes into view. It is the kingdom in its wide extent as including all that comes under divine sway. It includes the responsible side and the privilege side — the good of Romans and also of Colossians and Ephesians. But possession is conditioned by "whereon the sole of your foot shall tread ... all the land that ye shall tread upon". This shews that we have *to go there*. The land was ours by divine gift before we left Egypt, but it cannot be possessed or enjoyed until we put our foot upon it. "The act of favour of God" is "eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord". Every believer can say that it is his as a matter of divine gift. But is it *mine* as a matter of possession and conscious enjoyment? It cannot be this until my foot treads the land where it is known and enjoyed.

Finally "a blessing and a curse" are set before us (verse 26). The government of God and its results are strongly emphasised in this book. Blessing does not come apart from the moral conditions which are suitable to God's people. Whatever is contrary to His pleasure must come under curse. The epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians bring out the grace and love of God very fully, but they both recognise His government also, and in connection with it blessing and curse. "God, who shall render to each according to his works: to them who, in patient continuance of good work, seek for glory and honour and incorruptibility, life eternal. But to those that are contentious, and are disobedient to the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and distress, on every soul of man that works evil, both of Jew first, and of Greek; but glory and honour and peace to every one that works good, both to Jew first and to Greek; for there is no acceptance of persons with God" (Romans 2: 6 - 11). "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatever a man shall sow, that also shall he reap. For he that sows to his own flesh, shall reap corruption from the flesh; but he that, sows to the Spirit, from the Spirit shall reap eternal life" (Galatians 6: 7, 8).

Blessing is still attached to obedience and curse to disobedience. This is true in all dispensations: it is a moral necessity. 2 Peter, 2 Timothy, Jude and Revelation shew us a character of things in the Christian profession which must inevitably come under the curse of God. We are to flee from everything of that kind, "And pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2: 22). Thus shall we secure the blessing and escape the curse.

It is essential, in view of possessing and dwelling in "the land" that this eternal principle — for its action goes on into eternity — of blessing connected with obedience and curse with disobedience should be fully recognised. So "thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim and the curse upon mount Ebal". It is striking that in this connection we get Gilgal mentioned for the first time, the Spirit of God thus suggesting that a circumcised people alone could truly recognise this principle of the ways and government of God, or be consistent with it so as to secure the blessing.

"The oaks of Moreh" carry our thoughts back to Genesis 12, for at that very spot Jehovah appeared to Abraham, and promised to give the land to his seed. Moreh means "Teacher", and "the oaks of Moreh" would suggest the stability which is connected with divine teaching and divine faithfulness. God's ancient promises cannot be invalidated, but they can only be made good in a people who have taken up the moral exercises connected with Gerizim and Ebal — blessing and curse — and who recognise that the flesh has been cut off in the death of Christ, and who now refuse and disallow it as being only capable of bringing in curse. Then the blessing can be enjoyed without let or hindrance, and this is what God contemplates for His people. "For ye pass over the Jordan to enter in to possess the land which Jehovah your God giveth you, and ye shall take possession of it, and dwell therein" (verse 31).

THE INHERITANCE (CAC 30)

Deuteronomy 11: 10 - 15; Deuteronomy 14: 22, 23

The Old Testament is a great help to us because it presents things in a form which, according to the wisdom of God, is divinely suited to convey the truth to us, while presenting it in a way that exercises our spiritual understanding. I have no doubt that the scriptures we have read, and indeed Deuteronomy as a whole, were written primarily for us and not for Israel. When I say primarily, I mean that we who are God's people at the present time are the first to get the good of this book. No doubt Israel will get the good of it later on in great measure, but we take precedence over them in getting the spiritual gain of it. It is the word of God to us. "For as many things as have been written before have been written for our instruction" (Romans 15: 4).

What was before me at this time was that we might look at certain things which stand in relation to the place where Jehovah causes His name to dwell. These things represent exercises which have a result for the pleasure of God when His people are gathered together according to divine ordering. The things which I refer to at present were obligatory; no Israelite could disregard them; and neither can we disregard what they typify without disregarding the claims of divine love, and what is for our joy and the pleasure of God. The tithes might occupy us this evening, and another time, if the Lord will, we might consider the firstlings, and then the three feasts of chapter 16 — the passover, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles. These five things represent things which are obligatory upon all saints viewed as in the inheritance of God, and in the enjoyment of its wealth.

Many things are left by God to the free affections of His people. He puts no restriction on the liberty of those affections; He gives unlimited scope to bring burnt-offerings, sacrifices, heave-offerings, vows, voluntary offerings, choice vows. See chapter 12: 6, 11. All these things can be rendered as love prompts them. But the five things I have referred to are not so left; they represent things which are essential to the service and pleasure of God, and which are not to be omitted. There is what may be called an irreducible minimum, and it becomes a definite exercise that we should not fail to render it. The tithes were to be eaten in the place where Jehovah caused His name to dwell; the firstlings were to be eaten there; and the passover and the feast of weeks and the feast of tabernacles were to be observed there. There was no exception for any Israelite; all were under obligation to respect these things; they were essential to the pleasure of God in His people. If we do not take up what

answers spiritually to these things we shall fail to minister to the pleasure of God, and we shall lose much joy which God would put into our hearts.

We need not think that this is going to wear a legal aspect, or to make demands which there are no resources to meet. We shall find that in every detail it is enriching, enlarging, satisfying and joy-giving. For it is all brought about by divine love and divine giving, and it all tends to God finding satisfaction in having us before Him with our joy full. The only law that operates in the land is the perfect law of liberty; the only bondage that is known there is captivity in the chains of love. There is no Egyptian toil; all is under the sweet influence of heaven.

The people of God are viewed here as having come into the inheritance, and it is of the greatest importance that we should accustom ourselves to consider that we have our portion in the inheritance. We should all be prepared to accept that as the thought of divine love for us. We get the inheritance purely by the love and calling of God. It is well for us to see clearly the difference between the conditions which are set forth typically in the wilderness and those which pertain to the land. The wilderness is not a place of rest; things are not very agreeable there, though we prove the resources and sufficiency of divine grace in those conditions. Viewed as in the wilderness we prove the love of God and the love of Christ; we recognise there the lordship of Christ and the presence of the Spirit, and we may enjoy a great deal of grace and blessing; we may take up the privilege there of coming together to eat the Lord's supper. But all that, great as it is, is not the full pleasure of God's love for us. He has something else in His heart for us, and that is the inheritance, something which lies entirely outside wilderness life. We get the inheritance by the gift and appointment of the One who bestows it in love upon us. No amount of desire would secure to me the inheritance of some wealthy person. I could only get it by his appointment or by being his heir. I could say to the youngest and feeblest believer that long before he was born, God had prepared the inheritance for him. We were born anew and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ that we might possess the inheritance which the love of God designed for us. It is as much in the mind and heart of God that we should receive and enjoy the inheritance as that we should receive remission of sins. Jesus glorified sent Paul to the Gentiles "that they may receive remission of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26: 18).

The inheritance is the fruit of the love of God. John says, "See what love the Father has given to us that we should be called the children of God". And Paul in writing to the Colossians says, "Giving thanks to the Father, who has made

us fit for sharing the portion of the saints in light". That is the inheritance. It is beautiful to contemplate it as it is described in Deuteronomy 11: 10 - 12. "A land which Jehovah thy God careth for; the eyes of Jehovah thy God are constantly upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year". There is a sphere of blessing and of joy which is so precious to the heart of God that He cares for it, and His eyes are on it perpetually. Such is the inheritance that He has allotted to us in sovereign love. It is the full thought of divine favour for men, the wealthy places of blessing in Christ, in whom all the rich thoughts of God have been secured. The love of God ever cherishes the inheritance for us and cherishes us for the inheritance; the youngest believer is entitled to take that home to himself in all its blessedness. Persons who are heirs to a great inheritance usually think a good deal about it, but what inheritance can be compared to ours? If God cares for it, and His eyes are constantly upon it, we may well care for it, and have our eyes upon it. We are not incompetent to take it up; the Father has made us fit — or competent — to take it up, in the divine nature. According to Ephesians we have "obtained an inheritance, being marked out beforehand according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory".

It is purely a question of God's sovereign love, and of where it has given us our portion.

It is clear that what love gives can only be taken up and enjoyed by love. The conditions on our side are an obedient ear and a heart that loves God. All the ministry in the world would not help us if we lacked these things. But one is comforted to know that saints have an ear, and they love; it is the result of the work of God in them. There is everything about the inheritance to make it supremely attractive. God would allure us; it is a matter of intense concern to Him that we should be attracted by the thought of the inheritance, that we should care for what He cares for, and that our eyes should be on the things that His eyes are upon. Israel fell because they did not hearken to the word which spoke to them of the inheritance — the promised land. What a comfort it is to know that the children of God have an ear and a heart by the work of God; one feels comforted in speaking to the saints as counting on the work of God in them.

In Egypt they watered the seed with the foot; there was great labour with small results; that is like the religious world today, much labour but small results spiritually. What marks the land which is before God for His people is that it drinks water of the rain of heaven. God works in His people; they are begotten of Him and He works to produce an ear and a heart so that they love

Him. There are persons in this world who are interested in the inheritance; the things of God take the first place with them and predominate over all natural and self interests. Wherever it is so it is by the work of God. Then God gives the early and latter rain. These are the conditions of fruitfulness in the inheritance on God's side. The early rain comes to prepare the ground, and to start the growth of crops, and the latter rain falls to bring things to maturity. If there are with us the ear and the heart which we have referred to, God will most surely give rain. He will give ministry from heaven that will promote fertility, and the maturing of the spiritual crops. I think we might see an application of this in a general way and regard the early rain as typical of the ministry of the apostles. The ministry of the apostles was like the early rain to start things, at the beginning, but we are in the days of the latter rain. God is giving a ministry now to bring His pleasure to maturity in His people; surely none of us want to miss the gain of that. There are showers of latter rain falling on the inheritance at the present time in order that every thought of God for the spiritual enrichment of His saints may be brought to maturity ere the Lord returns. The latter things with God are greater than the former, and the glory of the latter days is greater than the former. Amos 9: 13 in referring to the latter days says, "The ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed". That shows the extraordinary fruitfulness of the inheritance; the crops could be so heavy that the fields could not be cleared by the reapers before the ploughman was ready to come in and prepare for the next crop! It gives us an extraordinary impression of the fertility of the inheritance. There is never any need, under such conditions, for the ground to lie fallow. Then why should we labour for things which do not satisfy, when we can eat in abundance what is so good, and let our souls delight themselves in fatness (Isaiah 55)?

The wealth of the inheritance is available for us now if God has wrought in us the desire and delight to listen to what he has to say about it. The Lord said, "He that has an ear, let him hear" — He assumed that there would be persons who had an ear. It is true of all the holy and faithful brethren in Christ that there is early and latter rain for them. God gives every one of us some early rain; He gives a ministry which was designed to work out in divine faithfulness; and as we exercise spiritual diligence the crops spring up and will come to maturity under the influence of the latter rain. But a spiritual diligence is most important. Turn to chapter 12: 7.

"Ye shall eat there before Jehovah your God, and ye shall rejoice in all business of your hand" and in verse 18 "Thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God in all the business of thy hand". The phrase recurs repeatedly in these chapters — "All the business of thy hand". I would suggest that it implies

diligence in the appreciation and cultivation of the inheritance. It is to be our definite business to see to the working out in result for our own joy of that which God gives us. So far as I can learn in Scripture, God has nothing for lazy people, and there is nothing for God from them. Many quietly accept that the inheritance is given to them in the love of God, and they perhaps know what it is to be under showers of blessing in the way of ministry, but they are indolent and slothful, they are not carrying out diligently what Scripture calls "the business of your hand". It is through the business of our hand that the inheritance becomes fruitful. There will be no crops, no corn or new wine, or oil, apart from diligence, and the result will be that there will be no tithes. We fail from want of spiritual diligence in regard to the things we admit to be true.

The latter glory of the house will be greater than the former.

In Romans 12 we are incited to diligence. "As to diligent zealousness, not slothful; in spirit fervent, serving the Lord". This is of the greatest importance in view of its effect on the meetings; the end in view is that there may be something brought to the meetings which will be an enrichment of the communion of the brethren. This is the product of diligence in cultivating the land. If we accept that divine love has given us the inheritance let us cultivate it with purpose of heart. In so doing we shall be working for an assured result; there is no question about God giving the increase. There will be crops in abundance, and tithes to carry to the place where God causes His name to dwell; to be eaten there in communion with the brethren before Him. Let us throw ourselves into this "business" with whole-hearted energy and confidence; the product of it is very attractive.

Our secular occupation in this world is discipline for us; it is a constant exercise to carry out the will of God in relation to it. But it is not our true "business" in a spiritual sense; it is discipline for us; but our "business" is to cultivate the inheritance. I have noticed that people who are pretty fully engaged in necessary duties prosper most spiritually; those who have little to do and much leisure often do not prosper because they lack the discipline of daily duties. The discipline we get in everyday life is intended to help us in view of our appreciating and entering upon and cultivating the inheritance. A brother was asked not long ago why he did not retire. He said, I feel I cannot afford to dispense with the discipline my business is to me. We are not here to make money but to be disciplined, and the circumstances of daily life as under the ordering of God will not hinder us in regard to the inheritance. It would be strange if the providential ordering of God for those in His kingdom was such as to hinder us from enjoying the things which it is His peculiar pleasure to

confer upon us. It could never be so. We are hindered by seeking our own things, not by things which lie in the will of God for us.

The things spoken of here lie outside the wilderness life — the corn, the new wine and the oil of the land are the wealth and fatness of the inheritance. We have not time to go into them in detail, but I should like everyone to pray about them. The *corn*, I believe, represents Christ risen as the great expression of divine faithfulness. Every ear of corn came out of death; it speaks of Christ in resurrection as the great expression of divine faithfulness — every promise of God made good in Him. That is the food of the saints as in the land. Psalm 37 says, "Dwell in the land, and feed on faithfulness"; that is the corn of the land, it is the bread that strengthens man's heart. It is the faithfulness of God to His own promises. There is not one word that God ever committed Himself to in the promises that He has not secured in Christ risen; the sure mercies of David are there; that is the food of the land. It is what Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 1, "God is faithful, that our word to you is not yea and nay ... in him is the yea, and in him the amen, for glory to God by us". That is outside wilderness life; it is the corn of the land. We are to gather it into our spiritual store and feed on it.

The *new wine* is typical of the joy that belongs to the kingdom of God. That, too, has its place beyond the reach of death, for the Lord had death before Him here, but He looked beyond to drinking of the fruit of the vine in the kingdom. I have no doubt it is figurative of the joy which is connected with the favour of God being fully known. Grace is a joy to the heart of God. We read that new wine "cheers God and man" (Judges 9: 13). The Lord Jesus gives us a taste of the joy of God in grace, and of His own joy in making it known, in Luke 15. The kingdom of God is where he has His own way in the perfect grace of His heart, and where men are brought under the sway of His grace. In "the land" there is a continual fresh gathering in of the joy of grace. Grace as known in "the land" is spoken of in Ephesians. "To the praise of the glory of his grace" (chapter l: 6); "the riches of his grace" (chapter l: 7); and "the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus" (chapter 2: 7). Then the oil speaks of the peculiar richness of what is found in the Spirit. "Fatness" is connected with the olive in both the Old Testament and the New. "Let your soul delight itself in fatness" is, I have no doubt, an allusion to what lies in the Spirit. The "root" of the olive tree (Romans 11) would be faith in Abraham which counted on God, but the "fatness" of it lies in the Spirit. So we find that the blessing of Abraham has come to us in Christ Jesus that we might receive "the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3: 14). Everything taken up in the Spirit has peculiar richness; it makes man's face to shine (Psalm 104: 15). "Thy corn, and thy new wine, and thine oil", convey to

us that as in the inheritance, and as making the cultivation, under the blessing of God, the business of our hand, there will be always fresh crops coming in as "the produce of the field, year by year". Things never become stale; there is continual freshness about every new crop. It is not that the produce is of a different kind; we do not want novelties; *they* are noxious weeds. But while there is no change in the character of it, it is still corn, new wine and oil — it is being continually acquired in a fresh way. There is fresh produce being gathered in — continual increase.

Corn, new wine and oil represent things which we are continually gathering in by the work of our hands as in the inheritance. But as we gather them in we have always to remember to tithe them, and the tithe has to be carried to the place where God causes His name to dwell. Every spiritual increase has to be linked with the assembly — the common meeting place of God's people. What one gains individually or householdwise is always to contribute to the communion found where God dwells in the midst of His people. The tithes had to be eaten there.

It is not in this case ministering directly to God, but ministering to the communion of His saints before Him. It is most agreeable to God that we should come before Him to enjoy together in communion that which He has given to us as the food and fatness of the inheritance. How the practical working out of this would free the meetings of the saints from all formality! Since we last came together there has been, so to speak, a fresh harvest from our fields, a fresh vintage, and a fresh gathering in of oil throughout Israel. And each one comes with the tithe that we may all eat together before God in the place where He dwells. All is fresh — the same Christ, the same grace, the same Spirit, but all acquired in a new way through fresh diligence and living exercises. So that the tithe is something which was never eaten quite in the same way before. The communion of the saints as gathered together has thus continually a fresh and satisfying character. There is nothing old or stale. The communion is such as to suit a living God, and a people who are living in the good of what He has given. It is the communion of saints viewed, not in the Corinthian aspect as in the wilderness, but as in the land. It is our communion viewed as in the enjoyment together of eternal life.

God delights in the spiritual communion of His people before Him — their common enjoyment of things which lie outside the range and power of death. Are we bringing the tithes to further this? Have we got increase as the result of diligent cultivation of the land so that we have something to tithe, something which we can bring to the gathering place of God's people to promote spiritual communion? I am not only referring to what is said in the

meetings, though I have no doubt if spiritual substance is there it will find expression. But I challenge myself and you as to whether we are acquiring spiritual increase. There is something very abnormal if we are not. But if we are, it is obligatory to tithe it for the promotion of the communion of the saints. The communion of saints in eating together what is typified by the corn, the new wine and the oil of the land is eternal life.

The communion of saints viewed as in the land depends on moral conditions being maintained which are suitable to the place where God dwells, and it depends upon the tithes being brought. Independency, and what is right in our own eyes, are ruled out. All must come to the one appointed place. It is not a matter of choice, but of God's appointment. If it is not carried out the service of God according to His pleasure is not rendered.

Sometimes brethren who are not getting on well together will be heard saying wonderful things in their utterances. But God is saying by this institution of tithes that He gives spiritual increase to promote spiritual communion. It is more to Him to see us united in the communion before Him of what He has given us, than it is to hear wonderful words from us while the communion is lacking.

It is very much for the pleasure of God that we should know the fellowship of saints as in the wilderness according to 1 Corinthians, but if we desire to minister to God's full pleasure it must be by enjoying the fellowship which pertains to the inheritance — to that sphere where eternal life and sonship are entered into.

DEPENDENCE AND OBEDIENCE (JBS 4)

Deuteronomy 13; Deuteronomy 11: 1 - 17

There are two subjects in these two chapters: one is the contrast between the wilderness and Canaan; the other, the contrast between Egypt and Canaan; they are very distinct contrasts, and the teaching of the two scriptures is, how we are to retain what we reach. Many reach who cannot retain, because retaining a thing requires a continuance of the power by which we reached it. Many a person in natural things can reach a height he cannot maintain. A great effort, a fortunate act, may reach a great eminence, but the question is whether you can retain it.

We all admit the fact that God has a place for us hereafter, but Canaan is not a future place; it is heaven on earth at the present time. We belong to another place altogether; we are on earth in a place that we do not belong to. I belong to heaven, but I am on earth, and that is Canaan. I am out of Egypt, and I have to learn the wilderness, and the man who is mostly in Canaan is the man who best understands what it is to be in the wilderness, for the higher you go the better you understand what it is to be dependent.

In the history of Israel they needed the wilderness to get into Canaan, and then they left it. It is not so with us; you often get contrasts in this way in scripture. It is not that we leave the wilderness for Canaan, but that we are in the wilderness as belonging to Canaan. A person may say, You are not in heaven; and I answer, That is true, but I am united to One who *is* and I am nearer to that One than to any other. I am on the earth, but I am united to One who is in heaven; and the more I know that, the more I am in Canaan. Besides this, I get no support whatever from this earth that I am on; so it is the wilderness to me. And the more you advance in the knowledge that you are a heavenly man the more novel, the more distressing, the more severe, the more extraordinary, the more unaccountable, will be the trials that you are subjected to in order that you may be dependent, lest being puffed up you should lose your high position through independence or wilfulness.

There are many people who are converted who are not sure that they are saved; and there are many who are saved who do not know that they are heavenly. But all these stand or fall together. As we read, "The land which the Lord thy God *giveth* thee for an inheritance" (Deuteronomy 15:4); it is a *gift*. I am as much a heavenly man as a saved man. I may be a very useless British subject, but I am one all the same. It is a great thing to get hold of the calling: "Walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye have been called", (Ephesians 4:1). I lay it down as a settled thing for your soul, that you must

say, I am as much a heavenly man as I am a saved man. He has already united me to Himself there, and, when He comes, it is that He may take me to the place where He is. I have not got to heaven yet, but I belong to the One who is there.

Man naturally never rises to this even when he is converted. Take, for example, the thief on the cross. He says, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (Luke 23:42). No, says the Lord; today in paradise. He was to have, not the kingdom, but heaven. Take another case, that of Stephen. He looked up and saw "Jesus standing on the right hand of God", and he turns to his murderers and says. You are going to send me out of this place, but it is only to send me to heaven. Take a still further case in Paul. He says, "I knew a man in Christ ... ' (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell;)" (2 Corinthians 12:2) I have lost all sense of things here. Every person does not get so high as Paul did, but every one is entitled to be where Stephen was.

It is a great thing to be able to walk about and say, I do not belong to this place at all; It is nothing but wickedness. Take an amiable man in nature. As he suffers in seeing all the disorder, misrule, cruelty, that is around him, what a relief to him to be able to say. My citizenship is not here; I am not responsible for it. My citizenship is in heaven. I say it is an immense thing. God says to me it is not my place. When He began with Abram, He called him out and said. This is not to be your country; come out of it to a land that I will show you. And so now God says, I do not give My people a place where My Son is rejected, but a place where He is received. I am a heavenly man, not by attainment, but by the gift of God. I am as much a heavenly man as I am a British subject, whether I am acting well or not.

Some seek to escape the edge of this truth by refusing to be called heavenly; but you are a heavenly man by *calling*. Heaven is your place: it is the first thing that is brought before you as a saved person.

I turn to these two scriptures to show that no height to which grace elevates us at the present moment ever takes us out of dependence here. Nay, if we lose dependence, as some have done, we bring reproach on the truth we are brought into. What keeps us in the high position is dependence. A man who learns obedience without dependence is legal. What was the great lesson of the wilderness? Not simply to "humble thee", but to "make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deuteronomy 8:3). That is, that you are to be dependent on the Word of God; and then you are obedient.

Obedience when you are looking for a rule is legal. Dependence is what I learn in the wilderness, and obedience is what keeps me in Canaan: but it is obedience as the consequence of being a dependent man.

Look at the Lord: *the* most heavenly Man; "the Son of man who is in heaven". And what is He down here? *The* most obedient One. He says, I have not got a word from God, so I cannot turn the stone into bread. I have learned to be a dependent Man, and because I am a dependent Man therefore I am an obedient Man. I live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God". That is the place of a heavenly man upon earth.

It is then in proportion as you enjoy the land that there will be trials in the wilderness. So much so, that even Peter, who does not get out of the wilderness at all, says: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (1 Peter 4:12). I am passing through the wilderness; and the only thing I have to keep my eye on here, as Peter says, is the enemy of God. Peter, as we have seen, never puts you out of the wilderness. John is the first who puts you out of it; and he does not put you in heaven — only gives you a heavenly life on earth. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour". (1 Peter 5:8) I have different enemies - three great ones, at any rate. There is Pharaoh; that is the clutch, the grasp, of the world. There is Amalek; that is the power of Satan to hinder. And there is Balaam; that is the snare of socialism. And these you do not, get in Canaan at all.

The warning of these two chapters in Deuteronomy is, that, if you do not obey, you will lose all. He shows you all the abundance of things, the contrast that there is between Canaan and Egypt; but will all this go on? Are you sure of it? Not if you are not obedient. If you are not happy there, you are worse off than in Egypt. There was water there, any how when you worked for it with your foot; but here there is none unless it come down from heaven. We get on to heavenly ground, and we rejoice in the fact; but we keep it only by obedience. All we have in the wilderness is the terrific opposition of the enemy of God. We are attacked by the way; but we do not become aggressors ourselves until we get into the land. And what is the result of aggression? It is getting place for Christ. Those who fought the holy wars were seeking *material* space for Christ; they had not intelligence as to His mind. What we want is to get *moral space* for Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 12, we get the brightest example of the heavenly man. A man caught up into Paradise, who heard unspeakable words which it was not possible for a man to utter. He was caught up into the place without going

there bodily. He is sensibly in the enjoyment of it; so sensibly that, for the moment, he has lost his link with the earth. I do not say that souls do not get a taste of it now-a-days; but, as they do, they get a deeper sense of the wilderness. Paul did: "there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me". For this he cried to the Lord three times; and He said: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:7 - 9). I gave it you lest you should be puffed up-lest you should get out of the place of dependence. And then see how Paul comes round, how beautifully he accepts it; he says: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities". Whilst not out of the wilderness, I have entered on the enjoyment of heaven, and I can go back to it; but I am made sensible that I am to be more of a dependent man that I ever was before. What tried Paul. was, that he lost the ability to expound this very thing that he had received. Never mind, through the grace of Christ 'he will be a better wilderness man'.

There is not time to go into chapter 11, but it opens with showing at what an immense cost they were brought into the land. I believe the great hindrance to every soul getting on is, not that it does 'not know the glory' - every soul has that - but that it does not know the cross. The cross has taken everything away, and left only Christ. It is not the glory that takes things away. Paul says: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14). It is the cross that takes all away. Paul is a bright specimen of a heavenly man.

Now I will show you one who lost the heavenly thing, as many do, by not being dependent. In Genesis 33. Jacob has come back to the land. There have been real power and grace shown in restoring him; but like many a one he thinks to rest in what he has attained. He builds a house, buys a field, and erects an altar, calling it El-Elohe-Israel. He does not give up truth, but he makes truth the thing that is before him, instead of God, who has brought him to Himself. He ought to have gone to Bethel. When at last he does get there, he finds quite another order of things. At Shechem he is a heavenly man; but he wants to rest in things here, and not to be dependent.

What is the consequence? He is brought into the most humiliating state. He says: "I shall be destroyed, I and my house" (Genesis 34:30). He has to be subjected to all this in order to make him true to his calling.

The Lord make us see what a wonderful place we are called to. I do not believe a soul ever has really known the presence of Christ if it have not at some time or other, known what it is to have everything lost to it for the moment. But, when after such a moment, you return to this scene, do not be surprised if some new form of trial come upon you,

because you cannot be let rest in the happiness you have reached, instead of in the grace that brought you into it. Many a one can trace failure and defeat to the moment that followed some happy time. God grant that we may seek to enjoy His Son in the unclouded light of His presence. When I come down from it, I am all the more prepared to meet the contrariety, the opposition to God, of the scene in which I am. Thus, while I delight in the One I have learned to know up there, I possess the sweetest thing the heart can know - dependence on God. Down here I have the most consolatory sense that I am dependent upon the One I am delighting in, and so am competent to come down and take my place for Christ, to seek space for Him in this world, whilst I myself do not seek to be sustained by anything in it but by Him who is my life.

Deuteronomy 12

- DEUTERONOMY 12 (CAC 5)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 12 (JND 36)

DEUTERONOMY 12 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 12

The people of God are viewed here as having come into the inheritance, and it is of the greatest importance that we should accustom ourselves to consider that we have our portion there. It is the thought of divine love for us; we get the inheritance purely by the love and calling of God — by the gift and appointment of the One who bestows it in love upon us. No amount of desire would secure to me the inheritance of some wealthy person. I could only get it by his appointment or by being his heir. I could say to the youngest and feeblest believer that long before he was born God had prepared the inheritance for him. We were born anew, and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, that we might possess the inheritance which the love of God designed for us. It is as much in the mind and heart of God that we should receive and enjoy the inheritance as that we should receive remission of sins. Jesus glorified sent Paul to the Gentiles "that they may receive remission of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26: 18).

We come in this chapter to "the statutes and ordinances which ye shall take heed to do in the land", and the first of these refers to the place where Jehovah would set His Name. This is a primary consideration for those who love Him. "Unto the place which Jehovah your God will choose out of all your tribes to set his name there, his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come". This is contrasted with "*all the places* wherein the nations which ye shall dispossess have served their gods". There was no unity in demon worship, for unity depends on the fact that "God is one", but this fact necessitates unity amongst His people, and particularly in their approach to Him.

God will not tolerate anything that is idolatrous; it is positively and wholly evil, as putting something in His place which is contrary to His Name and nature. Hence everything of this kind "ye shall utterly destroy" (verses 2, 3).

But then amongst His people there was to be but one "place" where Jehovah would set His Name, and where His habitation would be; that place was common to all Israel. It would refer, typically, to the truth of the assembly as being one and the same universally, though now taken up and acted on locally by His saints wherever they are found. Approach to God is universal in its character; He has but one way for all His people wherever they may be found. There cannot be anything sectarian, or local, or national about approach to God. No believer could think of saying, I approach God as a Wesleyan, or as a

Baptist, or as a member of the Established Church, or as an English or a Spanish brother! If we approach God at all it must be as of His assembly, and that puts the matter at once on universal ground. The way of God's appointment is the same for all His people. All Israel "from Dan to Beer-sheba" had to come to the one "place" where Jehovah set His Name.

This is not altogether a new instruction, though it takes a new form as in "the land". The books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers have made us familiar with the thought of "the tent of meeting" as God's dwelling place in the midst of His people, where alone He could be approached according to His own prescribed order. That was in wilderness conditions, answering to the assembly of God viewed as in 1 Corinthians. But the same thing, in principle, has place in "the land", and is to regulate and characterise the saints in their movements Godward.

This chapter requires us to accept as an unquestionable divine principle that if we approach God it must be in the way which He has appointed. It has often been said — and practically acted on — that the principles on which God's people assemble together, and the modes of divine service or worship which they adopt, are left to their own choice or judgment, and that each one must follow his own taste or conscience! But is not that exactly what is forbidden in verse 8? Surely God must be allowed to say how and where He may be approached! By choosing one place out of all the tribes of Israel in which to set His Name Jehovah preserved the unity of His people in their approach to Him. He excluded, not only idolatry, but also sectarianism and independency from their worship.

The "place" has now to be learned by its moral and spiritual features. It is "neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem"; it has to be found spiritually. "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. God is a spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth" (John 4: 21 - 24). We know something from Psalm 132 of the exercises of David with regard to finding out "a place for Jehovah, habitations for the Mighty One of Jacob". He could say, "Behold, we heard of it at Ephratah, we found it in the fields of the wood". Ephratah was where he had been born and brought up, and the mention of it suggests that from his youth David had thought of "a place for Jehovah". He found it first where Caleb found the land — *in his heart* — and if we do not find it there first we shall not seek or find it at all. But, having it in his heart, he swore and vowed to give himself no rest until he found it for Jehovah in Israel.

Israel had to pass through a most humbling history before the "place for Jehovah" came to light. They had to learn their own proneness to idolatry, and the terrible consequences of it in the government of God. "They provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. God heard, and was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel; and he forsook the tabernacle at Shiloh, the tent where he had dwelt among men, and gave his strength into captivity, and his glory into the hand of the oppressor; and delivered up his people unto the sword, and was very wroth with his inheritance". *Then* it was, when all was manifested failure on their part, that the "place for Jehovah" came to light. "Then the Lord awoke as one out of sleep ... and he smote his adversaries in the hinder part, and put them to everlasting reproach. And he rejected the tent of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which he loved; and he built his sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which he hath founded for ever. And he chose David his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds" (Psalm 78: 56 - 72). The chosen "place" came to light in connection with the chosen "servant" — typically Christ.

To understand the character of the place where God sets His Name we must realise the complete breakdown of everything on man's side, giving occasion to God to introduce His kingdom on the principle of sovereign mercy in Christ His beloved Son, the true David. When the Lord Jesus was here "the dayspring from on high" visited men "on account of the bowels of mercy of our God". All was failure and ruin on man's side but the power of the kingdom came in God's Anointed — a power adequate to deliver men from every form of the power of evil. And even the rejection and crucifixion of Christ only served to bring out more fully the sovereign character of divine mercy, for redemption was accomplished therein and Christ was raised from the dead, and exalted by God's "right hand as leader and saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins" (Acts 5: 31).

"The Mount Zion which he loved" is "the city of David"; it is called "the stronghold" (2 Samuel 5: 7). The sanctuary was built under the protection of that "stronghold". I take it to set forth the strength of divine grace and mercy in a risen Christ. The "stronghold" secures everything against the enemy, so that the "sanctuary" may be built in which everything is secured that is in accord with God's Name.

The instruction of Deuteronomy 12 looks on to the time when the people should have come to the rest and to the inheritance, and when they should have "rest from all your enemies round about, and ye dwell in safety". It

awaited the establishment of the kingdom under David, and the subjugation of all enemies by him, so that the house could be built in peace by Solomon.

If we do not know the power of the kingdom, as vested in the Lord Jesus, to deliver us from the whole power of what is evil, we shall not be really free to come to the place where God sets His Name. The power of the kingdom is first learned in the blessing and deliverance set before us in the epistle to the Romans, but it is interesting and helpful to see that we do not leave it behind when we go on to Colossians and Ephesians. In Colossians we are viewed as translated by the Father "into the kingdom of the Son of his love", and in Ephesians we read of "inheritance in the kingdom of the Christ and God". The risen Christ was seen by the apostles "during forty days, and speaking of the things which concern the kingdom of God". He would have them well acquainted with "the stronghold of Zion, which is the city of David". The power of all enemies is broken there, lawlessness is at an end, for we are under the sway of God as known in infinite grace and mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ. There can be no doing whatever is right in our own eyes when that rule is established in our souls.

We have referred to the kingdom thought being carried on from Romans to Colossians and Ephesians. In principle the same thing is true of 1 Corinthians. If assembly order according to 1 Corinthians is not respected and adhered to, and the things written there recognised as "the Lord's commandment" (1 Corinthians 14: 37), there will not be much known of the place where God sets His Name. If one does not obey "the Lord's commandment" one may be actually, and even publicly, lawless, though taking the place of being in the kingdom. "The name of our Lord Jesus Christ" has a wonderful unifying power for all those who are subject to Him. "Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all say the same thing, and that there be not among you divisions; but that ye be perfectly united in the same mind and in the same opinion" (1 Corinthians 1: 10). Indeed the more simply and fully we have divine Persons before us the more we shall be brought into true unity.

David in Psalm 78 is clearly a type of Christ, but David in 1 Chronicles 21 finds the place where Jehovah would set His Name through a humbling experience of his own failure. He was moved by Satan to number Israel, evidently for his own glory and to God's displeasure, and his sin was followed by a pestilence which destroyed 70,000 men of Israel. In deep repentance David took the sin wholly upon himself, and then he was told by the prophet Gad to "go up and rear an altar to Jehovah in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite". There, after buying the place for "the full money", he "offered up burnt-offerings and

peace-offerings, and called upon Jehovah; and he answered him from the heavens by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering ... . And David said, This is the house of Jehovah Elohim, and this is the altar of burnt-offering for Israel" (1 Chronicles 22: 1). It was a sin-convicted man, deeply repentant and fully confessing, who was shewn the place where Jehovah would set His Name. This was after Satan had done his utmost to bring in judgment, the state of the people being such that they were righteously exposed to it. If God is approached it must be in the deep sense of the sovereignty of His mercy which furnishes in Christ as the Burnt-offering a ground of acceptance when everything has been forfeited by human failure.

He is "rich in mercy"; it is a chief glory of His Name; it is on that footing alone that we know Him or can approach Him. And this is true for all the Israel of God; no one can truly approach Him except in the consciousness of it. This gives force to the word "choose" which occurs fourteen times in chapters 12 to 16 of this book. It indicates the sovereignty in which all is secured that is truly for the glory of God.

"To set his name there". His "name" indicates the way in which God has made Himself known; He is in the light of revelation, and He must be approached accordingly; it could not be pleasurable to Him to be approached in any other way. The full truth as to the blessed God is out. The great truth of the Old Testament was that there was one God known as the Creator-God, the Almighty and Jehovah. In the world and in Israel the devil was always seeking to corrupt and destroy that truth by turning men aside to "gods many and lords many". But in the New Testament, as it has been said, the truth is made known that "God is one". The Father has been revealed in the Son, and the Spirit given to those who believe. Now the great power of Satan is in the form of antichrist, who "denies the Father and the Son" (1 John 2: 22). But the Son has set the Father's Name in the affections of the men whom the Father gave Him out of the world. He manifested the Father's Name to them, and prayed the Father to keep them in it, "that they may be one as we". There can be no divergence there. If we approach it must be in the light of God's Name as now revealed, and that light is not merely individual or local; it is universal in the sense that it is the same for all saints.

If the saints "with one accord, with one mouth, glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15: 6), they are evidently on ground common to all of them; they are unified in glorifying God. If no human thoughts, or arrangements, or ordering were allowed to interfere with this, the saints would reach morally the place where God has set His Name. "For through him we have both access by one Spirit to the Father" — the Jew and the Gentile both

coming through Christ and by one Spirit to the Father! (Ephesians 2: 18). And again we read, "Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access in confidence by the faith of him" (Ephesians 3: 12). This is the character of approach which belongs to "the land". When we enjoy this great privilege we are not on individual or local ground; we are on ground which is common to all saints; we are enjoying the universal privilege of the assembly. And that is set forth, I believe, figuratively in the place of approach where all Israel found themselves on common ground before Jehovah their God.

If God is revealed and known as the Father His love places His saints in a relationship in which they can suitably and affectionately answer to that revelation. "Ye are sons of Jehovah your God" (Deuteronomy 14: 1). The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has "marked us out beforehand for sonship through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has taken us into favour in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1: 5,6). If we have access to Him it must be according to the place and relationship in which He has set us before Him. His sons can come near in liberty and with pleasure. The spirit we have received is contrasted in Romans 8 with "a spirit of bondage"; it is "a spirit of sonship whereby we cry, Abba, Father". "God sent forth his Son ... that we might receive sonship. But because ye are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4: 4 - 6). We are sons, and we have the Spirit of sonship, that we may have access to God in holy liberty. We can conceive the joy with which true lovers of Jehovah would come out of all the tribes to be together on the common ground of "Sons of Jehovah", and to bring offerings which were the evidence that they were enjoying, and prospering under, His favour. They would come to enjoy His blessing, and to minister to His pleasure, in the place where His Name was set. However great the enjoyment in their own gates, it was surpassed by the joy to be found in consciously ministering to the pleasure of God in that chosen place. We may be sure that there is that which answers to it for us today.

We see in Acts 20: 7 that the saints assembled on the first day of the week to break bread. In doing so they left, for the time, what was merely individual, or of household character. To use the language of our chapter, they came from their own gates to the place where the Lord had set His Name. I have no doubt that each of them could have truly said, "The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to thy memorial" (Isaiah 26: 8). Now Scripture assumes that all believers eat the Lord's supper, for Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 10 of "The cup of blessing which we bless", and of "The bread which we break". The "we" is the universal Christian "we", like the "we" of 1 Corinthians 12: 13. The

breaking of bread is the divinely ordained rallying point in Christianity. It is undoubtedly characteristic of the normal coming together of the assembly of God, as we may learn from Paul's epistle to "the assembly of God which is in Corinth". Anything that ignores this, or the assembly order that goes along with it, fails to answer to the place where God sets His Name. It is for Christians who break bread to see that they do it with pure heart, and with due regard to the honour of Christ, and in holy separation from all that is contrary to the light and principles of God's assembly.

The Spirit of God would teach us in 1 Corinthians 10 that the communion or fellowship which is involved in breaking bread is universal in character. To break bread locally without regard to the universal fellowship would be like eating the hallowed things in our own gates instead of in the place where Jehovah's Name is set. We must come spiritually to a "place" which speaks of the unity of all Israel in fellowship and in approach to God. As to the actual coming together to eat the Lord's supper it is in "every place" where His Name is called upon, but fellowship and approach to God are universal in character. While our assembly relations are taken up locally, it is important to see that they are taken up in the light of what is universal, so that in taking them up we embrace, in mind and affection, all saints. Viewing the saints according to what is of God would lead to our being exclusive of every principle or practice that is contrary to the universal truth of God's assembly. We should neither tolerate sectarianism nor independency. We are reconciled to God "in one body"; therefore assembly approach to God must be in the recognition of this. There could be no stronger expression of unity than "one body" formed by "one Spirit", and that the Holy Spirit of God. "In the power of one Spirit we have all been baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free, and have all been given to drink of one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12: 13). The consideration of this raises exercise that *we* should be careful to be in accord with the character and unity of God's assembly. It calls us to self-judgment, and to serious enquiry as to the existing state of things in the Christian profession. We cannot accept that there is no longer anything that answers to the place where Jehovah set His Name.

If national or sectional distinctions are retained in our minds, such as the difference between Jew and Gentile, it is clear that we are not in our spirits on the ground that both have "access by one Spirit to the Father". The Lord requires that even personal differences are to be adjusted before we offer at the altar (Matthew 5: 23,24), because every one who offers must recognise that the altar speaks of the unity of all Israel in approach to God. If something has come in contrary to that unity, the character of approach is practically falsified. This is a very serious consideration.

The saints now are "built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2: 22). They "are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2: 5). They form God's house, over which Christ is as Son (Hebrews 3: 6). "His habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come" involves for us affectionate interest in the house of God, consistency with the truth of that house, and subjection to Christ as Son over it. Worship is "by the Spirit of God" (Philippians 3: 3), and it is also in "truth" (John 4: 24). It is in accord with the revelation of God, and with the place and relationship in which He has set His saints. The way of approach to God is the same for saints in England, India, New Zealand, South America, or wherever they are. Those who approach God do so on ground common to all, even the truth and principles of His assembly, and this is what for us answers to the place where He sets His Name.

We have a personal history with responsibilities and exercises of an individual character; we have also responsibilities and privileges which we share with our brethren locally who call on the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ; but in approach to God we are on ground which is universal. It is not prayer that is contemplated here; that surely has its most important place; but here it is rather the offering of "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ". It is ministering to the pleasure of God — appearing before Him, not as empty or in need, but as furnished with gifts and offerings which are acceptable to Him.

"And thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and the heave-offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your voluntary offerings, and the firstlings of your kine and of your sheep" (verse 6). The "tithes" and the "firstlings" are the only obligatory offerings in this chapter. "The land" is viewed as yielding such abundance that the people, richly furnished with the blessing of Jehovah, are wealthy in affectionate desire towards Him. The burnt-offerings, sacrifices, heave-offerings, vows, voluntary offerings, choice vows, all speak of free and willing movements of heart towards God. Every one of them has reference to Christ as apprehended and appreciated in the hearts of His saints. Those appreciations are to be brought to His assembly, and enjoyed there for His pleasure. God would enrich us in our own "gates" with the preciousness of Christ, and then lead us to bring it to the place where He sets His Name that He may have what is due from the hearts that love Him, and that we may enjoy it in a deeper and fuller way in conscious nearness to God in His assembly. How the formal arrangements of the religious world, and its human order, interfere with all this! But it is good to dwell on the precious thoughts of God, and when saints begin to think

affectionately of what is due to God they will be prepared to learn the character of the place where He has set His Name.

The point of instruction here is that all is to be brought to that place. It has to find its relation, and to make its contribution, to what is universal. Do we think of all our spiritual gains as furnishing material for the service of God, and for enjoyments of assembly character? That is what they are given for, and only thus can they be rightly enjoyed. For we must note that our happiness has a great place in this connection. "And ye shall eat there before Jehovah your God, and ye shall rejoice, ye and your households, in all the business of your hand, wherein Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee" (verse 7 and also verse 12). Our richest enjoyments depend on our recognising what is due to God in His assembly, and that, as of that assembly, we stand in relation to all His saints. Have we really understood this? Have we drunk into the spirit of Psalm 122? Have we had any "choice vows" which have been delightful to us in making them, and delightful to God as brought to Him, and delightful in His assembly as brought into the common fund of spiritual joy?

"Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place that thou seest". No "right of private judgment" as to this was to be thought of. Every Israelite was to own the one place which Jehovah would choose, and to come there with his offerings. The principles of the assembly of God are marked by unity and universality; they are to be acknowledged by all His saints everywhere. It could not be of God that we should choose the principles on which we come together, or that we should set up principles contrary to the order and constitution of His assembly. It is almost forgotten by many today that God has an assembly, and that He has given it an order and constitution which is universally the same. There is so much that is contrary to that order and constitution that what is suitable to God can only be found practically as we act on the principles of 2 Timothy. We are now under obligation to withdraw from iniquity, and purify ourselves from vessels to dishonour in separating from them, and to "pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:19-22). We must go back to the first principles of the assembly, and learn what pertains to it in the mind of God. In spite of all the confusion of christendom saints can still be in the light of Christ as risen and glorified; they can still recognise the presence of the Spirit here, and that all the brethren are "one body" and a habitation of God in the Spirit; they can still confess the truth of God's assembly as seen in Scripture, and seek to be consistent with it. We have to admit that there is grave and general departure from what was set up at the beginning, but 2 Timothy gives us principles according to which saints can

walk together amidst all the evils of the last days, and still be vessels for holy service.

It is important that we should distinguish between "the place which Jehovah will choose" and "all thy gates". The one refers to approach in assembly conditions, which are universal in character, though actually taken up locally "in every place" where saints "call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1: 2). The other would refer to what is individual, or of household character, amongst the people of God. Notice the words in verses 15, 20, 21, "According to all the desire of thy soul". What we may get for ourselves in spiritual blessing in our "gates" is only limited by the desire of our souls. We are encouraged to enjoy there "the blessing of Jehovah thy God which he hath given thee". Our individual or household consideration of the Lord's things, our general brotherly intercourse with saints, or even a reading or an address, would come under the head of "all thy gates". We are perfectly free to enjoy the good of "the land". The desire of our soul has full scope; it has often been said that we can have as much of Christ as we want. It is striking, too, that it should be said, "the unclean and the clean may eat thereof" (verses 15, 22). Many of the blessed things which God has given to men can be set before the "unclean" as well as the "clean"; indeed if they were not available for the unclean there would be nothing to bring about their cleansing. The Corinthians and the Galatians were both "unclean", the one by fleshly indulgence, and the other by fleshly religiousness, yet what a precious ministry of Christ was presented to them! What is administered through Christ in the wealth of divine giving is available for all.

The blessed God would have us to enjoy in our own "gates" all that He gives us of spiritual good, but while encouraging us to do so He would remind us of what is due to Him. What we enjoy in our own "gates" is preparatory to going to the place where He sets His Name. Believers say sometimes, I can enjoy the Lord and His things at home. Of course they can, but it is also their privilege and obligation to recognise in a practical way their assembly relations with the saints. Those relations are not voluntary ones; they are divinely formed; and a very considerable part of our blessing, as well as of what is due to God, is found in the practical recognition of them. In a day of great departure and weakness we may find but few with whom we can walk in the truth, but the truth itself is universal, and every saint is under obligation to acknowledge it. The tithes, the firstlings, the vows, the offerings were all due to God, and His portion was to be rendered in the place chosen by Himself. Let us enjoy all that we can of spiritual good, personally, household-wise, and in our intercourse as brethren, but let us not forget or despise the assembly of God.

In rendering what is due to God we leave, for the time, our own "gates", and we come to what is universal in character. Many believers think almost exclusively of what *they* can get; to speak of meetings as "means of grace" is a common phrase with many. But is there to be no consideration for what is due to God? Is He to have nothing from His people? If we have the blessing of Jehovah in our gates the result will surely be that we shall have tithes to bring; we shall acquire burnt-offerings and peace-offerings; we shall develop devotedness and spiritual affections that will make "choice vows". Our hearts, made wealthy in the appreciation of Christ, will be moved to minister to God, and to recognise that He has an appointed place where it is His pleasure to be ministered to. We shall delight to go to the place where He sets His Name, and we shall not appear there empty. He will get something, and His saints will get something, and all our spiritual joys will be deepened as we take them up with Him and with His people. It is really a question of the place God has with us. It was said of Benjamin, referring to Jerusalem as the place where Jehovah would set His Name, "He will cover him all the day long, and dwell between his shoulders" (Deuteronomy 33: 12). Jehovah's protection would be over His beloved, but He would dwell between his shoulders — His dwelling place would be in the strength of His people's affections.

If we bring our tithes and offerings and vows to the place where God chooses to set His Name we shall not fail to get our portion. "Ye shall eat there before Jehovah your God, and ye shall rejoice, ye and your households, in all the business of your hand, wherein Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee" (verse 7; see also verses 12, 18). The "business" of our hand is never really so prosperous as when we carry it on with constant reference to the blessed God, and to what is due to Him. We greatly deepen and increase our own joy by holding things in relation to God and to His assembly. There is more joy in eating "before Jehovah" in His assembly than there could be in eating in our own "gates". Things are enjoyed there in the great expansion that comes by taking all saints into account, and viewing all their blessing as held in common to the glory and praise of God.

"Thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy bondman, and thy handmaid, and the Levite that is within thy gates; and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God in all the business of thy hand" (verse 18). It is "Israel's custom" so to do (Psalm 122: 4 margin). It is evident from this scripture that all the business of our hand is to be carried on in view of what can be brought to the place where God sets His Name; its end is there, and there only can it be enjoyed in the fullest possible manner.

"All the business of thy hand", implies diligence in the appreciation and cultivation of the inheritance. It is to be our definite business to see to the working out in result for our own joy of that which God gives us. So far as I can learn in Scripture, God has nothing for lazy people, and there is nothing for God from them. Many quietly accept that the inheritance is given to them in the love of God, and they perhaps know what it is to be under showers of blessing in the way of ministry, but they are indolent and slothful, they are not carrying out diligently what Scripture calls "the business of your hand". It is through the "business" of our hand that the inheritance becomes fruitful. There will be no crops, no corn or new wine or oil, apart from diligence, and the result will be that there will be no tithes. We fail from want of spiritual diligence in regard to the things we admit to be true. In Romans 12 we are incited to diligence. "As to diligent zealousness, not slothful; in spirit fervent; serving the Lord". This is of the greatest importance in view of its effect on the meetings; the end in view is that there may be something brought to the meetings which will be an enrichment of the communion of the brethren. This is the product of diligence in cultivating the land. If we accept that divine love has given us the inheritance let us cultivate it with purpose of heart. In so doing we shall be working for an assured result; there is no question about God giving the increase. There will be crops in abundance, and tithes to carry to the place where God causes His Name to dwell, to be eaten there in communion with the brethren before Him. Let us throw ourselves into this "business" with wholehearted energy and confidence; the product of it is very attractive.

Our secular occupation in this world is discipline for us; it is a constant exercise to carry out the will of God in relation to it. But it is not our true "business"; our "business" is to cultivate the inheritance. I have noticed that people who are pretty fully engaged in necessary duties prosper most spiritually; those who have little to do, and much leisure, often do not prosper because they lack the discipline of daily duties. The discipline we get in every day life is intended to help us in view of our appreciating, and entering upon, and cultivating the inheritance. A brother was asked not long ago why he did not retire. He said, I feel I cannot afford to dispense with the discipline my business is to me. We are not here to make money but to be disciplined, and the circumstances of daily life as under the ordering of God will not hinder us in regard to the inheritance. It would be strange if the providential ordering of God for those in His kingdom were such as to hinder us from enjoying the things which it is His peculiar pleasure to confer upon us. It could never be so. We are hindered by seeking our own things, not by things which lie in the will of God for us.

"Corn", "new wine", and "oil" represent things which we are continually gathering in by the work of our hands as in the inheritance. But as we gather them in we have always to remember to tithe them, and the tithe has to be carried to the place where God causes His Name to dwell. Every spiritual increase has to be linked with the assembly — the common meeting place of God's people. What one gains individually or household-wise is always to contribute to the communion found where God dwells in the midst of His people. The tithes have to be eaten there.

It is not in this case ministering directly to God, but ministering to the communion of His saints before Him. It is most agreeable to God that we should come before Him to enjoy together in communion that which He has given to us as the food and fatness of the inheritance. How the practical working out of this would free the meetings of the saints from all formality! Since we last came together there has been, so to speak, a fresh harvest from our fields, a fresh vintage, and a fresh gathering in of oil throughout Israel. And each one comes with the tithe that we may all eat together before God in the place where He dwells. All is fresh — the same Christ, the same grace, the same Spirit, but all acquired in a new way through fresh diligence and living exercises. So that the tithe is something which was never eaten quite in the same way before. The communion of the saints as gathered together has thus continually a fresh and satisfying character. There is nothing old or stale. The communion is such as to suit a living God, and a people who are living in the good of what He has given. It is the communion of saints viewed, not in the Corinthian aspect as in the wilderness, but as in the land. It is our communion viewed as in the enjoyment together of eternal life.

God delights in the spiritual communion of His people before Him — their common enjoyment of things which lie outside the range and power of death. Are we bringing the tithes to further this? Have we got increase as the result of diligent cultivation of the land so that we have something to tithe — something which we can bring to the gathering place of God's people to promote spiritual communion? I am not referring exactly to what is *said* in the meetings, though I have no doubt if spiritual substance is there it will find expression. But I challenge myself and you as to whether we are acquiring spiritual increase? There is something very abnormal if we are not. But if we are, it is obligatory to tithe it for the promotion of the communion of the saints. The communion of saints in eating together what is typified by the corn, the new wine, and the oil of the land is eternal life.

The communion of saints viewed as in the land depends on moral conditions being maintained which are suitable to the place where God dwells, and it

depends upon the tithes being brought. Independency, and what is right in our own eyes, are ruled out. All must come to the one appointed place; this is not a matter of choice, but of God's appointment. If it is not carried out the service of God according to His pleasure is not rendered.

God is saying by this institution of tithes that He gives spiritual increase to promote spiritual communion. It is more to Him to see us united in the communion before Him of what He has given us, than it is to hear wonderful words from us while the communion is lacking. It is very much for the pleasure of God that we should know the fellowship of saints as in the wilderness, according to 1 Corinthians, but if we desire to minister to His full pleasure it must be by enjoying the fellowship which pertains to the inheritance — to that sphere where eternal life and sonship are entered into.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 12 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 12

The subject here is the one place of resort where Jehovah's name was. "Ye shall not do so" refers to this, "ye shall not have high places". They might eat flesh anywhere, clean or unclean, only consecrated things were to be eaten where Jehovah had placed His name. Who was to eat it is not in question I think here at all, only the Levite was not to be forgotten. It would apply to the priests as others; whatever of this kind was to be eaten, and whoever was to eat it, it was to be eaten there. Priests are swamped in the whole mass of Israel.

— 5, 6, 7, 16 - 20, see also chapter 14: 22 - 27, the people are to eat the tithes and firstlings; whereas in Numbers 18:17, they are specially the priest's as the tithes were the Levites';

also the tithe is at the end of three years, see chapters 14: 28 and 36: 12, 13. In chapter 14: 72, the tithe seems to be yearly, see also Numbers 18:21.

— 5 - 14. One thing is quite clear, that the leading thought is "the one place" to which they were to go; for things are spoken of, of which no man ate anything.

— 17, 18. But here there is more difficulty, for here it is they are not to eat within their gates; still we find again this point of the place prominent, and the eating spoken of vaguely — they might eat of any (clean) beast, only pouring the blood on the ground. But what belonged to God, sacrifices, vows, etc. (verse 26), they were to take to the place where Jehovah's name was; and then it was left to apply the eating to what it legally applied to.

— 27. They were to offer their burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, on the altar of Jehovah, and the blood of the sacrifices was to be poured out on the altar of Jehovah their God, and they would eat the flesh. Now this referred strictly, according to the law, only to the peace-offerings — of sin and trespass-offerings the priests ate, and parts of the peace-offerings, and that is recognised in this book. But the point is offering was to be made here, in what referred to divine worship, to God, not to what the soul lusted after — here he might eat in communion with the altar, with God, but here only. Sacrificial eating was at the chosen place only. Hence what the soul lusted after, the unclean could eat of (verse 22). It is to be remarked that there was no payment of tithes by the people to the priests, nor at Jerusalem — they paid tithes of all to the Levites, then the tithe of their tithes to the priests, and then ate their tithes at home as if they were the, now, sanctified fruit of their fields.

With regard to Numbers 18:24 - 32, it is possible this may have dropped through disorder and carelessness; but the carrying up tithes to Jerusalem was a distinct thing. All nations have god-festivals, and Israel was to have theirs in connection with Jehovah according to the rudiments of the world.

As regards our chapter, it would thus, as noticed, offer no difficulty — offerings were carried up and they ate the part which was to be eaten according to the law; nor does chapter 14: 22, 23, etc. offer any difficulty as to this distinct or second tithe — they ate it before the Lord, or took up money and bought what they liked. Only firstlings, first-fruits, and all vows, heave- and wave-offerings remain, see Numbers 5 and Numbers 18; these all belong to the priest. These *reh-sheeth* (first-fruits), so far as males went, some think they were all other firstlings except the males (Rosenmuller), or firstlings generally, not the priest's. But it is wrong as to the priests having the worshippers to eat with them; some, only the clean males of their house could eat, others all the family. But they must be a second set of firstlings as there was a second set of tithes, which there clearly was, see Tobit 1:1, where the second tithes are very distinctly brought forward, and the third, so that this was a known ordinance in Israel. As regards the firstlings; the first-fruits were given to the priests, so in chapter 18. Tobit speaks only of the second tithes, but these or their worth he spent in feasting in Jerusalem every year. We must leave, I suppose, the directions of Numbers, etc., where they are; they are not the main object of Deuteronomy, but the people's going up with their festal joy to Jerusalem to connect it with Jehovah, and the firstlings and the like to be such as they might otherwise have eaten at home, but, according to Deuteronomy, were to go to Jerusalem with.

The first males, if the first born, would remain to the priests. The immediate object was to identify all their common joy with Jehovah by the place. Next, the character of worship, and all these services and directions, is common enjoyment of the blessings promised — not approach to God in the holiest. As to this, see Deuteronomy 16, Deuteronomy 26, and Leviticus 16.

Deuteronomy 13

- (Deuteronomy 11)
  DEPENDENCE AND OBEDIENCE (JBS 4)
- DEUTERONOMY 13 (CAC 5)

DEUTERONOMY 13 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 13

The last section of the previous chapter is a warning against being ensnared by things over which one has previously got the victory. Many a person has walked in apparent superiority to certain things for years, and then fallen under their power. An order which is pleasing to man after the flesh is sure to have idolatrous elements in it. There will be something in it that either obscures the revelation of God, or to some extent takes away the glory of Christ, or sets aside the Spirit of God. The result of such things getting a place in practice or in teaching is that the character of what professes to be approach to God becomes such as not to be pleasurable to Him, and there may even be introduced into it that which He regards as "abomination".

As to what is evil, and contrary to God, we are not even to "inquire" into it. "I wish you to be wise as to that which is good, and simple as to evil" (Romans 16: 19). There is a great tendency in the human mind to crave knowledge as to what is wrong, and many have been ensnared by needlessly investigating evil teachings, and have fallen under Satan's power thereby. The important thing is to know what is good, and to go on with it.

Chapter 13 regards the people of God as having known Him. We are not to be turned aside to "go after other gods, whom thou hast not known" (verses 2, 6, 13). We are to be true to what we know. This is a principle which will preserve the youngest babe in Christ. We may not know much, but let us be true to it, and we shall be preserved, and we shall follow on to know the Lord. There was a man who only knew "one thing", but he would not be diverted from it, and he quickly got more. (See John 9) What we, as believers, know of God is so precious that the devil will do all he can to divert us from it. But we must resist him, "stedfast in faith" (1 Peter 5: 9).

The instruction of this chapter is very solemn, for it shews the extreme displeasure with which God regards those who seek to draw His people out of the way in which He has commanded them to walk (verse 5). Such persons were to be put to death, however near and dear they might be; they were not to be spared, pitied, nor screened. They were marked by speaking "revolt against Jehovah your God"; they were abhorrent to Him, and He would have them to be reprobated in the most absolute way by His people. It need hardly be said to Christians that in its application to ourselves this does not suggest any violence against persons, but extreme moral detestation and condemnation of what is contrary to God in their teachings, There is not to be the slightest allowance of, nor fellowship with, the evil deeds of such as

pervert the truth, or "the right paths of the Lord". It is our privilege and our duty to pray for the good of persons whose teachings are false, and to desire that God may "give them repentance to acknowledgment of the truth, and that they may awake up out of the snare of the devil", and to this end we are to be marked by "in meekness setting right those who oppose" (2 Timothy 2: 24 - 26), but the spirit and action of grace towards them personally is in no way to weaken our abhorrence of the teachings with which they are identified. Such persons are to be outside the pale of Christian fellowship, like the twice-admonished heretical man, of whom Paul says, "Have done with" him (Titus 3: 10). Not bringing the doctrine of Christ, they are not to be received into the house, nor greeted (2 John 10, 11). They are to be separated from as vessels to dishonour (2 Timothy 2: 21).

This chapter would lead us to anticipate the possibility of being tested by pernicious influences in three different forms. Verses 1 - 5 refer to "a prophet, or one that dreameth dreams, and he give thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass that he told unto thee". We are expressly warned against such in the New Testament. "Many false prophets", says John, "are gone out into the world" (1 John 4: 1).

"But there were false prophets also among the people", says Peter, "as there shall be also among you false teachers, who shall bring in by the bye destructive heresies" (2 Peter 2: 1). And Paul speaks of such as "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And it is not wonderful, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11: 13 - 15). Paul says also, "For I know this, that there will come in amongst you after my departure grievous wolves, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves" — the elders of the assembly in Ephesus! — "shall rise up men speaking perverted things to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20: 29, 30).

There are many such at the present time, and some of them profess to give signs or wonders — healing, speaking with tongues, supernatural manifestations or communications from the spirit-world, and so on — and what they say may sometimes really "come to pass" (see verses 1, 2). But these things are not to be allowed to impress or overawe us; they are to be regarded as a test. "For Jehovah your God proveth you, to know whether ye love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul". We shall find that all these prophets and dreamers, while they may speak "swelling words",

and even quote Scripture largely — as did also their master the devil — speak "revolt" against

"Our God whom we have known,
Well known in Jesus' love".

They speak "revolt against Jehovah your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage" (verse 5). They do not call upon us to wonder and adore as we behold the Lamb of God in the place of sin, and of sin's judgment, as the Passover. They do not tell us that He who hung upon the cross was "over all, God blessed for ever" (Romans 9: 5), or that the Fulness of Godhead dwells in Him bodily as a glorified Man at the right hand of God. They do not magnify to our souls the grace of a Redeemer and Saviour God, or the fruits of redemption in present and eternal blessing. They do not tell us that through the one offering of Christ we are perfected for ever, or that God's salvation in a Risen Christ gives complete deliverance out of the present evil world. They do not recall to us that we have been set free from everything that once held us in bondage, and that God in the fulness of His love has delighted to give us His Spirit, and to bring us to the abode of His holiness, and to bless us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. They may tell us of wonderful things — past, present, or future — but the actual effect of their specious teaching is to take us away from the truth of the glad tidings, and from that knowledge of God in which all true blessing consists.

It is a day of false prophets and dreamers, but without exception they are marked by defective and erroneous thoughts of the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by thoughts of God which are contrary to the truth of the glad tidings which have been announced to us, and which also we have received, and in which we stand, and by which also we are saved (1 Corinthians 15: 1, 2). They may "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting" (Romans 16: 18), but they really speak "revolt" against the God whom we know as Redeemer, Justifier, Saviour and Deliverer, and whose good and acceptable and perfect will it is now our privilege to prove.

In verses 6 - 11 the test comes in a more secret and appealing way. "If thy brother, the son of thy mother,

or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, who is to thee as thy soul, entice thee secretly", etc. This refers to private and personal influence brought to bear upon us by those with whom we have the closest and most intimate ties of natural affection. But no feelings of personal regard

or natural affection are to weigh with us for a moment to lead us to consent to such enticings, or even hearken to them. We are called upon to discern — and the unction we have received will enable us to discern — when any influence tends to draw us away from what we have learned through the glad tidings, and from that which has been "the faith of God's elect" from the beginning. For we have had a spiritual ancestry, answering to "thy fathers" in verse 6, and we do well to remember those who have spoken to us the word of God (Hebrews 13: 7). This would apply specially to those of whom Peter speaks as "your apostles" (2 Peter 3: 2). From whatever quarter, or in whatever form, inducements to depart come to us they are to be resisted in the most decided way. "That prophet ... shall be put to death" (verse 5). "Thou shalt in any case kill him" (verse 9).

The third section of the chapter (verses 12 - 18) would refer to departure of a collective or assembly character, for it is "in one of thy cities". And here we get for the first time an expression which recurs frequently afterwards in Scripture — "children of Belial". It is sad to think that there are those amongst the people of God who are thus designated by the Holy Spirit. They are morally worthless as having nothing in common with Christ (see 2 Corinthians 6: 15). We need to be reminded that there are such persons, and that their influence may even draw away assemblies. "The woman Jezebel" is a veritable "daughter of Belial", and her influence in the assembly in Thyatira is of the very character against which Deuteronomy 13 warns us. "Her children will I kill with death; and all the assemblies shall know that I am he that searches the reins and the hearts; and I will give to you each according to your works" (Revelation 2: 20 - 23). This is much like Deuteronomy 13: 11.

Departure from God is never so serious as when it takes assembly character. The angel of the assembly in Thyatira was held responsible for permitting Jezebel with her corrupting and idolatrous teachings, and "the Son of God, he that has his eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass", will judge unsparingly both the teacher and the taught "unless they repent". Religious influences that do not give Divine Persons their proper place are essentially idolatrous. There should be holy jealousy as to such things, and intense repudiation of them. Indeed in principle this would apply to anything which tends "to draw thee out of the way that Jehovah thy God commanded thee to walk in". We are to stand perfect and complete in everything that is God's will, and not to allow any influence that would be contrary to it. Those influences have to be destroyed, as to their power in our souls.

If our brethren would lead us away they are to be resisted. Not even one so conspicuous as Peter was to be exempt from being withstood to the face when

he played a dissembling part (Galatians 2). It might seem immaterial whether a Jew ate with Gentiles or not. Some would have regarded the circumstance as of no importance. But Paul's spiritual eye saw clearly that the whole character of the dispensation was involved; Christianity itself was at stake. And Paul did not spare that in Peter which was to be condemned; he did not screen him, but exposed before all the evil that was working. He killed, not Peter indeed, but that which, at the moment, in Peter was contrary to what both he and Peter had known of God. Peter might well speak of Paul afterwards as "our beloved brother Paul"; no doubt he felt deeply how much he owed to Paul's faithful love. The incident serves to shew how subtle are the influences of evil against which we have to be on our guard, as tending to draw us out of the way in which we have been commanded to walk. Every such test, if gone through with God, will confer spiritual confirmation and gain, but if we yield in what may seem to be small matters greater defection will soon follow.

Certain evils may be "near unto thee" (verse 7). They are so like the truth as to deceive the unwary. We should always bear in mind that opposition to the truth in the last days is "in the same manner in which Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses" (2 Timothy 3: 8). The truth is withstood by imitation; the evil thing is very like the real and divine thing. It has the form of what is right without the spiritual power and vitality of it. The nearer things are the more deceptive and dangerous they are if they are not of God.

Then, on the other hand, there are evil influences which are "far from thee". Teachings which are so far-fetched, and so entirely different from anything we have known, that their very strangeness and novelty has a kind of fascination for the mind. But whether "near" or "far", everything is to be utterly refused which has not been "heard from the beginning". "As for you let that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you: if what ye have heard from the beginning abides in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise which *he* has promised us, life eternal. These things have I written to you concerning those who lead you astray: and yourselves, the unction which ye have received from him abides in you, and ye have not need that any one should teach you; but as the same unction teaches you as to all things, and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, ye shall abide in him" (1 John 2: 24 - 27).

Our safety lies in going on with what is good and of God. "Ye shall walk after Jehovah your God, and ye shall fear him, and his commandments shall ye keep, and his voice shall ye hear; and ye shall serve him, and unto him shall ye cleave" (verse 4).

Deuteronomy 14

- (Deuteronomy 11)
  THE INHERITANCE (CAC 30)
- DEUTERONOMY 14 (CAC 5)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 14 (JND 36)
- NOTES OF READINGS ON DEUTERONOMY (3) (JT 7)
- THE YEAR OF RELEASE (JT 15)
- FOOD - CLEAN AND UNCLEAN (WJH 18)

DEUTERONOMY 14 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 14

"Ye are sons of Jehovah your God". Sonship is the relationship in which we stand, through infinite love, to the blessed God. He bestows eternal life upon us; it is the land of our possession — the gift of God for men. But we are sons for the pleasure of God. This thought comes out in many scriptures. "Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (Proverbs 3: 12). The Voice out of heaven said to Jesus, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I have found my delight" (Luke 3: 22). God gives us life eternal as "the land", but He would have us to enjoy it in the consciousness that we are sons for His pleasure. "Thee hath Jehovah chosen for a people of possession unto himself, out of all the peoples that are upon the face of the earth" (verse 2).

God has not only shown us mercy in cleansing and saving us, but He has called us to the blessedness of being sons — objects of delight to His heart. Nothing could touch our hearts more than that. And it brings in an entirely new standard of walk and ways and spirit. If I realise that I am one of the sons of God I am no longer a bondman (Galatians 4: 7); I do not merely ask What is my duty? or, Is there any harm in this or that? I am constrained to enquire eagerly, How can I most yield delight to God my Father? It becomes a holy and abiding exercise that there should be nothing to disfigure the moral beauty that rightly attaches to sons of God.

Any idolatrous mark would disfigure us (verse 1). And we are to live on food suitable for sons; we must beware of influences and associations that are unclean. "Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing".

The creatures that may be eaten represent the influences which we allow to come into our lives and to form us morally. The kind of company we keep, the books that we read! the subjects on which we allow our minds to dwell, all tend directly to affect us inwardly, and to give us character and constitution in a moral sense. We have to exercise discrimination and holy care as to what we eat and assimilate. The clean creatures would be such as have, in a typical or symbolical way, the features and characteristics of Christ. What is not after Christ is unsuitable food for sons of God.

The clean beasts are not particularised in Leviticus 11, but a number of them are mentioned here in detail. In Leviticus 11 the people are taken account of as standing in relation to Moses and Aaron, the mediator and the priest, and thus called to be a holy people because Jehovah was holy. But in Deuteronomy

14 we are viewed as sons in family relationship, and as such the features of Christ are to mark us for the delight of God.

"The ox, the sheep, and the goat" are frequently used in Scripture as types of Christ. What, marks the ox is strength for labour; see Psalm 144: 14; Proverbs 14: 4. It is written of Christ that "coming into the world he says ... Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, thy will" (Hebrews 10: 5 - 7). He came in with capability to do all that was according to God's pleasure. There was strength to carry out the will of God in every detail in patient, persistent energy. "I do always the things that are pleasing to him" (John 8: 29). I have read that no animal draws with such a steady pull as the ox; there are no fits and starts, no rushing and halting, but an even, onward, persevering movement. Such was the service of the blessed Son of God as Man here. The forty times repeated "immediately" or "straightway" in the Gospel of Mark has always arrested the attention of readers. How He passed on from one service to another! Never in a hurry; always at leisure — if we may so say — to attend to the need that presented itself; but completing each act of service that He might pass on without delay to the next. Does not the consideration of it make most of us feel ashamed to reflect on how casual and intermittent our little bit of service has been!

There are, indeed, sabbaths for the ox (Deuteronomy 5: 14), and times when the Lord may say, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest a little" (Mark 6: 31). But it is well to remember that the sabbath comes at the end of six days of labour. "Six days shalt thou labour, and *do all thy work*". Patient and persistent labour is to mark the sons of God. They are to feed upon Him who said, "I must work the works of him that has sent me while it is day. The night is coming, when no one can work" (John 9: 4). I cannot doubt that one great corrective of the carnal state at Corinth lay in the Apostle's words, "So then, my beloved brethren, be firm, immovable, abounding always in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15: 58). As sons we are to feed on Christ as symbolised in the ox, so as to be characterised by strength for persistent toil. It is a mark of sonship.

Let us not be content to have the light of sonship as the blessed relationship to which God has called us in infinite love. If the Spirit of sonship in our hearts has put us consciously in the place and affections of sons, let us see to it that, as led by the Spirit of God, we are acting as sons, finding our delight in doing what is pleasing to God. "And they shall be unto me a peculiar treasure, saith Jehovah of hosts, in the day that I prepare; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Malachi 3: 17). Ephraim had to

bemoan himself, and to be chastised, because he was "as a bullock not trained", or as the Authorised Version reads, "unaccustomed to the yoke" (Jeremiah 31: 18). How we need to be trained so as to bear the sons' yoke of Christ, and to be devoted to the service of God in the liberty of sons! We shall then find that Christ's yoke is easy and His burden light.

The sheep is not marked by the strength or labour of the ox, nor by the stately step of the goat, but by uncomplaining submission to suffering. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, but he opened not his mouth; he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and was as a sheep dumb before her shearers, and he opened not his mouth" (Isaiah 53: 7). It is precisely in that connection that we are told He has left us a model that we should follow in His steps. See 1 Peter 2: 21 - 23. It is as feeding on Him, and abiding in Him, that we shall be able to walk even as He walked.

The goat is mentioned among the things which, "have a stately step", and which are "comely in going" (Proverbs 30: 29 - 31). How "stately" were the Lord's steps! With what calmness and dignity He moved on amidst the contradiction of sinners, and in presence of weakness and misunderstanding in His disciples! Never halting or perturbed, never uncertain as to what step to take next! Wherever He was, in every circumstance — even the most uncongenial — He was "comely in going". Whether in presence of the devil, or of cavilling, unbelieving men; with Pharisees, Sadducees, the chief priests, Pilate, Herod, we never see anything but stateliness, dignity, and comeliness in the way He moved. The contemplation of it makes most of us feel ashamed of ourselves. But if we fed on Him as the goat we should acquire ability to move with stately steps. Our steps need not fail of the grace and dignity that is proper to sons of God. It is largely a question of the kind of food our constitutions are being built up on. The different features of Christ set forth symbolically in the clean animals have to be appropriated and assimilated so that we may be sons of God in moral constitution.

The "hart" sets forth another deeply interesting feature that belongs to sons. It is expressive of inward and ardent desires after God. "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God" (Psalm 42: 1). The wonderful heart-breathings after God which form so distinct a feature of the Psalms are all the fruit of the Spirit of Christ, and sometimes they rise to prophetic utterances of Christ Personally. His tarrying in Jerusalem at the age of twelve, and being found "in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers and hearing them and asking them questions" (Luke ii), shew the intensity of His interest in all that was of God. He was, indeed, engrossed in His Father's business. And when afterwards He cast the money-changers and merchants

out of the temple, "his disciples remembered that it is written, The zeal of thy house devours me" (John 2: 17). What a corrective of Laodicean lukewarmness would be found in feeding on the characteristic feature of Christ which is set forth in the hart! Nothing is more important than that this feature should have a very distinct place in our moral being.

The "hart" and the "gazelle" are both mentioned as symbolical of Christ in the Canticles (Song of Songs 2: 9, 17). The "gazelle" would seem to suggest the thought of what is beautiful or glorious, for the word is translated "beauty" in Isaiah 4: 2; Daniel 8: 9; Daniel 11:16; Daniel 11:41; Daniel 11:45. It is translated "glory" in Isaiah 28: 5 and other passages; "ornament" in Ezekiel 20: 6. What grace and beauty marked all the ways of Christ! He was, indeed, "fairer than the sons of men", and in all that is morally glorious in its excellency He is available to be fed upon that the "sons" may take character from Him. Let us not say that it is out of our reach, for God has placed it in Christ for us that we might appropriate it into our affections as their food and joy, and what we feed on will inevitably form us. There can be no lower standard of what is suitable in the sons of God than what was found for the delight of God in His beloved Son as Man here. The heart that loves Him would refuse to cherish, or to be content with, anything lower or other than that.

So far as I know the remainder of the beasts that may be eaten are only mentioned here, save that the stag appears in the provision for Solomon's table. We may find it difficult, through our ignorance of the animals referred to, to say just what features of Christ each one of them sets forth. In one sense it is a comfort to know that there is a wealth of suggestiveness in the Spirit's typical presentations of Christ that is beyond us. It is something still to be searched out, and known and fed upon. Each one of these animals symbolises features which can be safely and profitably assimilated by sons of God. They all have the same kind of feet and digestive organs.

Separation in walk must be accompanied by inward rumination, or what we are in our true inwardness may be quite different from what we appear to be outwardly. This is the case with the swine, representing those who may be very separate outwardly, like the Pharisees, but who are unclean inwardly. Paul could say of Timothy that he had followed up his teaching and conduct and purpose and faith. He not only heard things, and passed them on to others, but he followed them up in the exercises of his own soul. Meditation and reflection are essential; it is most important that we should have the "knowledge which cometh of reflection" (Proverbs 8: 12). For lack of it many earnest persons are very immature in the knowledge of God and His things

which should mark His sons. We cannot be intelligent sons for the pleasure of God by merely receiving what others say; an inward reflective process has to go on answering to chewing the cud. As we truly feed on Christ, with inward consideration, we retire more and more from the world, and from what marks it, because we perceive that there is no delight for God in it, or in its things. Anything outside what was true in Christ has the character of what is unclean. A separate walk, and inward occupation with the things of God, are features that are not to be lacking in sons of God.

We are not to be deceived by persons who have, or appear to have, some of the features which are approved of God. Some may be like the camel, the hare, and the rock-badger, who chew the cud, or appear to do so, but have not cloven hoofs. Such appear to give place in their thoughts to the things of God, but their practical ways are not at all in keeping therewith. And, on the other hand, the walk may be exemplary in a legal way while the heart is a stranger to the inward movements which are proper to those into whom the Spirit of God's Son has been sent forth. Such inconsistencies are not to be found in the sons of God. "Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch".

The creatures "in the waters" have to move through an element which comes closely into contact with them, and only those who can do so with purpose and definiteness, and without being unduly affected by it, are to be eaten. The natural is very near to every one of us, and if we are to move through it as sons of God for His pleasure we need "fins and scales". Probably many of us are more tested by what is natural than by what is worldly; we are in danger of being diverted or unduly deflected by the natural influence of relatives or friends, with the result that our course lacks spiritual definiteness.

If Barnabas had been characterised by "fins" he would not have parted from Paul. He allowed, at any rate for a time, a natural partiality to govern him, and under its influence he lost the immense privilege of being the companion of Paul in his labours. A definite following of Christ, and a walk in the Spirit, are needed if we are to move through the natural influences, which are so close to us, in a way that is suitable to sons of God.

The birds represent influences — good or evil — that move in the spiritual sphere. The "clean birds" are not specified here, but twenty-one are mentioned as not to be eaten. There are many evil influences in a spiritual sense. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, if they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out intro the world" (1 John 4: 1). We must beware of spiritual influences that are not of the Holy Spirit. Satan is the prince of the power of the air; he is the prime mover in all that is contrary

to God; but the forms which evil takes are very varied, and we must not forget that they are found now within the Christian profession. We read in Revelation 18: 2 that "Great Babylon ... has become the habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hated bird". "But the Spirit speaks expressly, that in latter times some shall apostatise from the faith, giving their mind to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons speaking lies in hypocrisy" (1 Timothy 4: 1, 2).

There are not only systems of teaching that are in bold and open opposition to Scripture, but others that are specious and make a great show of being accurate in their deductions from Scripture. But every evil teaching strikes in some way at the Person or the atoning work of the Son of God, or obscures the glad tidings of God so that men are turned away from the great salvation which is in Christ Jesus. Other evil influences obscure the truth of the heavenly calling of the saints. It is sad to see even true believers carried away by such things as Anglo-Israel theories, or the imagined prophecies of the great pyramid! There is a certain fascination for many minds in the attempt to fit current events into scriptural prophecy, but such occupations tend to divert from the present witness of the Holy Spirit to a glorified Christ in heaven.

Without attempting to point out in detail the characteristic features of each unclean bird mentioned here, it may suffice to say that many of them are birds of prey, and some are lovers of darkness, and none of them represent what God can approve as giving character to His sons. It is to be noted that the paragraph begins with "All clean birds shall ye eat", and it ends with "All clean fowls shall ye eat" The best preservative against what is unclean is to be actively occupied in the assimilation of what is clean. And those "born of water and of Spirit", have an inward cleanness that enables them to judge accurately between what is clean and unclean. The sons of God know the difference. It is suggestive that in Genesis 7, where we have the first mention of "clean" and "not clean", there is no list given to guide Noah in the selection. It is written that "Noah was a just man, perfect amongst his generations: Noah walked with God". Such a man did not need a list; his own inward perceptions, as taught of God, sufficed to distinguish the clean from the unclean. And the "sons" of God know the difference; they "have their senses exercised for distinguishing both good and evil". Every child of God knows intuitively the difference between what is of Christ and the Spirit and what is of the mind and tastes of the flesh. Of course it is possible to put away a good conscience, and to have the spiritual sensibilities so perverted or deadened that the power of discrimination is practically lost, but this is a sad state of departure from God. John writes to "little children" — the babes in the family of God — that they have the unction from the holy One, and know all things . "I have not

written to you because ye do not know the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth" (1 John 2: 20, 21). There is capacity even in babes to discern what is of Christ and of the Spirit. The sheep of Christ "follow him, because they know his voice. But they will not follow a stranger, but will flee from him, because they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10: 4, 5).

We have to be exercised as to what we receive in connection with ministry — even ministry in the assembly as referred to in 1 Corinthians 14 "And let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge". Everything is to be tested. "Do not lightly esteem prophecies; but prove all things, hold fast the right" (1 Thessalonians 5: 21, 22). But it must be remembered that ability to judge lies in being spiritual ourselves. "The things of the Spirit of God ... are spiritually discerned; but the spiritual discerns all things, and *he* is discerned of no one" (1 Corinthians 2: 14, 15).

"All clean birds shall ye eat ... . All clean fowls shall ye eat". It is as much as to say, Go on with what is clean, and leave alone all that is otherwise! I do not think that it would greatly profit us to know in detail what every unclean bird represents. We must beware of occupying ourselves with what is evil, even if professedly to judge it. Some may be called as a matter of service to investigate wrong teachings and to refute them, but for saints generally it is well not to know them. "I wish you to be wise as to that which is good, and simple as to evil" (Romans 16: 19). When we see that things are not of God, it is well to leave them alone. Let us go on with what is spiritual. The sons of God must feed on Christ, and take character from such features as are "clean" in the sight of God. I think it must be admitted that most believers are not well developed in spiritual constitution. A good constitution can only be built up by feeding on good food. No doubt the saints appreciate spiritual features — the features of Christ — when they are set before us objectively, but it is another thing to be possessed of them as developed in ourselves. Of how many of the features of Christ could I say that I have eaten and assimilated them so that they have become incorporated in my moral being?

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God". How blessed when the inward thoughts and feelings are the product of the leading of the Spirit of God! It is in this way that the saints come out characteristically and definitely as the sons of God. Through mercy we are where there is the comfort and blessing of the light of sonship. We know that it is the thought, and purpose of God's love that we should be His sons in Christ Jesus by faith. The gospel gives us the precious light of this. But then if we are to answer to the thought and pleasure of God we must appear in the character and wealth which are seen to attach to "sons of Jehovah" in Deuteronomy 14,

Deuteronomy 15. And in view of this what we feed upon is of the utmost importance.

"Ye shall eat of no carcase; thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is within thy gates, that he may eat it, or sell it unto a foreigner; for thou art a holy people to Jehovah thy God". There are things which may be permissible, or even profitable, for strangers or foreigners that are not at all suitable for sons. There is a wholly different, and far more elevated, standard for the people of God than could be thought of by the natural man, However excellent his ideals might be. A "carcase" is something that has not been devoted to death with any definite purpose in relation to God. It has died in the natural course of things, or by misadventure. God's sons are not to be characterised by what speaks merely of the absence of natural energy. People may give up the things of the world, or some of them, simply because their tastes have changed in a natural way, and they prefer a quieter life. In some cases the power to enjoy the pursuits of the natural man may no longer be present. There is no value in this for God. His sons are to be marked by positive spiritual energy which will impart a sacrificial spirit and value to their course. Their bodies are to be presented a living sacrifice. "The deeds of the body" in a fleshly sense are not to cease by the failing of natural energy to carry them into effect, but they are to be put to death by the Spirit.

Then the remarkable injunction that comes in here, and elsewhere, "Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk", would seem to be a reminder that God would have His sons to regard all that is of Himself in nature. It was God who established the relationship between a kid and its mother, and because He established it, He would have it to be regarded by His sons with tender and refined sensibilities. God would have tender considerations and sympathies in His people. The natural mind would be ready to say, What difference would it make either to the kid or its mother if it were boiled in its mother's milk? What would either of them know about it? But God would say, It is a matter that I concern myself about; I wish my sons to think tenderly of natural relationships. The more we regard what is of God in nature the more deeply we shall feel the sufferings which have came into the natural sphere through sin, and sympathies will be developed which are worthy of God. When the blessed Son of God saw disease and death it was an intense grief to Him because it traversed all God's original order. He was deeply moved when He saw in the sorrow and suffering of the creature the evidence of the power of evil having come in. It is written that He "healed all that were ill; so that that should be fulfilled which was spoken through Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases" (Matthew 8: 17). As it has been said, He bore in His spirit what He removed by His power.

The groan of a suffering creation is a grief to the heart of God. It is a marvellous statement that not one sparrow falls to the ground "without your Father". He bears every creature in His mind, even, as we should say, the most insignificant. And if this is the case how much more does He think of, and feel for, the intelligent creature man, on whom He has so specially set His heart? At the present time His sons have to suffer with the groaning creation, and as part of it, that we may be sympathetic with all its sorrow. When the Son of God came into the world in the fulness of divine power to heal every disease and meet every need He came in sympathetically, so that we not only find Him speaking words of power, but *touching* those He healed. His touches spoke of sympathy. Divine power was there in Him to annul death and call the dead Lazarus out of the grave. But what tender sympathies were expressed in the tears of Jesus! The sons of God have to suffer now, both actually and sympathetically, that they may be qualified to come out at the "revelation of the sons of God" in a sympathetic spirit for the emancipation of the groaning creation. It is not for the pleasure of God that His creatures should groan, and His sons would never willingly add to the sufferings of any creature of God. But sufferings being present, as the result of man's sin, they give occasion for the development and expression of consideration and sympathy which is of God. Such feelings are proper to the sons of God. We may learn much of the heart of God in what He says of a kid and its mother.

The tithe of Deuteronomy 14: 22 - 27 is clearly additional to that spoken of in Numbers 18, which was to be given to the children of Levi for their service. The first charge upon spiritual prosperity is the support of what is levitical. The temporal support of those who serve the Lord in spiritual things has its place (1 Corinthians 9), but the tithes would represent rather that spiritual prosperity is to yield an abundant supply for the sustenance in a spiritual way of service for God. The levitical element in ourselves, and in the saints generally, is to be nourished and supported. If we have the wealth of the land, what answers to corn, new wine, oil, firstlings — a supply of what is connected with Christ and the Spirit and with spiritual increase — let us not forget that it is all to be tithed for service. If we do not render the tithes we rob God, and we shall lose His blessing. See Malachi 3. If those who have increase in spiritual blessing are not found serving the Lord proportionately in diligent zealousness and fervency of spirit they will assuredly lose what they have. The maintenance of service is perhaps more important than it is generally supposed to be; it is a definite mark of sons of God.

In presence of much fleshly activity in the Christian profession it is greatly for the pleasure of God that we should diligently maintain spiritual and devoted service. It is the practical evidence of spiritual prosperity. We were taken

account of for service from the outset, as the Levites were numbered from a month old, but every year should see us coming to greater maturity in that respect. All the elements of what is levitical are seen in Romans, but they are seen in full maturity in Philippians.

We must not think entirely of the Levites as representing a separate class — while, of course, recognising that there are distinct gifts — but rather as typifying the whole company of saints as united together to render holy service. Service does not take the same form in every one; it is taken up by each according to the measure of faith given by God; but it all blends in unity. When each is going on diligently with his appointed service things work happily and in harmony; there are no elements of discord or divergence.

Our first exercise should be to acquire spiritual substance, but then it is given that it may be tithed for the support of service. If what we suppose to be spiritual gain does not promote what is levitical there is something wrong about it; the tithes are not being rendered. Whenever we get any spiritual increase it must always be a definite exercise that it shall contribute to direct service to God and to His people. This is the first charge on the wealth of the inheritance.

Then the chapter before us speaks of a second tithe, which is to be eaten before Jehovah in the place which He chooses to cause His Name to dwell there. It suggests the peculiar gain and joy which is connected with honouring God in the assembly conditions which He has established. It has been made possible, through the grace of the Lord, for us to "come together" in conditions which are suitable to God, and to eat the Lord's supper together (see 1 Corinthians 11), and thus to be convened in assembly character. This involves separation from evil, for God's Name is in His assembly, and it is a holy Name. We must remember that any spiritual blessing which we have individually is to be tithed for the assembly; it is to contribute to our joy as those privileged to meet at a centre common to all saints, To recognise that there is such a centre, and that all saints are under obligation to regard it, is bound up with the fear of God. "That thou mayest learn to fear Jehovah thy God continually" (verse 23).

This is a word for any who may think that they can enjoy the Lord and His precious things at home, and that they are not under any obligation to take practical account of God's assembly. There are certain things, represented by this tithe, which cannot be enjoyed at home *for the pleasure of God*. To eat them there would not be "before Jehovah thy God". We are thus reminded that whatever we gather up of the wealth of the inheritance is to be held relative to the common meeting place of saints. For here it is not something to

be offered to God, but something for us to eat ourselves. It suggests a peculiar spiritual gain and joy which accrues *to us* from recognising what is due to God as to the assembly. We get our joy full. Such is the precious link between God and His sons that their enjoyment is secured and enhanced by the recognition that He has a place which He has chosen to cause His Name to dwell there. If we have not that in mind we are not behaving suitably to sons of God.

The provision for cases in which the way might be "too long" intimates that it may not always be easy to avail oneself of assembly conditions. Fellowship with God's people according to the truth of His assembly is not always easily obtainable. We are in "difficult times", but it is peculiarly pleasing to the Lord to see that we value what is of Himself even when it makes unusual demands. It has often happened that when believers have found themselves at a distance from privileges of assembly character they have been tempted to give up the truth, and to fall in with a human order of things. But difficulties are not to be succumbed to, but surmounted. The full value of the tithe is to go to God's appointed centre. The two going to Emmaus gathered in much on that eventful resurrection day, but we may say that they carried their tithe to the common fund with those who were "gathered together"

(Luke 24: 33). And on the day of Pentecost the Spirit of God gave the saints a sense that they were all bound up together as having common interests, possessions and joys. Who can doubt that this intensified the joy of each?

Then "at the end of three years" there is another tithe; it suggests the result of a prolonged experience of the wealth of the land. The third year is called specifically "the year of tithing" (Deuteronomy 26: 12). And this tithe is to be laid up "within thy gates; and the Levite — for he hath no portion nor inheritance with thee — and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hand which thou doest". The result of three years' enjoyment of the plenty of the inheritance is that one becomes qualified for a very large-hearted ministry to those who have need. A solemn affirmation as to this has to be made, as we see in Deuteronomy 26: 13 - 15, from which we may learn how important as a condition of blessing was the faithful rendering of those hallowed things to those for whom they were appointed.

The favour and love of God bestows the inheritance. Then spiritual diligence is needed, set forth in the requisite tilling of the ground and gathering in of the crops. Without this there will not be much to tithe. The land is good, but it is the diligent soul that is made fat in it. Then the tithes are abundant. There is

nothing said of more than one tithe until we come to Deuteronomy, but now we see the people, viewed as "sons of Jehovah", so enriched that they can render even three tithes, and out of their abundance can minister satisfaction to every kind of need. This chapter and the next, dealing with tithes, the year of release, the giving bountifully to a poor brother, the furnishing of the Hebrew servant — man or woman — all bring out in a striking way the wealth of "sons of Jehovah". God counts upon enriched affections in His sons, so that, as in the wealth of the inheritance, they can be large-hearted in liberality without putting any strain on their resources.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 14 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 14

— 1. Compare with this Galatians 3 and Matthew 5.

NOTES OF READINGS ON DEUTERONOMY (3) (JT 7)

Deuteronomy 14

JMcF Is this the expression you were referring to this morning, "Ye are the sons of the Lord your God"? Deuteronomy 14:1.

JT Yes. I thought it would be helpful to see this side of the truth in this book. It is a book of encouragement, and one feature in it is, that it sets before us the greatness of our place and calling. We cannot go over each chapter, but you will notice in chapter 4 how God calls attention to what the nation was, as compared with other nations. In verse 7 we read; "what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day". Deuteronomy 4:7,8. Connecting that with chapter 14, "Ye are the sons of the Lord your God", we are reminded of what we are by calling. It is not what we should be here, but what we are; and certain results, or consequences, are expected. In connection with that it might be helpful to point out that we have to distinguish between covenant relationships, and family relationships. There are two lines running through Scripture; the one having to do with God entering into a covenant with man through the Mediator; and the other having to do with God adopting a family. Now this chapter, I think, touches the latter; we are the sons of God; so that our countenances are not to be disfigured.

JM Would you kindly repeat what the covenant relationships are in New Testament lines.

JT Well, I think, that whilst the new covenant is not made with us, yet we come into the benefits of it. At one time in our history we had no relationship with God at all, but God from His own side approached man in the Mediator; and in the death of the Mediator God commends His love to us. It is not His love for His children, but His love for people who at the time He manifested it were aliens, were sinners. That is very important, if it could be laid hold of. It may seem to be a distinction without a difference, but it is not. The two lines run through Scripture, and they are distinct.

WHM His covenant with Abraham was to a thousand generations, it says in Psalm 105:8. Is that the kind of covenant you are speaking of?

JT No doubt there is a similarity in all covenants. But the covenant with Israel, I think, supposes a certain kind of contract, or bond; it was a covenant contracted between two parties. The proposal that the bond should exist came from God; it originated with God. It comes in in our case in the Lord's supper,

because the cup is the new covenant in His blood. It is a different thought from family relationships. The Supper, in that way, has more the covenant in view.

JB Are we under the covenant on account of provisional position?

JT I think it gives stability of soul in view of our position down here. It does not take us off the earth.

WH We would not have liberty in our souls if we had not covenant.

JT Quite so, because we want to be sure of God's disposition towards us; and God is free not only to manifest His love, but to *commend* it to us. We should know it; indeed one wonders why it should need to be commended. But before we know it God takes account of the state of our souls, and commends it to us; and the knowledge of it gives stability of soul, in view of the difficulties in which we are here. That is to say, God's love is no *less* to me now than it was before I was converted. If He commended it to me in that day, He would commend it to me now. It gives great stability of soul, because of our weakness.

PL Does the mountain suggest stability? The ministry of the covenant was at Horeb.

JT I think it does. It is not a mountain exactly in which you are to live. The sphere of the divine life is in Canaan, the mountain of His inheritance but the mountain in which the covenant was made suggests a place of strength and stability to our souls as having to do with wilderness circumstances.

WHM What does Lebanon typify?

JT I think the goodly mountain would be the mountain of God's inheritance. "Thou shalt bring them in and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance", Exodus 15:17. Moses said that.

JM The covenant relationships on our side would be the acceptance in our souls of the disposition of God towards us, and living in what God has for us.

JT Yes. In Peter's address to Israel in Acts 2:33, he says: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear". He sheds abroad in our hearts His love, by the Spirit. The mountain is an objective thought. God commends His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. But in order that we should have means, or ability to answer to the bond, to conform to it, He sheds His love abroad in our hearts by His Spirit. Some of us were occupied with it a little this morning, and it may

be helpful to us to review it. God is reaching out to the Gentile with His love, dispensational distance was ignored, so that the love of God is shed *abroad* in our hearts, wherever we may be. Christ is "a light for the revelation of the Gentiles" Luke 2:32;

they are brought into view; and wherever there is state for it God sheds abroad His love. It is worldwide. Now, God is answered to in that way here and there in the Gentile world, the righteous requirement of it is fulfilled, but in whom? Not simply the Jew; but in anyone who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. So that there is a people whom God has secured for Himself through the Mediator. "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, the testimony to be rendered in its own time" 1 Timothy 2:5,6 to which Paul had been appointed a herald and an apostle, a teacher of the nations in faith and truth. So that the result was that a people are brought in who answer to the heart of God, who at one time were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world", Ephesians 2:12. That is the connection in which the covenant lies.

Ques Is our boasting in God in that way?

JT Yes. Our position down here is in view. But when you come to the family side, while it begins here, it belongs to heaven. The covenant is not between the Father and His sons or children.

JB Is it through the covenant we triumph over what we are naturally?

JT The love of God shed abroad in our heart becomes a great leverage; the one who has that has a great advantage over other men. Sonship is received as light in the soul. "When the fulness of the time was come" that is now, we are in the period of it. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, come of woman, come under the law, that we might receive sonship", Galatians 4: 4,5. Now, the expression "receive sonship" is a matter of light received in the soul as to God's mind about you. Then it says, "Because ye *are* sons", not that ye shall be, but because ye are sons, "God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father", Galatians 4: 6.

Rem It is true of all the family.

JT Yes, it is for all believers of this dispensation to lay hold of as a matter of light; that is the status; but the gift of the Spirit of God's Son gives you the state. Now, there you are on family ground, which is eternal; whereas the idea of the covenant will necessarily terminate, because we shall not need that any longer; the idea of a bond between God and man is not needed there. Certain

consequences flow from the relationship here, namely, that you should not disfigure your face for the dead.

E.M. What does that mean?

JT I think our countenances should reflect God, because we are God's sons.

EM How are our faces disfigured?

JT You can understand in regard to them, that the disfiguration would connect and link them with an idolatrous system, and in that way mar the reflection of God in them.

JMcF It was an idolatrous practice.

JT Then he goes on to say: "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth". Deuteronomy 14:2.

PL You come to what He has chosen here. The thought of family affections brings in the sovereignty of divine love.

JT I would like to know whether the brethren agree as to the distinction to be made between covenant relationships, and family relationships.

JMcF You were saying this morning that you get the one in Luke's gospel, and the other in John's gospel.

JT I think that is right, in the main. Luke sets out how God has approached man in the Mediator;

so you will find in the opening chapters that He takes every possible pains to set man at ease. God, I think, in approaching man in the Mediator took all possible pains so that everything should be removed that might hinder men in availing themselves of the divine proposal.

JM It is the same people that are in covenant relationship who are also in the family at the present time.

JT Yes; and so the importance of the gospel of Luke in seeing how God has drawn near to man in the Mediator; it was an overture on God's part.

JB "The grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world", Titus 2:11, 12.

JT I think what we all need to begin with is the knowledge of God. I do not mean as our Father, that is further on, although the two lines run together, but

to know Him as the God who came out in the Mediator when there was nothing in us at all to commend us to Him.

WH You say that the gospel of John is largely the family side; it is that which will abide.

JT Yes. So we have "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him". John 1:18.

RL God must come out in Man, before man can go in.

JT I think that is what Luke presents to us; his gospel is a priestly gospel. So Christ goes into heaven as Priest. Man goes in as Priest making way for others. But in John's gospel it is "I ascend to my Father and your Father". John 20:17. That is the family side.

RL In Luke 15, God went out before the prodigal could come in.

JM In Exodus 19, Moses was to speak to the *house of Jacob*, and tell the *children of Israel*: What is the difference in the expressions?

JT A man's house suggests one idea, and his children another. Christ is to rule over the house of Jacob. You can understand that a man's house is one idea; it includes all the persons in it, your wife, as well as your children; your children stand by themselves; and they have a peculiar place in your heart, but your house is the greater thought. The people to whom Moses was to speak were Jacob's house, and they were Israel's children, and God proposes to enter into covenant with them. In order to do that He commends Himself to them, saying, virtually, I want you to decide as to whether it is worth your while; you know what I have done for you, how I have borne you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself; and then He shows them what they should be if they did indeed obey His voice, and keep His covenant; they should be a peculiar treasure unto Him above all people, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. The priesthood side is connected with the covenant. He does not say as yet that they shall be His sons. Then they take that up; Moses comes from Jehovah to them, and then they send Moses back to Jehovah with their answer, saying, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do". Exodus 19:8. There the bond was formed. What answers to that in our history is outlined in Romans 5, which gives us the divine side; and shows how God comes out and commends His love to us. Now, what are you going to do? I think chapter 6 shows what the believer really does; that is, he accepts baptism; and, we may say, the Lord's supper follows upon that. That is something that you formally commit yourself to; so that there is outwardly a bond formed.

JB Had the passover anything to do with the covenant?

JT The passover came in before it. God commends His love to us, and then He sheds it *abroad* in our hearts.

JM I should like you to say a word now upon the "family" side.

JT The family side is taken up in Romans 8. You have there, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God". Romans 8:14. They are marked off in that way. Not only are they now viewed as in covenant with God, but they are His sons, because they are led by His Spirit. And then He says, "Ye have not received a spirit of bondage again for fear, but ye have received a spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father". Romans 8:15.

Ques Would you not say that all believers are sons?

JT Yes, but you might be outwardly in fellowship, and your will not subdued. It is a great thing to be led by the Spirit of God. We have been dwelling on the territory of Moab; it supposes the recognition of the Spirit, instead of the flesh in the believer; and one who is thus marked off is a *Deuteronomy* Christian. Now, it is a very remarkable thing that the Lord Jesus cited Deuteronomy only, in the wilderness; and that signifies that Deuteronomy is for a people who are marked as being led by the Spirit. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. If you are not led by the Spirit, you are not fit for Deuteronomy.

WH Being led of the Spirit is characteristic of a Christian.

JT The tabernacle is not in view after Numbers 21; that is, because it is a question of the Spirit in the believer actuating him. After the brazen serpent and the springing well Og goes down before you; there is nothing able to withstand you; and that is why, I think, the Lord comes in in the New Testament on that platform. He comes in on the Deuteronomy side of the wilderness; there was no need in His case, of a forty years test; He came in on the plains of Moab you might say. He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness, and He was entirely subject to the Spirit. In Luke 3 He receives the Spirit in the form of a dove; and in chapter 4, He is led by the Spirit into the wilderness; and then we read, he "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee". Luke 4:14.

JMcF Do we get in this scripture how the sons are marked off?

JT That is what I thought. They were not to be disfigured for the dead: they were a holy people unto the Lord. Then you see the kind of food they are to eat, only what is clean. When you come to feeding, you come into actual touch with people, and you are capable of discerning. You get a good deal here in the way of instruction as to the kind of people we are to have to do

with; first the beasts of the earth, who are actually on the earth, and cannot get off it; and then the birds that fly in the air.

Ques What do they set forth?

JT Birds are independent creatures; they represent people who have this world's means, on the one hand, or else they have got spiritual means. Those who are independent as regards this world's means, they are unclean. It is very striking, if you have noticed a bird flying, how independent it is; it mounts over every obstacle. A bird represents either a worldly person with means; or a spiritual person, who has power to mount up to heaven. No list of the clean birds is given. "Of all clean birds ye shall eat" Deuteronomy 14:11; and then again: "Of all clean fowls ye may eat". Deuteronomy 14:20. But then it goes on "These are they of which ye shall not eat". Deuteronomy 14:12. You are to find out the clean ones once the unclean ones are named.

WH The unclean ones would defile.

JT Yes. The constitution you have will depend on the food you eat.

JMcF Would the unclean birds represent those who are under spiritual influences of a bad character while the clean would be those who are under the influences of heaven?

JT Yes. Why are people high and lifted up; for instance, like Nebuchadnezzar? His influence reached the heavens, Daniel 4: 22. That was because of earthly means; it was not divine. But how does the believer rise? He rises with spiritual power "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint", Isaiah 40: 31. Those are the people that are clean.

PL They have the spirit of the ascending Man. He breathes upon them.

JT I think so. You have *title* to go to heaven, according to God's purpose; and then you have *power* to go in the Spirit.

WK I think it is very interesting about the food. It is striking with regard to the birds. Taking it in general, I think you will find it is those that are mixed in their breed; they do two things; they walk or creep and they fly; they are not pure. The fish that are pure have something to resist the elements in which they live; that is, they have scales, and they have something to push them along, they have fins; so we need both. But I notice you seem to look at it more in the light of those with whom we have intercourse.

JT Yes, I thought so.

WK That would lead to our being very careful in regard to those with whom we have intercourse; otherwise we would get contaminated.

JMcF I think if we were awake to the dignity of sonship, we would be very careful as to our associations.

WK You did not say anything with regard to the animals that walk upon the earth. They must have the cloven hoof. It must be divided in two. The expression is stronger than that in Leviticus. And then, they are to chew the cud.

JT I think chewing the cud is that in receiving the testimony, the word, you assimilate it, and it works out in a becoming walk.

WK You do not mix with the unclean. I hope we may all take that to heart, for it is a serious thing for Christians to walk harmoniously with the world.

JMcF The way to take it to heart is to wake up to the dignity of our position as sons.

JT You often see persons evidently listening, and enjoying the things of the Lord, but when they go out it is different. I am sure you have seen it there are numbers of people who seem to enjoy the things of God while among the saints, while in their associations outside they are mixed up with all sorts of things.

EM Is not the religious world a great snare?

JT Birds are liable to be unclean religiously.

PL They lodge in the mustard tree.

JT Yes; and so Babylon has become the cage of every unclean and hateful bird; Revelation 18: 2.

JM Would you say a word as to verse 21?

JT Well, that shows that the Lord Jesus is the only right food for us. He died sacrificially. I mean it is food through His sacrificial death. "Dieth of itself" Deuteronomy 14:21 is in contrast with life taken.

JM His flesh is meat; we eat of His flesh, and drink of His blood.

JT Yes. You will find that what flows from all this, the right kind of food is, that God has His portion, as you will see in the end of the chapter.

WK That is, the tithes.

JT Yes; and then you share "within thy gates" with the Levite, and the stranger, and the fatherless and the widow. Deuteronomy 14:29.

JF I suppose our meditation over this scripture would emphasise the fact that God wants sons, and we should delight to respond to His desire.

JT He intends to have men around Him; that is, to have men in that relationship, as sons.

WK There is a point in verse 23: "Thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God". Deuteronomy 14:23. If that were done, I think we should be careful as to food.

PL Thou shalt eat "in the place where he shall choose to place his name there". Deuteronomy 14:24.

JT I think when you come to place, God's rights are in view, and He is entitled to select the place and, making it practical, it refers to where His principles are held and recognised now. God never gave that up; and we shall see in a later chapter that He prescribed that all the males should appear there before Him three times in the year.

WK And they were not to come empty.

JT There is such a thing as your own gates, but they come after the divine place.

THE YEAR OF RELEASE (JT 15)

Deuteronomy 14: 22 - 29; Deuteronomy 15: 1,2; Philemon 8 - 20

These scriptures may appear to be far apart and unrelated, but I hope to show that though they are such from a historical point of view, yet they are intimately related, and deal with precisely the same thing, namely, the establishment and maintenance of right relations among the people of God. God would have amongst His people family relationships, not only in name but in immediate and permanent activity.

In mentioning the fact of the family, one is led to think of it as presented in an extensive way through Scripture, it being a primary thought with God, and what is primary with God He cherishes so that from John's point of view, the immediate and permanent result of the Lord's becoming flesh was, that a family came into evidence. It says, "He came to his own, and his own received him not". John 1:11. John sums up the ministry of Christ in the midst of Israel briefly saying, "As many as received him" — there were some who received Him — "to them gave he the right to be children of God", John 1:11, 12. That is what we are here and now.

In his first epistle, John also says, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be *called* the children of God ... Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be", 1 John 3:1, 2. Not only are we accorded the right to take the place of children, but we are called such, we have a known designation — "the children of God".

Now I wish to speak on these lines, and would seek to show how the family is endowed, so that there should be the means whereby our status and dignity are maintained in this world. The book of Genesis yields more family instruction than any other book in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy corresponds in result. Genesis affords the instruction that bears fruit in Deuteronomy. That is, the people were to go into the land as a family. This chapter (Deuteronomy 14) says, the people were the sons of Jehovah, and then the Spirit of God prescribes their food. We all know the effect of food in the bringing up of children, in the forming of their constitutions, so that the relationships being formally recognised, the food is prescribed.

But prior to all this, there was the original patriarchal influence and example (I trust you will follow my remarks). God had said to Moses, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob", Exodus 3:6. These are the patriarchs, and Jacob, the last of them, shines in his true

patriarchal instincts, intelligence and energy as he was about to pass off the scene. One refers to him with a peculiar kind of feeling. Our minds last evening were directed to a glorious sunset. Such a sunset is absorbing in its splendour, and I would liken the end of Genesis to a sunset such as was described to us. Jacob hears that Joseph, the object of his tenderest affection, is coming to him; the one upon whom the preservation of the family depended, and it says, "Israel strengthened himself". Genesis 48:2. There is no evidence that he took a stimulant. The power was in him, he strengthened himself although of advanced age. He rises to the occasion in the energy and power of *Israel*, and received Joseph, saying, "I had not thought to see thy face". Genesis 48:11. He also says, "Thy two sons ... shall be mine". Genesis 48:5. He knew he was going to die, but was in the energy and strength of Israel, and consciously a patriarch. Joseph's sons were now *his* sons. And further, he says, I am going to indicate what they are to be. Joseph, on his part, with true parental affection, brings the lads "out from his knees", Genesis 48:12, and the patriarch blesses them. It says, "Guiding his hands wittingly", Genesis 48:14, indicating who was to have the first place. (See Genesis 48.)

Now, beloved, this parental designation is not far away from us. It refers to "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom every family in the heavens and on the earth is named", Ephesians 3:14, 15. The Father names the families, and has given us the first place. Let us accept it. Of all the families named of the Father, the Church has the first place; even so in Israel, we have Joseph instead of Reuben, and Ephraim instead of Manasseh, and Levi taking precedence of all! Who devises such changes? God in His wisdom; and in that wisdom He has selected us to be first — to have a unique place, the one nearest to Christ. We are *named of the Father*. As Israel, in remarkable intelligence, representing God Himself, designated Ephraim's greatness and multitudes, in whom the people were to be blessed, so God has designated us in wisdom, and more than wisdom, being "rich in mercy", and "for his great love". Ephesians 2:4.

Think of this for a moment: "For his great love, wherewith he loved *us*, ... hath quickened us together with Christ ... and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus", Ephesians 2: 4 - 7. And so the apostle goes on, in his own energetic, loving way, to say, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" Ephesians 2:19. That is what we are today. Our heavenly position is designated on account of His great love wherewith He loved us. Who could explain that love? No one. We bow to it, owning it is sovereign. We should

rejoice in God's sovereignty, because of what it means to us. If there is anything that will give impetus to our affections in a coming day, it is the knowledge of the great love of God underlying the position of the church.

Well, Jacob is about to die, and expresses these parental instincts, in view of leaving a family behind him. He says, "Gather yourselves together, and I will tell you what will befall you at the end of days", Genesis 49: 1. He would have them to know what should happen. They were to represent him, and in doing so to have a great place here; so he says, "I will tell you". Then he says moreover, "Assemble yourselves, and hear" Genesis 49: 2. That is to say, there is not only the evidence of the mind of God in the great patriarch, but the sons are to hearken to *Israel* — it is the spiritual side — their *father*. And then, at the end, it says, "All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, ... and he blessed them: everyone according to his blessing". Genesis 49:28. In other words, the tribes are set up fully endowed. And as Isaac, in an earlier day, had blessed Jacob, saying, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field" — the field representing rich soil whence income would be derived — so Jacob, according to Isaac's blessing, was sustained by corn and wine; Genesis 27: 27, 28. The tribes, in like manner, are richly endowed, and Deuteronomy takes that into account.

Moses, the writer of the Pentateuch, was aware of all these things, and in reading those books we should always remember that it is a retrospective view, written by a man who had been forty years in the desert with God and the people; he looks back and records everything from that standpoint. It is only thus we can understand the Pentateuch aright, and so in referring to the family, he says, "Ye are sons of Jehovah" (Deuteronomy 14: 1), not now the sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We read in chapter 26, that an Israelite is to come with his basket of firstfruits to Jehovah and say, "A perishing Aramaean was my father". Deuteronomy 26:5. There is nothing about that in Genesis 48, it does not depict a perishing Aramaean. Jacob is Israel strengthening himself, blessing the tribes, and representing God in so doing, though outwardly in weakness, having gone down to Egypt with a few. Spiritually he was *Israel*, progenitor of millions (not "a few") and these are now "sons of Jehovah".

Well now, the endowment is what will sustain us in our dignity, so the first thing is, what will your property bring in the first year, the third year, and the seventh year. In the seventh year you are so wealthy, spiritually, that you are able to "make a release". I can only briefly speak upon these three points, and would seek to enlist the interest of everyone here as setting out in his spiritual career.

That career is composed of hours, days, weeks, months, years. You have to wait a year before you can make any definite reckoning as to your acquirements. You may think you have acquirements, but your brethren know differently. You may think you can speak well and attempt to preach, but you have to wait a year in order to make a definite reckoning. It is the tithe of the first *year*, not of the first quarter, or the first half year that you bring to Jehovah. The inheritance was divided amongst themselves, each man was to have an allotment according to his needs; and now what will you do with it? You must spend a year on it, and a year is a considerable time for a young person. Time passes swiftly with the old, but with the young it is not so swift and so you sow your seed in the Springtime, and you have to wait. "The earth bears fruit of itself", Mark 4:28 and you are cast on God for it. During all these months between the sowing and the reaping you are cast on Him. Many things may intervene: You have to watch the sky, to look out for weather and be continually on the alert, if you are to have a crop. You say you love God, that is like a crop growing.

Then you look after it all the more because God looks for a tithe. You have to appear before Him and you must not come empty; if you have no crop, how can you bring a tithe?

I speak especially to yearlings. You are to go where God has placed His name with your tithe. You may think you have a fairly good crop, but when you come up to Jerusalem with your tithe and lay it down alongside of others', you may be very humbled about it. There are comparisons, you see. Here is a man from Beer-sheba. Look at his tithe, see his bag of money; think how many fatlings he can buy and the number of people he can entertain! Consider this brother, he has had a good year, for he has looked after his farm. And even in his youth he takes account of the Levite. Young people are not prone to have respect for the Levites. A Levite is one who will not minister to your natural feelings. He will not recognise your family claims, nor will he appeal to you naturally. But God says, even in your first year, do not forget him. He disregards his father and mother, and has no respect for family feelings when it is a question of his service. You must take him into account, and the more you do so the more you evidence your spirituality.

We now come to the third year: three in Scripture, denotes a complete period. It is completeness as to testimony. Every third year the Israelite who brings his tithe stores it within his gates. His doing so shows that he can be trusted. God does not say to him, You must come up to Jerusalem, for He can trust him to store up in his own gates his tithe. He is not like the man in Luke's gospel who had no room where to bestow his fruits, and purposed to pull down his barns

and build larger, and there to store all his fruits and his goods. That man was not thinking of others at all. He certainly could not be trusted. God says to him, "Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee", Luke 12:20. What is going to become of his goods? Whose shall they be? These were given to him to enjoy, not to store up. He did not know whose they should be. Solomon says, the man that comes after may be wise or a fool. (See Ecclesiastes 2:18, 19.) What will the fool do with your goods? Squander them, it may be. So the word here is, "At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year [all of it], and shalt lay it up within thy gates: and the Levite (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee), and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest". Deuteronomy 14:28,29. It refers to a "local brother" — to use a familiar expression — whose farm has done well, who has progressed spiritually and has added to his wealth; he has laid it up within his gates, and all the local brethren share it with him. That man can be trusted.

John, in his gospel, contemplates believers that can be trusted. The Lord, indeed, elsewhere, speaks of being faithful in that which is another's, otherwise who shall give you that which is your own? This is that which is our own. Our spiritual wealth is our proper endowment, and the man who is allowed to store it up within his gates can be trusted. He has already been up to Jerusalem and has measured up with his brethren, and now in the third year he is, in a sense, perfected. The Lord uses the word in regard to Himself, referring to His resurrection; Luke 13: 32. The apostle says in Philippians, "As many as be perfect", that is, their senses are developed; they are not one-sided but are balanced, and such are to "walk by the same rule", Philippians 3:15, 16. In the presence of a perfect man "the meeting" does not lack anything. He is wealthy and shares it abundantly with the stranger, fatherless and widow, and especially with the Levite. The Levite is ever in the mind of God, and must ever be in the mind of the saints. He has no inheritance on earth, and so has to be the special care of the spiritual.

Now the seventh year is the year of *excess*. In that year time Israelite was to make a release. Not only do you show hospitality to your brethren and those who are near to you, but you remove everything that would tend to limitations. I hardly know of anything more pleasurable, in a way, than to be released from what involves bondage. It may be trespass; there is much trespass amongst us. A man who trespasses is obligated to the one against whom he trespasses, but the word here is that you make a release in the seventh year. You are not only "perfect", but spiritual. You are formed in

Ephesian character, and as such are marked by excess. It says, "At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother because it is called the Lord's release". Deuteronomy 15:1,2. You are now like God Himself. In the seventh year one is, so to say, entirely on the divine side. You see what God is doing: that He has remitted His claim against every man and woman on earth. "When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both", Luke 7: 42. That is God's attitude; it is His wonderful year of release.

Now the Christian is brought wholly to the divine side, to the release, not of every man, but of the neighbour and the brother (the stranger is not admitted here). So that instead of being in bondage on account of any claim we, as creditors, may have on them, we release them, and they are free to resume their occupations on their lands, and so develop them. A man bound to a creditor can make but little headway, and many of us have suffered on that account. There is no wealth when you are bound to a creditor. Moses said, there shall not be a time when there will be no poor amongst you; the spiritual man therefore opens his hand bountifully to such, for it is "the Lord's release".

Now I have read the verses in Philemon because there is a striking correspondence between them and those in Deuteronomy already considered. The apostle Paul is the creditor and Philemon is the debtor. One need have no fear in having a creditor like Paul, because he is a wealthy man; he can write a substantial cheque, sign it with his own hand, and send it by the hand of one who was once a slave. He sends this cheque to his debtor, and says, Philemon, here is an opportunity for you: this young man left you, and is indebted to you, for he was your slave. In the meantime he has been converted; he is now my son, and is a great comfort to me. I would like to keep him, but I would do nothing without your mind, I therefore send him with this cheque, signed by my own hand. If he owes you anything, include that in it — put it to my account but remember, you owe to me yourself also. What I wish to do is to establish brotherly relations between Onesimus and yourself.

Now that is the substance of the letter. It is the spirit of Deuteronomy, perfectly expressed in the beloved apostle. He says, I do not claim this for Onesimus as one having authority. I might so do, but for love's sake I rather beseech thee "being such an one as Paul the aged". Philemon 9. That is, he appeals to him on moral grounds, and says, I send this young man, a brother beloved to me, and I wish that he may be so to you. He is so to you, much more than to me, both in the flesh and in the Lord. Philemon, like many of us,

required the gracious touch of a spiritual man, so that he might remit his claim; and does it not appeal to you, dear brethren, to remit *your* claim?

It is "the Lord's release", let us then relax our hand from the loan, and in virtue of it, we shall have family circles where there is liberty, where we shall enjoy the affections of brethren beloved, instead of slaves. There is a great deal of misunderstanding and slavish fear amongst us, whereas the year of the Lord's release would enable us to remove all this by remitting all our claims, so that our brethren should be free and no longer slaves. We are truly free, as born of the free woman, and the Lord would have us to be in the liberty of wealth. Poverty tends to slavery, but spiritual wealth maintains us in practical liberty with one another. May the Lord bless the word!

FOOD - CLEAN AND UNCLEAN (WJH 18)

Deuteronomy 14: 3-21

WJH God desires His people to reach maturity; it says, "Till we all come... unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ", and "May grow up into him in all things", Ephesians 4: 13, 15. The expression "all things" is important for us to recognise, for not one thing that is not in keeping with Him is to be allowed to remain unjudged.

We may be helped to look at the food we may eat in view of growth, that being largely dependent on food. One had in mind the great range of food available in God's land. In Egypt the variety of food for the people of God is very restricted, in general it may be said to be confined to the passover lamb, the unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. In the wilderness the variety of food is also limited and, in the main, is confined to manna, but in God's land there is a range of food available to the saints, so that they may reach maturity. We cannot look much at this range now, but if we look a little at what is in our chapter, the Lord might stimulate our desires and give us a sense of what is available. There is no shortage of the many kinds of food available in God's land.

JW Is what you have said enriched by the first verse, "Ye are sons of Jehovah your God"?

WJH That bears on what has been said. God's people were His sons, which involves maturity, not only are they His children; they are His sons, and as such they are to eat food in keeping with such dignified and mature relationship. It says in Joshua that, having crossed the Jordan, they ate that year of the produce of the land. What a thought that is: what that land produces! It includes wheat and barley, the vine, and the fig and the olive, the pomegranate, honey and milk, in addition to those there is animal food available through death. The thought of death does not enter so much, if at all, into the other foods, but the clean animals that we may eat are available only through death.

GHMcK It would remind us that our life is sustained by that which required the death of another.

WJH I think the matter of not eating a carcase is of the greatest importance. A carcase refers to what dies of itself and is therefore not good food. Only what is made available through the beast being slain is good food. The carcase may be sold to the stranger, but the people of God are not to eat it.

FWU Is there any thought of dying of itself being connected with corruption?

WJH That would follow rapidly, but I think dying of itself would involve that there is no application of the Spirit of God in the matter. "If, by the Spirit, ye put to death the deeds of the body", Romans 8: 13. There are things that may die out in people's lives and in the world, of themselves; things that just work themselves out and disappear. Such are not food for a Christian. Take the temperance movement as an example. It is all right for the stranger, but we are not to find food in such movements. There is no application of the meaning of the death of Christ in it. It is right enough for the world, but it is not suitable for the Christian; we must get our food by the direct application of death.

We might dwell together on what we may eat so that all should have a sense of the great range of food available, and feed upon it.

JH Would the food spoken of in John 6 be food to bring about maturity?

WJH Yes. It would maintain life, "He also who eats me shall live also on account of me", John 6: 57. The Lord's supper too, is very good food, of the best but, while the Lord's supper is available weekly, I suppose we may have the food spoken of in this chapter just as often as we have appetite.

EAK Does the range of food you have referred to and its excellent quality, come out in the one day provision of Solomon's table, where some of the food that is before us in this scripture is enumerated?

WJH That is helpful. I think it gives a list of what was provided each day, and when the queen of Sheba came to Solomon and saw "the food of his table" in such great variety, " ... there was no more spirit in her". Men and women of this world are turning to the sink of corruption for food today, and often doing what they did in the siege of Samaria figuratively, eating asses' heads and doves' dung, and paying a fabulous price for such unclean food. The Lord would help us to appreciate the variety and excellence of what is available in God's land.

The first referred to are "the ox, the sheep, and the goat". These are in one class by themselves; each of these represent excellent food. The ox in Scripture is connected with untiring service to others, a feature seen so perfectly in Christ. He took indeed "a bondman's form", which is service in the extreme, and said to His own "I am in the midst of you as the one that serves", Luke 22: 27. What excellent food, and the more we eat it the more we will be ready to consistently, patiently, and laboriously if needs be, serve the precious interests of Christ and one another.

GHMcK "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister", Matthew 20: 28.

WJH Quite so. The Lord came to minister, a wonderful word, and I believe that thought is represented by the ox, and is available for us as food.

VD In Mark 1: 32, "And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased..." That would show an untiring service.

WJH Quite so. When the sun was set an ordinary servant might have said it is time to stop, but the ox character goes on.

Ques What form does this eating take? Is it in the contemplation of Christ?

WJH In a spiritual sense we eat with our minds, and with our affections. Scripture speaks of food for the mind, "the pure mental milk of the word", 1 Peter 2: 2, showing that the mind is fed. "Bread which strengtheneth man's heart", Psalm 104: 15, shows that the affections are fed. I believe the Lord would help us to think of this feature of the ox, and allow it to feed our affections.

WAP Is patience a feature seen in the ox?

WJH Yes. I have no doubt the ox represents patient service, year in and year out.

CG "The Lord direct your hearts... into the patience of the Christ", 2 Thessalonians 3: 5. Is that your thought?

WJH That is right. The patience of the Lord, in continuing to serve under all conditions, is food, and the Lord would help us to eat it, so that we take character from what we eat. I am quite sure we all express by our ways, spirits, deportment, and manner of life, the kind of food we eat. It is so physically, but more so spiritually.

EAK Would Jeremiah help us as to the matter of the mind and the affections in eating? He said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart", Jeremiah 15: 16.

WJH Quite so. These two faculties are in operation to rightly eat. The thought comes into our minds and we think about it. The apostle says, "Think on these things", Philippians 4: 8. I think the Lord wants us to take greater care of our minds. Our poverty largely lies in our minds not being taken up with what is of God but, having thought about these things, food is intended to strengthen the affections for Christ.

GF Why do you confine this food to Canaan?

WJH Deuteronomy contains instructions for the land. What Moses says in this book largely has in view what they would enjoy in the land. The bread for their daily life in the wilderness was the manna; the precious grace of Christ

that came here in humble conditions to do the will of God, but the building up of a constitution in view of maturity has in mind this range of spiritual food.

Another animal of this group is the sheep. The sheep represents the submissiveness and readiness to suffer seen perfectly in Christ. Paul says "We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter", Romans 8: 36.

GHMcK Isaiah 53: 7, "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter".

WJH Quite so, "as a sheep dumb before her shearers". What excellent food to build up what is of God are the features of Christ represented in the sheep.

GHMcK Do you think the many of our younger brethren especially called on to suffer find that food supports them in it?

WJH I think so. Think of being shorn! "As a sheep dumb before her shearers". Naturally we resent this; our spirits get on fire if we are shorn of anything, but the sheep stands before her shearers dumb.

JH That came out in a marked way when the Lord Jesus was accused.

WJH Perfectly; and later in Paul in a wonderful way, as a man who fed on this food.

CG This food being the food for the land, where and how practically do we appropriate it? Is it in a sphere outside the wilderness setting that we appropriate Christ, and thus are formed in our minds and hearts?

WJH I think the people of God may be looked at as in three positions. In a certain sense they are in the world, and there they need constantly unleavened bread, constant refusal of evil in the light of the death of Christ. Then they are also passing through the wilderness on the way to God's purpose, and in that wilderness need the manna to keep them white and even and strong to do God's will. But in another sense they may touch the great thoughts of God which will be entered into in their fulness in eternity, and in that connection they need the food that is found in the land.

JW Would you agree with what was said long ago that as to our bodies we are in Egypt, as to our experience in the wilderness, but in our spirits we may be in the land?

WJH I think that is right. We may know in our spirits the blessedness of God's land and enjoy now the food that is there.

JW Do you think it would be illustrated in Caleb and Joshua having gone that wonderful excursion into the land and bringing back the fruits of it? While their daily experiences would be of a wilderness character yet in the spirit of their mind they would be enjoying the rich fruits of that land?

WJH Quite so. The Spirit of God, having been given as "earnest of our inheritance", gives us power to enjoy what is the purpose of God for His own.

FWU Do you suggest, in this threefold character, that the first two are on the line of what is preservative, the unleavened bread and manna, while the third is positive development?

WJH The first is specially preservative, the manna builds up a constitution that will do God's will, "Man did eat angels' food", Psalm 78: 25. But the various foods available in Canaan bring before us excellent features of Christ; the ox is one, the sheep is another, and the goat another. The goat, no doubt, speaks especially of the marvellous dignity of the walk of Christ; His holy and separate walk. What food they provide!

JNG Do you connect each of these features specially with the way the Lord faced death?

WJH The Lord's death brings them into perfect expression; His untiring service, His absolute submissiveness, and the stateliness of His going.

VTS Is it interesting that these three mentioned are specially used for the sacrifices?

WJH Showing what delight God has in them. These are brought to God, the sheep and the goat and the bullock, a different thought in the last from the ox, but the same creature.

GHMcK Would you enlarge on the thought of dignity connected with the goat?

WJH "There are three things which have a stately step", Proverbs 30: 29, and one is "the he-goat"; the tread of kingly dignity that marked Jesus here, separate from all else, but walking in dignity.

EAK Would Joseph bring out the features of the goat, in the dignity that marked him in nearly every situation, as typical of Christ; also in the blessing of Jacob his father "on the crown of the head of him that was separated from his brethren"?

WJH I think that is right. No doubt the goat would bring in the thought of separateness, but also a dignified tread.

GF When you spoke of these animals being available only by death, did you mean that, not only must Christ die, but all must pass through death to enjoy them?

WJH I was thinking that the element of sacrifice is required for us to appropriate them, sacrifice as to ourselves. We do not take on these features

easily, it requires the element of sacrifice in us. Food is not to be just a carcase. That is the way I was viewing sacrifice at the moment. We know very well it is not natural to us to say "ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake", 2 Corinthians 4: 5. It is not natural for us to be submissive and to tread a dignified walk in separation from all that is unsuitable to God.

JW Of the animals ending with "the wild sheep" it says, "These are the beasts which ye shall eat", and then, "every beast that hath cloven hoofs", and so on, "ye shall eat", but later there is the thought of discrimination being necessary.

WJH The Spirit of God does not necessarily give the name of every creature, but just general instruction that such must have divided hoofs; there must be a discriminating walk. Then clean animals are those that chew the cud; there must be the feature of rumination marking them.

Before we proceed, there is another group, "the hart, and the gazelle, and the stag, and the wild goat, ...and the wild sheep", which are not domesticated or under control, they are creatures that are free in the mountains, in the valleys, and in the fields; they go where they will, whereas the ox is yoked in service to men, the sheep and the goats are in flocks under man's control. These animals are clean and they can be eaten, even the wild sheep and the wild goat. The Lord Jesus alone on the mountain top is as pure and holy as when serving with His own.

Ques Why do you think there are three and then seven? I was wondering if the three first suggest definitely the Lord Himself.

WJH The Lord has also features of the seven, I think the reference to the sheep as *wild* is in the sense, of not being controlled by men. It is not the wildness of the ass; we cannot eat a wild ass, but you can eat a wild sheep or a wild goat. They live away from human control but they are still sheep and still goats.

EAK Are there not features of beauty and attractiveness in these animals: the stateliness of the stag being outstanding, and the gentleness and grace of the gazelle.

WJH Holy liberty may be suggested in all of them. "I charge you... the gazelles, or by the hinds of the field", Song of Songs 2: 7. Liberty of movement in elevated laces is something to feed on.

GF Would you suggest anything in Christ that answers to these animals?

WJH I think this thought of agility as being able to move in difficult places with such sure-footedness would be a feature of Christ. The hart is spoken of as panting after the water-brooks, what a feature that is!

GHMcK He went as He was wont to the mount of Olives, away from the conventions of men.

WJH Quite so. These creatures are found outside the haunts of men but nevertheless are pure and available as food. We can think of the Lord in that way as often alone, but inherently pure, and we need to feed on that, so that when we are alone we are still marked by purity. The Lord was with His own in the features of the ox and the sheep and the goat, then He retired to the mountains and what agility marked Him moving from height to height; what good food is thus afforded us!

Rem He could say, "Come with me, from Lebanon", Song of Songs 4: 8.

WJH "I will get me to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense", Song of Songs 4: 6, what liberty of movement in the upper regions. The Song of Songs no doubt, would give us many a clue as to the gazelle, the hind, and the roe.

ABJ The disciples accompanied the Lord and were used to His coming in and going out, but there were occasions when none could follow Him. He went out alone and spent the night with God in prayer.

WJH The contemplation of His movements affords food for our minds and our affections and would help us to take character from Him. We are often tested after the supper as to what agility we have to get to the mountains, and it really depends on how far we have been feeding on Christ in this setting.

EAK The Lord spent whole nights in prayer and rose a great while before day. How much we have had of late in connection with getting up a little earlier to make room for these exercises, feeding on this food would help us.

WJH I am sure it would. It was His custom to retire to the mount of Olives. I wish it were more a custom with us to retire to the spiritual realm. We need food for that.

CG Does John describe a man thus formed, as he says, "I became in the Spirit on the Lord's day", Revelation 1: 10, a man formed by this particular kind of food?

WJH Very good. Then it says, "Come up here", Revelation 4: 4, he could have access to heaven. He is called up through the door that is opened in heaven.

FWU Do you suggest, from the Song of Songs, that the Lord would move first as giving us an example, "Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills", Song of Songs 2: 8, and that would produce similar movement with us?

WJH At the Lord's supper we need to wait in the first instance until the Lord's voice is heard, and then to be agile when He is moving upward. Sometimes we are rapid at the beginning and very slow when we should be agile. "I charge you... that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please", Song of Songs 3: 5. Everything is passive until He is pleased to wake love. At the beginning of the meeting we come together and sit down quietly and let the Lord wake love, and nobody should stir until He does. But later He would move to the mountains and He wants His own with Him, and therefore we need the agility of the roe, the gazelle, the hind, and those other creatures that live in the mountains.

CG These animals suggest great spiritual agility and spiritual sensitivity in relation to the service of God.

WJH That is it. I think the Lord is helping us as to the bearing of these things. We are to take account of these holy features and delight in them in Christ and allow them to operate in our souls.

GHMcK Sensitivity is a very apt word: these animals are extremely sensitive.

WJH In a remarkable way, and they enter much into the Lord's description of His bride in the Song of Songs.

Perhaps we could refer briefly to the other species, namely what is in the waters, and the birds. There is a great range of food in the waters. There were waters in Canaan and there were fishermen there, and there will be in the world to come. There will be fishing along the banks of the river. So that there are great supplies of food in the waters, but we are to know what kind to eat. The kind that have fins and scales are to be eaten, all others to be rejected. There is great instruction in that: only those who have power to go against the general current and to shut out the element they are in, are clean. We see that perfectly in the Lord. He went exactly in the opposite direction to what was general around, and not one trace of the elements penetrated His moral being. We are to feed on that.

GD Does it help that the fish lives in an element that would be death to everything else?

WJH It is an element proper to the fish, but the scales shut out what they are in, so that they are not destroyed by it, and the fins provide them with propulsion against the current. We need these features and are formed according to them by feeding on this food. It is significant that the Lord fed people with fish over and over again. He ate fish after His resurrection, "they gave him part of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb", Luke 24: 42, showing that fish is good food, but fish with these features.

Then in connection with the birds, all clean birds can be eaten, however small, as sparrows, leaving us to find out in detail what are clean. There are certain that we must not eat, namely the birds that feed on carrion, birds of prey, and those that operate at night, the owl and the bat and their kind. We are not to eat the male or female ostrich. It is remarkable the Spirit of God should refer to both thus.

GHMcK Would Job help us there?

WJH Yes. I think Scripture explains Scripture. We do not need to go outside of Scripture to understand Scripture. The ostrich has no intelligence and no maternal instincts, but the male specially makes a great show. Job speaking of its feathers, Job 39: 13. What makes a great show but lacks intelligence and also lacks maternal features is unclean. What operates in the darkness, especially in relation to spiritual influences, is unclean; anything that feeds on what is dead is unclean. Christian science and spiritualism are in this category. Christian science also makes a show like the ostrich, but the system is devoid of spiritual intelligence and without maternal feelings.

LGL Would what is suggested in the ostrich and the owl be indicated in regard to the end of Babylon as, suggested in Isaiah? It speaks about its glory and so on, and what will find a habitation there. These birds are found there.

WJH Indeed the spiritual Babylon is "a hold of every unclean and hated bird", Revelation 18: 2. There are many clean birds that we may eat, the dove and the pigeon, and even the sparrow is clean. I do not know any bird that seems so clean as a seagull as to its outward appearance, but it is not clean by reason of what it eats, showing the importance of care and discrimination as to our food.

JNG You alluded to spiritualism; would you connect it with feeding on carrion?

WJH All these wicked systems ignore the ruin of man, and feed on what man is, instead of seeing that what man is morally has been judged. Practically everything that is false disowns, in some way or other, the fall and ruin of man, hence they feed on what is morally dead.

EAK Are not the birds that Abram scared away of that character, and do they not speak to us of the adverse spiritual influences that will rob us of impressions of Christ unless we are energetic in that way?

WJH A very good passage to show how urgent the matter is. "Abram scared them away", Genesis 15: 12. He would not tolerate their influences in relation to that which spoke of Christ.

Deuteronomy 15

- (Deuteronomy 14)
  THE YEAR OF RELEASE (JT 15)
- DEUTERONOMY 15 (CAC 5)

DEUTERONOMY 15 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 15

The increasing wealth of the sons of God, as dwelling in the land and gathering in its fruits, is beautifully brought out in these chapters. There is a continually increasing yield for God and for His people. From the first year there is a tithe for service and for assembly enjoyment. From the third year there is a tithe for the benefit of the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. There is ability to give expression to what God is in grace to those who have need. Then "At the end of seven years thou shalt make a release". All this indicates in a blessed way increasing formation in the divine nature. The saints are viewed as continuing to be nourished in the good of the land, and as increasing in spiritual wealth. God's sons are becoming more like Him — more imbued with the spirit of grace. They are getting freed from the spirit of demand. If I am requiring and demanding from my brethren, even if what I require is due to me, I have not lived long in the land. I have not been there "seven years". I have not learned much of God's ways of acting.

I may know that I have a righteous claim on my brother for something that is due to me which has not been rendered. In such a case I am in the position of a creditor. We may be in that position sometimes, though I fear we are more often in the position of debtors to our brethren. There are parts of Scripture which apply very distinctly to debtors, and to what is due on their part, and we must have full regard to those scriptures, but *this* is not a chapter for debtors but for wealthy persons, sons of God, heirs of all God's wealth. It is a chapter for creditors. "*Every creditor* shall relax his hand from the loan which he hath lent unto his neighbour; he shall not demand it of his neighbour, or of his brother; for a release to Jehovah hath been proclaimed" (verse 2). This indicates such maturity in the divine nature that God's sons can act even as He has acted Himself. What an exalted privilege is that! To sing truly, "Oh what a debt we owe" would enable us to take up the creditor's privilege in the year of "release!"

There are times when our brethren come under obligation to us. A creditor is one who has a righteous claim on his neighbour or his brother for something. It is well to consider whether we have righteous claims that remain unsatisfied. Let us turn over our ledgers and see if we have any entries standing against brothers or sisters! Yes! Brother So and so did not treat me with the respect that was due to me; he did not shew me Christian consideration or courtesy! And another brother took full advantage of my kindness, but expressed no gratitude; he made no return for all the good I

have done to him! And a sister spoke unkindly of me; she even said what was not true! And another promised to do a certain thing, but he never did it! All such things as these put us in the place of creditors. Such debts as that go on piling up year after year, and the creditors get soured by thinking so long about the debts that have never been paid! God does not like to see His sons maintaining demands on one another, so He steps in to confer a great privilege on all creditors. The creditor here is the one who gains, for he shines in the glory of correspondence with God. How could you enjoy your sabbatical year if you were thinking all the time of undischarged debts due to you from your brethren! Many local difficulties are the result of old standing accounts. There is a rankling sourness in the heart on account of things said and done years ago, and it is destructive of family affections and spiritual prosperity, These things shew that we have not been "seven years" in the land; we have not yet acquired sufficient wealth to "make a release". If we keep up personal grievances against our brethren we are missing the creditor's privilege in the year of release.

How often people say, "But I want righteousness". They forget that righteousness now consists in acting towards others in the same way that God has acted towards us. See Matthew 18: 21 - 35. Certain things are due on the debtor's part, and God's work in him would lead to the acknowledgement of this, but, as we have said before, this particular scripture is not occupied with the debtor, or the relief he gets; it is the setting forth of the creditor's privilege, and of the gain which accrues to him as he takes it up. It is not even spoken of here as a release to the debtor; it is "a release to Jehovah". The creditor has an opportunity of showing how he appreciates Jehovah's gracious favour, and of reflecting it in his conduct towards his poor brother. It is poverty in our brother that has brought him into the place of a debtor. If he had been spiritually wealthy he would never have incurred the debt; he would have undoubtedly discharged all his righteous obligations. But *his* poverty may furnish *me* with an opportunity to act as a wealthy son of God, and to make a release.

Making "a release to Jehovah" is not writing it off as a bad debt. It is really transferring the undischarged debts to God's account, who will certainly see that the creditor loses nothing by reflecting His character and ways. There is no question of the justice of the creditor's claim, but he is wealthy enough through divine favour to relax his hand and not demand it. He knows that God will give him such wealth that he will be far better off by freeing his brother from all demand than he would have been by insisting on having all that was due. "For Jehovah will greatly bless thee in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, if thou only diligently hearken unto

the voice of Jehovah thy God, to take heed to do all this commandment which I command thee this day" (verses 4, 5). On this line you will never yourself be a debtor; you will never be a poor man in Israel. I have often seen people on the line of demand, but I have noticed that they are invariably poor in spiritual wealth. When the spirit of demand has been in my own heart I have found it spiritually impoverishing.

"Of the foreigner thou mayest demand it", shews that the subject here is relations between the people of God; the "release" applies to those within, not without. How many wounds are left smarting year after year because creditors are not rich enough to relax their righteous demands on their neighbour or their brother! God says, I want all my sons to taste the luxury of making a release. One might reverently say that God knows the pleasure of making a release; He has done it Himself; and He wants all His sons to have the same joy — to be wealthy enough to do it ungrudgingly! It is "a release to Jehovah"; that is, it is entirely done to Him for His pleasure.

The year of release would apparently coincide with the sabbatical year. It seems to me it was a necessary accompaniment of that year. It was a year without toil; no tilling of the ground, no agricultural work at all — a year of restful enjoyment. God would have His sons free at such a time from everything that would interfere with complete rest. How could we be in restful enjoyment with a lot of entries in our books against our brethren? How many lose spiritual enjoyment by dwelling on some wrong — real or supposed — that has been done them! I believe the year of release is a benefit to the creditor even more than to the debtor. It is presented in that light in this chapter. The creditor is wealthy enough to make the release without putting any strain on his resources, and he gains immeasurably by doing it. The spirit of demand amongst saints is the fruit of our not knowing how great is the wealth that belongs to the sons and heirs of God. It is a spirit that might suit poor persons, but it does not give the impression of wealthy sons.

The spirit of "release" comes out in such scriptures as, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any should have a complaint against any; even as the Christ has forgiven you, so also do ye" (Colossians 3: 13). "And be to one another kind, compassionate, forgiving one another, so as God also in Christ has forgiven you" (Ephesians 4: 32). The Lord taught His disciples to pray, "And remit us our sins, for we also remit to everyone indebted to us" (Luke 11: 4). It assumes that those who thus pray have observed the year of release; the Lord would have us to enjoy the privilege of doing so. On the other hand, the consequences of not making a release are very serious. "For if ye forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father also

will forgive you yours, but if ye do not forgive men their offences, neither will your Father forgive your offences" (Matthew 6: 14, 15). The children of Israel went into captivity because they had apparently ceased to observe the sabbatical year about the time of David. They had to go into captivity for seventy years to make up for seventy sabbatical years that had not been kept (2 Chronicles 36: 21). Governmentally we may lose all spiritual freedom and enjoyment if we do not "make a release". If I find my heart indisposed to do it I have to recognise that I am small in the divine nature; it is *I* who am not acting as a son of God; *I* am the debtor rather than my poor brother; I must judge myself rather than him. The effect of making a release is that in my spirit I am in the liberty of grace and love towards my debtor. *He* may not yet be in freedom with me, for that will be dependent upon something on his side. But, as we have already said, this chapter is for creditors, and how they are to act if they are wealthy sons of God.

Then there is to be gracious consideration for "a poor man", "thy poor brother" (see verses 7 - 11). The word "bountifully" occurs three times in these five verses. This is a perpetual obligation, "For the needy shall never cease from within the land". God will see to it that there will always be opportunity for His bountifulness to be expressed through His sons. Hardened hearts, or shut hands, or things of Belial in the heart, are not suited to sons of God. There is not to be a thought of withholding, or of consideration whether we shall ever get back what we give. It is the spirit of grace in sons toward those marked by poverty, need, lack. How many such there are! There is always to be a bountiful hand open for them; they are to be kept going by the wealth of others. We are not to suppose that any wealth we have is for ourselves alone, or that it is only to be expended in mutual enjoyment amongst those who are as well off as we are! It is to be ministered "bountifully" to the poor and needy; that they are such constitutes their claim, and to care for them is one of love's luxuries. I am not referring altogether to temporal needs, though surely such a scripture has a definite bearing on them. But I am thinking for the moment of those who are spiritually poor. How many there are who never seem to know spiritual prosperity; they never acquire resources of their own; they never contribute anything; they seem to always need to be supported and kept up by the spiritual wealth of others! Well, they furnish a fine opportunity for bountifulness on the part of those who are spiritually richer than they are. I knew a brother who felt keenly how poor spiritually the saints were amongst whom he lived and served. They never seemed to get on, or to be capable of taking in spiritual thoughts. He got discouraged, and asked the Lord to move him to some place where there would be more interest and appreciation. He told me that the Lord seemed to say to him, Did you want to

care for my saints? and he answered, Yes, Lord, I did. Well, there they are; go on caring for and feeding them! And he went on doing so until the Lord called him home.

There is a tendency with us to look for some kind of return, and to shut up our hand if we see no prospect of getting it. But as wealthy sons it is our privilege to support, and to supply the lack of, the spiritually poor without considering whether there will be any return or not. The Lord's own words were, "Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Highest" (Luke 6: 35). If I am only prepared to dispense my spiritual wealth on condition that I should be appreciated, or honoured, or respected, it is "a thing of Belial" in my heart. Paul was a wealthy son, and he said, "Now I shall most gladly spend and be utterly spent for your souls, if even in abundantly loving you I should be less loved" (2 Corinthians 12: 15). He had drunk deeply into the spirit of the scripture we are now considering. We like to be with those who understand us, and who can reciprocate our thoughts and feelings, but this must not be allowed to diminish our bountifulness to those who have need. They are to be valued and ministered to because of what they are to God.

The "Hebrew man" or "Hebrew woman" of the next section (verses 12 - 18) are brought in to complete the picture of the bountifulness which is to mark sons of God. It is no repetition of the ordinance in Exodus 21, where the "Hebrew bondman" is a well-known and precious type of Christ. *There* the central figure is the bondman, but *here* it is the bountiful conduct of the master when he sends his servant out free. He is to be sent away furnished — or as the margin reads, adorned — with every good. "Of what Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee with shalt thou give unto him". It is not the blessed service of Christ here, but the wealth that sends away full one who has been sold for service. The servant here is "thy brother"; there is no such word in Exodus 21. Each scripture is perfect in its own setting. The point here is how we act towards a brother or sister who may have come under obligation to us. It supposes a certain right acquired; the man or woman "have been sold unto thee". Such a circumstance in Israel would indicate a very reduced state; it would imply poverty and indebtedness and a condition of servitude brought about under the governmental ways of God. But, as Scripture often reminds us, thoughts of grace underlie even the government of God, and we see a striking illustration of it here. There may be circumstances, perhaps undoubtedly the fault of our brother, which give us a hold upon him. But how are we going to use it? Will we get all that we can out of him, or will we remember that we are privileged to let him go free, and to adorn him with good? There is a statute of limitations as to what we may exact from our

brother, even when we have a righteous claim upon him in the government of God. He is not to be kept more than "six yeses", and at the end of the term he is not to be let go empty; he is to be provided with capital to begin afresh free from the poverty which brought him into servitude. He has been under obligation; in the seventh year he is released from it; but the point in this scripture is the style in which he is released; it is to be worthy of "sons of Jehovah". We are to remember how God released us; we came out from Egyptian bondage enriched with "utensils of silver, and utensils of gold, and clothing" (Exodus 12: 35). There is to be not only a release, but the man or the woman are to be adorned with the best, that we have. It is the spirit which Paul desired to be found in Philemon; his runaway slave was to be received as "a beloved brother", and Paul counts upon Philemon doing "even more" than he said.

Whatever obligation a brother may have come under he is to be treated in a brotherly way, and with a bounty that is worthy of God. If he comes into permanent obligation it must be entirely in the freedom of love. There is nothing said here about his wife or children; it is the personal relation of one who has found a brother that he is well with, and he loves him and his house so much that he does not wish to be free from him, That is the impression that a wealthy son of God would make on one who came under his hand. When the bondman is entirely freed from any claim he devotes himself "for love's sake" to serve his brother forever. Both the master and the bondman are thus seen to be true "sons of Jehovah", acting in a spirit of love, and bound together in that spirit. What a contrast to the selfish and exacting spirit that marks man after the flesh!

A new section begins with verse 19, and it, brings before us important instruction as to certain things which have to be done "in the place which Jehovah will choose to cause his name to dwell there". We have learned from chapter 12 that this "place" has typical reference to conditions which are common to all the people of God in their approach to Him. It speaks of divine assembly conditions which are the same for all saints — a gathering centre by which the unity of God's people in approach to Him is secured, and to which His people universally are to come.

Now we learn from this section (Chapter 15: 19 - 16: 17) the character of certain prescribed privileges which were to be taken up in this place. It is not here voluntary offerings or "choice vows" prompted by the devoted affections of Jehovah's people richly blessed by Him. The things enjoined here were obligatory on every Israelite as the ordered service "year by year"; so they are evidently typical of great spiritual features which are to characterise the saints

as coming together before God in assembly conditions. His pleasure in His saints will be secured as these things are taken up, and the thought of this makes them intensely interesting and attractive to those who love Him.

"Every firstling" — it is the word usually translated "firstborn" — was to be hallowed, and eaten before Jehovah in the place which He would choose. Judgment came on the firstborn of Egypt, but a hallowed firstborn was a memorial of how Jehovah had secured His "firstborn" for Himself. It represented the distinctive place and relationship which God had predetermined to bestow upon His loved people. The thought of "firstborn" originated in the purpose of God. Before He had said anything of the passover He made known to Pharaoh the peculiar place that Israel had in the purpose of His love. "Thus saith Jehovah: Israel is my son, my firstborn" (Exodus 4: 22). In sovereign love He gave them that place for His own pleasure. Paul in Romans 9 mentions sonship as the first distinction of Israel. "Whose is the adoption (sonship)"; that was their primary distinction; Paul puts it before the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises. It is true of us also that sonship is our chief glory, conferred upon us by God's sovereign love for His own delight.

On the natural line the firstborn in Scripture very often loses the pre-eminent place, as in the case of Cain, Ishmael, Esau, Reuben, Manasseh. The firstborn as the chief of *man's* strength was set aside, but God's firstborn never loses the place accorded to him, for it is by the gift and calling of God, which are "not subject to repentance" (Romans 11: 29).

It is interesting to see that God declared the sonship of Israel, and their firstborn character, to the enemy and oppressor; it was purely a question of what they were in the thought of God's own heart. I do not know that it was ever said to the people that they were sons until the end of the wilderness; but God said it to Pharaoh. God let out to him the great thought of His love about His people. The first announcement of Christ was made to the serpent. It was to Balak that Jehovah declared His estimate of His people in all its blessedness. Some of the most precious utterances of the Lord about His saints were spoken to unbelievers and adversaries. When God is speaking to His people He is sometimes hindered by their state from communicating all that is in His heart. The Corinthians were in such a state that they were not prepared to hear the great thoughts of God. But when God is speaking to the adversary He can tell out all that is in His heart concerning His people.

Sonship is the place of relationship and dignity which has been brought to light in Christ; there could not be anything greater than that. If we come into it, we come in through Christ and in Him, and in the value of redemption, but

redemption has sonship in view (see Galatians 4: 5). The truth that Israel was God's son, His firstborn, underlies the Passover. We see in Ephesians that God marked us out for sonship before the foundation of the world, and it was *to Himself*; that is, it was for the pleasure of His love. That underlies the coming in of Christ for the accomplishment of redemption. Behind it was the precious thought of divine love that God would have sons. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ; according as he has chosen us in him before the world's foundation, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love; having marked us out beforehand for adoption (sonship) through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has taken us into favour in the Beloved". It is in view of this that redemption has come in, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of offences, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1: 3 - 7). When God takes sons for His own pleasure, He righteously clears them of everything that attached to them in their sinful state; He clears them by redemption. The passover is God's way of clearing His people so that He may have a son to take out of Egypt. The prophetic word was, "When Israel was a child then I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son" (Hosea 11: 1). As we know, the Spirit of God in the New Testament quotes that as having direct reference to Christ. The Spirit of God identifies sonship as in Israel with sonship as in Christ. This is divine instruction for us; it was not understood by them, nor could be. The Passover was God's righteous way of taking His son out of Egypt; He settled in the value of redemption every righteous liability attaching to His people. He covered His people in the power of redemption so that He might take them out of Egypt according to His own thought in the grace and dignity of sonship. Redemption is the righteous title of God to carry out the pleasure of His love in regard of those who have been sinful. It is interesting to see that the one other passage in Scripture except Exodus 12 where we get the word "passing over" is in Isaiah 31: 6. "As birds with outstretched wings so will Jehovah of hosts cover Jerusalem; covering, he will also deliver, *passing over*, he will rescue it". This gives us the true thought of the Passover; it is God passing the wing of His protecting love in the power of redemption over His people as a covering so that the destroyer is not suffered to enter; His people's houses are delivered.

There are two firstborns referred to in Exodus 4. "The firstborn in Egypt, the first-fruits of their vigour in the tents of Ham" (Psalm 78: 51), represent everything that is excellent in dignity and strength with men, and the judgment of God is on it, and we have to learn this. But there is a firstborn for

God, and He secures His firstborn through death. God has brought in Christ and His death as an entirely new starting point — a "beginning of months". He has secured something which has excellence and dignity, firstborn character, for the pleasure of His own love. It is good to get the divine thought of firstborn.

"By faith he (Moses) celebrated the passover and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them". Moses, I think we might say, represented Christ who has celebrated the true passover; He has become the passover for all His people, so that, not only is the destroyer unable to touch them, but they are secured as objects of pleasure in dignity and strength, for the delight of the heart of God. We learn typically in Exodus 12 that God brings in Christ and His death as a new starting point from which He moves to give effect to all that is in His own heart. If God moves from that point, who can tell the immensity or the blessedness of the result which He will secure? Who can measure it? The result is that God will have many sons, according to His eternal purpose, and not only sons but firstborn sons. In a natural family it would be impossible for all the sons to be firstborn, but it is possible with God. All His sons are firstborn, for they all take character from Christ; they are all distinguished. The kind of sonship which they have is patterned after His, and they are all enregistered in heaven; they are sons after a heavenly order (Hebrews 12: 23).

The "firstborn" is the distinguished son; he has pre-eminence in the family; and the thought of being "firstborn" attaches in a special way to Christ; He is spoken of repeatedly as the Firstborn. God says of Him, "I will make him firstborn" (Psalm 89: 27); and in the New Testament we are told that God is going to bring Him as the Firstborn into the habitable world, and when He does all the angels are to worship Him (Hebrews 1: 6). Then He is the Firstborn from among the dead, the Firstborn of all creation, and the Firstborn of many brethren. Those titles and honours shew the distinguished place that Christ holds pre-eminently. How gladly do our hearts accord Him that place! But then, as we have seen, God spoke of Israel also as His firstborn, shewing that in His mind something of the distinction of Christ was to be theirs also. Israel was to be not only a son, but a distinguished son as firstborn, and in that way peculiarly for God's delight. And saints of the assembly, too, have firstborn character; they have it in a higher way than Israel, for they are "enregistered in heaven".

Sonship properly belongs to the land; in the wilderness God acted towards Israel as a father, but on their side, they were not addressed as sons until Deuteronomy 14, when Moses said, "Ye are sons of Jehovah your God". The

only man, perhaps, in the wilderness who had an appreciation of sonship was Caleb, and he had been in the land. He said, "If Jehovah delight in us". That is a beautiful expression of the spirit of sonship; Caleb had a sense of the delight of God in His sons. We need a greater consciousness of the place which has been accorded to us in the sovereignty of divine love, through redemption. We have a distinguished place of dignity with God as part of a company of firstborn ones. The light which God has vouchsafed to us is the light of sonship. God's thought is to place His sons as heirs in the inheritance so that they may enjoy all the wealth of it in the blessed consciousness of their place of dignity with God as sons for His delight. We have to take up these scriptures in their typical import. It was impossible that Israel could enter into them; these things were written primarily for us, His called ones of the present time.

I trust we can now see something of the force of "Hallow unto me every firstborn ... it is mine". And again, "Thou shalt offer (literally, transfer) unto Jehovah ... every firstling" (Exodus 13: 2, 12). And again, "For every firstborn is mine. On the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both of man and beast; mine shall they be; I am Jehovah" (Numbers 3: 13). God did not think of the firstborn in Israel according to flesh; the slain lamb had met all that for Him, and as having eaten the lamb they were personally identified with it, and it with them.

It has pleased God to mark us out for sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself. He has favoured us in this wonderful way. Christ is the Beloved; it is what He is to His God and Father, and what He is to His God and Father we are as in Him. God delights to have it so; it is what He has proposed for the satisfaction of His love. Redemption through blood came in to take us righteously out of all we were involved in, but God took us out by redemption — even as He did Israel — with sonship in His heart. He would have sons, and it was with that in view that His beloved Son was here as Man for His delight. I have often thought of how the Lord spoke of Himself as "him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world" (John 10: 36). He was set apart in a unique way for the Father's pleasure, and something of a similar thought is suggested in "Every firstling ... thou shalt hallow to Jehovah thy God". Every firstling was typical of what is set apart for God — for His pleasure. Hence, "Thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy kine nor shear the firstling of thy sheep". This is not like the corn and new wine and oil which we spoke of before as given to men; the firstlings are hallowed to God; they are typical of what is for Him.

The firstborn among kine and sheep would be typical of that character of sonship which has been seen in Christ, and which is now conferred in sovereign love upon the many sons His brethren, and which is for the delight of God. We may be well assured that the Spirit of God's Son sent out into our hearts would be continually giving us increase in the form of "firstlings". God would give us, as prospering in the land, fresh apprehensions of sonship in that excellent character which is so pleasurable to Him.

But those apprehensions are intended to bring us together "in the place which Jehovah will choose, thou and thy household". Every Israelite with a firstling had to bring it to a meeting place common to all Israel, and to eat it there. What a blessed communion is here suggested! All eating before Jehovah that which speaks of the delight which He has found in His Firstborn, and in all those on whom he has conferred sonship, and who have the character of firstborn ones before Him! All appropriating inwardly, and in common joy, the delight which it is to the heart of God to have an assembly of firstborn sons to share "The portion of the Firstborn Son, The full delight of heaven",

What is brought out in the type before us is not offering to God, but eating together before Him. It is the communion of His saints together in feeding on the precious thoughts of His love as brought out in connection with what has the character of firstborn. We are thinking of what *He* has got for His own possession and for His love's satisfaction. And we cannot have the *communion* of this in *our* gates. It must be, and can only be, in the place which He chooses. The communion of sonship is found in the assembly. But that communion is dependent upon our bringing "firstlings". There must be the acquisition of God's thought, the apprehension of it in Christ, and as being true for all God's called ones. But we cannot hold it, or have the communion of it, without the truth of the assembly being recognised in a practical way. We must bring our "firstling" to the place where all Israel are bringing theirs! We are divinely taught that what is for the delight of God embraces all His sons. We must be where other sons are to enjoy the communion of sonship.

Of course we are sons individually, but the thought of sonship in Scripture is that it is collective; we belong to an assembly which is composed of sons all having firstborn character. Scripture gives the thought of "many sons"; in Romans we read "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God". The sons of God are going to be revealed — the whole company of them. They will be seen as perfected into one according to John 17 — in the unity proper to a company of sons. So in Galatians and Ephesians the thought is collective: "Ye are all God's sons ... in Christ Jesus ... ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3: 26, 28). In Ephesians 1: 5 the "us" is the whole company

of many sons. The Son of God is "Firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8: 29).

So that if I get a "firstling" — if I get by the Spirit a thought of God's delight in Christ as His Firstborn, and of His delight in that assembly of sons which has firstborn character as being of Christ through redemption — I am under obligation to find the place where I can meet other sons in the way of God's ordering so that we may eat together before God in the communion of sons. I would ask any Christian, Have you found such a place as that? It is one thing to say that we believe in the communion of saints, and another to enjoy it. The pleasure of God is found in His people being together before Him in the communion of sonship. I am sure we need to entertain a more exalted idea of the communion of saints. Every apprehension that we get by the Spirit of our association with Christ as sons is like a firstling. It is a spiritual apprehension of what is in the mind of God concerning all His saints, and it is given to us in order to minister to the unity and communion of the saints as coming together in the place where He causes His Name to dwell.

This will make it clear why nothing that was defective could be thus sacrificed and eaten before God. It would not be suitable as a type of what was in the mind of God concerning His people. Our place as sons before God in Christ Jesus does not admit of any thought of defect. So that a firstling with a defect does not set forth what is suitable to the assembly. The thought of defect could not apply to Christ personally, but it might apply to my apprehension of Him in relation to the place which the saints have with God. The firstling with a defect, which might be eaten "in thy gates", but which was not to be brought to the place which Jehovah would choose, would raise an exercise in our souls as to whether our apprehensions of Christ in relation to our place with God are such as to be suitable to God's assembly viewed as in the land. There may be thoughts of Christ which have value so far as they go, but in which there is an element of "defect". They do not identify Him with the saints, or the saints with Him, according to the perfection of the divine thought. There may be food in them which can be partaken of in *our* gates, but they are unsuited to the assembly in the aspect of it which we are now considering. In the assembly thus viewed, there should be nothing of the nature of defect in what is offered and eaten. It was said in the preface to a well-known hymn book, "The great principle in selecting and correcting has been that there should be nothing in the hymns for the assembly but what was the expression of, or at least consistent with, the Christian's conscious place in Christ before the Father". Many hymns marked by affection and piety have "defects". They do not really identify the saints with Christ's perfectness before the Father. They are not suited to God's assembly as typified by the

place in the land where He has set His Name, though they may have a place privately, and some spiritual value. But the thought of Christ as Firstborn, and of the saints as sons with Him who is above, hallowed for the pleasure of God, is a very precious one to God, and He would exercise us to be possessed of it without any defect. It is the purpose of His love, and He would have it to form the substance of our communion together before Him. We ought not to be content with such fellowship as may be known and enjoyed in the wilderness. To minister rightly to the pleasure of God we must move on to take up the fellowship of saints as it may be known in the land.

"Because ye are sons"; that is what we are; we must never let that go; we have a most exalted and dignified place with God; every saint has that place; it is according to the place that Christ has as Man with God. "But because ye are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4: 6). The Spirit of God's Son will never deviate from what is suitable to the relationship which divine love has given us. As in the hearts of the saints He will always promote those emotions and affections which are proper to sonship. Let us yield ourselves to be thus intelligently formed in a spirit of sonship. Assembly communion is to take character from eating the "firstlings". All the precious thoughts of God connected with the "firstborn" are to form the substance of our communion and the nourishment of our souls before Him. What an exalted character does this give to the communion of saints!

Deuteronomy 16

- DEUTERONOMY 16 (CAC 5)
- AT A MARRIAGE MEETING (FER 21)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 16 (JND 36)
- LECTURE AT ROCHDALE (JND 42)
- NOTES OF READINGS ON DEUTERONOMY (4) (JT 7)
- APPEARING BEFORE GOD (JT 32)

DEUTERONOMY 16 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 16

The passover now comes before us as another thing to be observed in the place which Jehovah would choose to cause His Name to dwell there. The keeping of this service was the first thing enjoined to be done when they came into the land (Exodus 12: 25), and it was to be "an ordinance for ever". It has its place at the present time, for we read, "Our Passover, Christ, has been sacrificed" (1 Corinthians 5: 7), and it will be observed in the millennium (Ezekiel 45:21); it is of abiding importance for the people of God.

When the passover was kept in Egypt they were just about to come out as a redeemed people, and ever afterwards it was a memorial of how they came out; they were never to forget how, or by what means, they came out of Egypt. As in the land we are never to forget the value or the blessedness of the way in which God brought us out of the world; it is an essential part of the communion of the assembly that this should be maintained. If God has taken us up in love as His "firstborn", as we have seen in connection with the firstlings, it is requisite that He should deliver us from "the present evil world", and that we should be in moral separation from the flesh which is corrupt and corrupting. Therefore the passover and the feast of unleavened bread are to perpetually characterise the fellowship of His people. The one speaks of the death of Christ, and the other of those moral exercises which are needful to preserve consistency with it.

It is helpful to note the connection of the passover with what is brought before us typically in the agricultural year, for this is the setting of the feasts in Deuteronomy 16. The passover characterises the month Abib; then the feast of weeks is reckoned from the beginning of harvest; and the feast of tabernacles is when the harvest and vintage are gathered in. This chapter begins, "Keep the month of Abib, and celebrate the passover to Jehovah thy God; for in the month of Abib Jehovah thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night". The connection of the passover with the month Abib is repeated again and again in Scripture. The word Abib is translated in Leviticus 2: 14. "And if thou present an oblation of thy first-fruits to Jehovah, thou shalt present as the oblation of thy first-fruits *green ears of corn*". That is the word Abib; it is explained in the following words as "corn beaten out of full ears".

The month Abib was when the barley harvest came to maturity. The passover being characteristic of that month teaches us that the maturing of God's thoughts of blessing for men must ever be connected with the death of Christ. Through that death God delivers His firstborn, and takes them out of the world

which is under judgment. He secures the beginning of His harvest in that way. "Ye come out today, in the month Abib. And it shall be when Jehovah hath brought thee into the land ... which he swore to thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month" (Exodus 13: 4, 5). The bringing out and the bringing in are in the value of the death of Christ. Christ as risen is the First-fruits, but the harvest includes all that are His. The death of Christ secures all that is secured for God or for men. The month of Abib speaks of the beginning of a divine harvest every part of which is secured in the redemption value of the death of Christ. So that the passover has its place for ever — for the assembly, for the remnant, for millennial Israel. It is "an ordinance for ever". In the light of this, one can understand the Lord speaking of the passover as being "fulfilled in the kingdom of God".

God works out all the designs of His love by bringing in Christ as the slain Lamb. "Our Lord Jesus Christ .. gave himself for our sins, so that he should deliver us out of the present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father" (Galatians 1: 4). The present evil world is the world of religious flesh, and it is the place of bondage. By Christ and His death God takes His firstborn out of the place of bondage to serve Him in liberty. If we are in bondage we are not out of Egypt; we have not apprehended Christ and His death as the way by which God would bring us completely out, of every kind of bondage. It would be an impossibility for one to remain in Egypt who had known the sign of the blood, and eaten the Lamb roast with fire.

It is noticeable that in the mind of God, as given to us in Deuteronomy 16, the great thought connected with the passover is being brought forth out of Egypt. This is mentioned four times; see verses 1, 3, 6. Indeed this is what God proposed from the outset. (See Exodus 3:8; Exodus 3:10; Exodus 3:12; Exodus 3:17; Exodus 6:6-8; Exodus 6:13; Exodus 6:26,27; Exodus 7:4,5.) And it is repeatedly dwelt upon in the scriptures which refer to the passover. (See Exodus 12:17,42; Exodus 13:3,4; Exodus 13:8,9; Exodus 13:14; Exodus 13:16; Exodus 23:15; Exodus 34:18) In many minds the thought of being sheltered from judgment is the principal thing connected with the passover. But if our thoughts are limited to this we shall miss the great import of this precious institution. Such a thought as being sheltered by blood, but remaining in Egypt, is foreign to Scripture. Wherever the blood was on the doorposts and lintel, those within were feeding on the lamb with girded loins, feet shod, and staff in hand, and they were eating in haste. They were going out *immediately* as redeemed to God. Redemption is greater than shelter, for it secures a people delivered out of the world for the pleasure of God. The uniform testimony of Scripture is that by the passover God was acting in love for the

redemption of His people, having regard to His covenant and His wondrous thoughts of favour towards them. See Deuteronomy 7: 8; Isaiah 43: 1, 4; Isaiah 63: 9; Hosea 11: 1.

The blood of the lamb on the door-posts and lintel was "a sign on the houses in which ye are". It was a sign that God's firstborn was there, and that he was there as a redeemed one. The old hymn puts it, "The blood was the sign that marked them as Thine". In the passover lamb God disclosed in a typical way what had been in His mind "before the foundation of the world". His book of life was the book "of the slain Lamb" (Revelation 13: 8). No doubt Peter is referring directly to the passover when he says, "Knowing that ye have been redeemed ... by precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ, foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but who has been manifested at the end of times for your sakes, who by him do believe on God, who has raised him from among the dead and given him glory, that your faith and hope should be in God" (1 Peter 1: 18 - 21).

We know God as a Deliverer and Redeemer, for He has brought in Christ as the Lamb *for our sakes*.

He attaches great value to us, and would have us redeemed out of bondage and from vain conversation so as to be for His pleasure. Great and wondrous are the thoughts of God concerning His people, but they could only be brought to pass through redemption — through the precious blood of Christ. This was typified in Israel's deliverance, but the Lamb was not really manifested until "the end of times"; we have to look at it as typifying what is known now. God has brought in Christ as the Lamb for our appreciation and appropriation, and His precious blood is the sign of redemption. By the spotless Lamb and the precious blood *God Himself* becomes the Object of faith and hope. He covers His people with His protecting wing, and does not suffer the destroyer to touch them. He passes over, not merely in the sense of leaving them alone, but as Himself becoming their Shelter in virtue of that precious redemption of which the blood was the sign.

"And thou shalt sacrifice the passover to Jehovah thy God, of the flock and of the herd, in the place which Jehovah will choose to cause his name to dwell there" (verse 2). God has moved in love to bring a people forth from sin, the world and Satan, from all that marks man as in the flesh. In doing this He had before Him His purpose to have His firstborn, and to place him in the inheritance which His love would bestow in "a good and spacious land". The death of Christ is very precious to God as that by which He gives effect to the great designs of His love. Hence He speaks of the passover as "my sacrifice"

and "my feast" (Exodus 23: 18; Exodus 34: 25), and He would have it to be celebrated to Him in the place which He chooses to cause His name to dwell there.

The death of Christ in passover aspect is very great before God, and He has ordained that it shall be perpetually the subject of assembly communion. It is not a matter for "one of thy gates", but for "the place" chosen by God. It is an exercise which involves the communion of saints; it is an apprehension of Christ which can only be taken up assembly-wise. It is too great, if one may so say, for the individual, for it has in view the whole result which the passover contemplated in the mind of God. Eating the passover is to mark God's assembly as gathered together at a common and divinely appointed meeting place. Our coming together as in the land must be in accord with such conditions as are suitable to God's Name and dwelling. Only under such conditions can there be anything that has divine sanction as a gathering centre for His people, or that has the true character and communion of God's assembly. When king Hezekiah celebrated the passover he was careful to keep in mind its assembly character (2 Chronicles 30); it was for all Israel even if they did not come. That is how we have to take it up now; a great many may not take up the privilege, or respect the conditions which make it possible, but it is there for all saints.

The place which Jehovah chooses sets forth the divinely appointed conditions by which God would unify His people in their fellowship, and in their approach to Him. Such conditions must be according to His own choice; He will not admit of anything else. Man's choice as to how God should be served has brought in every kind of disorder and confusion. But God's choice if truly acknowledged, would eliminate these things, and unity would mark His people, founded upon complete separation from the world, and the purging out of all leaven.

There is a tendency with us to regard divine things almost exclusively from an individual standpoint, but we have to learn to look at them in their bearing on God's people as a whole. In the chapter now before us the Passover, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles had all to be observed in the place where Jehovah would cause His Name to dwell. They set forth things which have assembly character, and which are to be taken up assembly-wise. We shall not otherwise see them in their proper setting.

Paul was writing "to the assembly of God which is in Corinth" when he said, "For also our Passover, Christ, has been sacrificed". He introduced it, not as an individual matter, but in its bearing on the unleavened character and communion of the assembly. The first element in assembly conditions is that

the assembly is not of the world; it has been taken out from the world for the pleasure of God in all the value of the death of Christ. God has "visited to take out of the nations a people for his name" (Acts 15: 14). Then God's assembly must be unleavened; its fellowship necessitates the purging out of everything which would puff up the flesh.

This is a serious, as well as a blessed, exercise. "Thou shalt eat no leavened bread along with it". We must distinguish between the feast of unleavened bread and the Passover. They are identified in Luke 22, and this shews that the feast of unleavened bread is not to be separated from the passover; they are indissolubly connected together. But the feast of unleavened bread lasts seven days; it is to be kept not only when the saints are together, but it is to characterise them personally and in their associations at all times. It not only *may* but *must* be kept in our "gates". If the death of Christ is the holy subject of our communion there can be no allowance of anything that would appeal to the flesh, or give the flesh any place or importance.

The assembly is an unleavened company (1 Corinthians 5: 7), and is under obligation to be so practically. To preserve an unleavened character is essential for all who eat the Passover, whether in the wilderness or in the land, and this extends beyond the meetings. "And there shall be no leaven seen with thee in all thy borders seven days". This must be maintained at home and everywhere. Our personal associations and character, as well as our assembly associations, must be unleavened. The unleavened bread is called here — here only, I believe — "bread of affliction". This seems to indicate the severity of the exercise which is called for to maintain an unleavened character as in the land. The higher the ground which we occupy through grace, the more intense are the exercises involved in maintaining consistency with it. This is illustrated in Paul's experience after he had been caught up to the third heaven. The afflictive character of his discipline was strongly marked, but it was needful to keep leaven from working even in Paul! Not the smallest bit of what would inflate the flesh is to be allowed. "Do ye not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump"? A little bit of what is carnal or legal, if not judged, will work actively to leaven all that with which it comes in contact. We have only to look at the religious world to see how leaven, which was small when first introduced, has permeated the mass with corrupting influence. The life of the flesh is under judgment with God, and has been brought to an end in the death of Christ, who bore its judgment in love. That is the Passover, and it involves the purging out of leaven.

The eating of the passover is always to be in fresh exercise on each occasion when it recurs; none of the flesh is to be "left overnight until the morning". We

cannot reserve the communion which may have been the product of spiritual exercise on one occasion so as to be able to take it up again without a renewal of the exercise. If there has been a particularly sweet time of communion, whether as to the precious death of Christ, or anything else which is a subject of assembly communion, there may sometimes be an attempt or desire to have it again without the fresh and living apprehensions of Christ which produced it, being renewed. But the spiritual communion which pertains to the assembly of God cannot be carried over in this way. It would soon become a form without freshness or power. The communion of the saints before God is dependent on the sustained vigour of their affections, preserving vitality and freshness in their apprehensions and appreciations of Christ. What is "left over night" has no longer this character, and it is no longer in keeping with the spiritual and living character of the communion of saints as together in assembly.

"Thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the time that thou camest forth out of Egypt" (verse 6). The death of Christ is really the end of Egypt's day; it is the end before God of all that belongs to the life of man as in the flesh. The sense of this has to be maintained in the land; it is to characterise the fellowship of the children of God. It was a sad feature in Israel's history that from the time of Samuel they did not celebrate the Passover with the honour that was due to it (2 Chronicles 35: 18). Probably that lay at the root of much of their departure and idolatry, as it is surely the secret of the worldliness, carnality and legality which have come into the Christian profession. The death of Christ has not been fed upon as that by which we are freed from the system in which the flesh has its life.

It is deeply touching to see how the Lord felt about this feast. He sent Peter and John to prepare it; He ordered that there should be a suitable place reserved for it — "My guest-chamber" (Mark 14: 14) — and He said, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, that I will not eat any more at all of it until it, be fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22: 15, 16). He looked on to the fulfilment of it, to the harvest of God being matured in the kingdom through His own precious death. Then all the happy subjects of the favour of God will eat the passover together, as understanding that the death of Christ has been God's way by which to bring them out from bondage, and into all the blessing of the kingdom. At the moment Christ and His little company were the true assembly of Israel, and He delighted to eat the passover in communion with them. He saw in them the beginning of those great results which were to be brought about for God through His death — an unleavened company in the communion of His death.

Before the Lord instituted His supper He gave the passover its full character. We may safely say that it had never before been eaten with full intelligence of all that it meant as in the mind of God. And as eaten by the Lord an element was added which does not appear in the Old Testament; that is, "the cup". It may have become a custom among the Jews to have one or more cups, but the Lord taking it up gave it divine sanction and import; it completed the divine thought. It has been God's way in Scripture to introduce a thought, and then from time to time to add to it until He has completed what was before Him in connection with that thought. It was so with reference to the house of God, and other subjects, and it is so as to the passover. As instituted in Egypt the blood is prominent; as spoken of in the wilderness the fat is mentioned; as celebrated in the land it was to be eaten in the place where Jehovah caused His Name to dwell — it was to be taken up assembly-wise. Finally, as eaten by the Lord with His disciples, the cup is added, speaking of the joy of the kingdom as known under the new covenant, and linking it all with His death in passover aspect.

The difference between the passover in its spiritual import and the Lord's supper is a matter which we do well to consider. Luke 22 shews how intimately they are linked together, but at the same time they are distinguished. The passover will, I believe, be carried on by the remnant in the light of the New Testament after the assembly has been translated. But the Lord's supper is, I believe, a remembrance which is peculiarly the privilege of saints who are of the assembly which is His body.

The Passover, as we take it up spiritually now, is the celebration of what God has done for us through the death of Christ, as effecting our complete deliverance from the world system in view of all that He has before Him for us as having inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. The Lord's supper is the remembrance of One who, as having come in Manhood, is cherished in the affections of those who have the place of His wife and His children. It recalls how *He* devoted Himself in love — the true Hebrew Servant who has said, "I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go free". It is more personal and intimate, as suited to those who form His body. It is the remembrance suited in the thought of His love to those who are in the place of His intimate associates who cherish His memory — those who are in the favoured place of being His loved household.

But neither of these precious and holy institutions is to obscure the other. They are both divine and spiritual, and both have their place in the assembly of God. Spiritual intelligence and affections would know how to give each its suited place.

The "feast of weeks" refers to a period counted "from the beginning of putting the sickle into the corn". The wave-sheaf is not mentioned here, but we know that it was the first-fruits of the harvest. Christ Risen was the Sheaf of first-fruits waved "on the next day after the sabbath" (Leviticus 23: 11), and as risen He becomes the starting point of new exercises. The passover was to be sacrificed "at even, at the going down of the sun"; the death of Christ was the end of Egypt's day — of all connected with sin and the flesh — and in that aspect it is to form the substance of our assembly communion. But the "feast of weeks" is reached by counting from Christ as risen; it is connected with the dawn of a new and eternal day in the resurrection of Christ.

It is of the utmost importance that, as believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, we should learn to count from His resurrection. No man in Christendom can write a letter, or an invoice, or read a newspaper, without being reminded that so many years ago the Lord came into the world. The very date preaches the gospel, and speaks of the grace of God to men. But Christendom counts from the coming of Christ into this world, and it connects Christ with the world as it is, and this lies at the root of many mistaken thoughts and actions. How many think that Christ came to improve the world, and spend their lives in trying to further this! It is a great mistake.

We have to learn as the people of God to count spiritually from the resurrection of Christ. He has entered a new sphere altogether outside the life of this world. The sickle has been put into God's harvest, and the first stroke of that sickle has secured Christ as risen. The Sheaf has been waved "to be accepted for you" (Leviticus 23: 11). A risen Christ has been accepted for us, and therefore our acceptance is entirely outside the course of things here. The death of Christ is the going down of the sun in regard to this world, and in regard to all hopes and expectations from man as in the flesh. A new day has begun in the resurrection of Christ, and we have to count from that new starting-point.

In Luke 24 we read that the women who went to the empty tomb saw two *men* in shining raiment; Luke does not say angels, but *men*. "Shining raiment" is not for this world, or for mortal men. No one was ever seen here in shining garments save the Lord Himself on the holy mount. Shining raiment speaks of suitability to the resurrection world. Men could not be risen with Christ other than as in shining raiment; such men belong to the region of things above; they are suitable in their attire for association with the risen and living One. Two men in shining raiment standing by the women might well convey to their souls that they had had old garments — thoughts connected with this world, and with the restoration of the kingdom to Israel according to the flesh, but

that now as the associates of the risen One they would have to wear raiment that was not of this world at all. As risen He was accepted for them in view of the resurrection world.

We have now to count from Christ. If He has died we have died with Him; if He is risen we are risen with Him. Every believer expects to be in shining raiment when God's harvest is *actually* gathered up in resurrection according to 1 Corinthians 15. But that harvest is now being gathered in a spiritual sense consequent upon the resurrection of Christ. The risen One has been accepted for us, and all that are Christ's are bound up with Him in the bundle of the living; they live out of death as bound up with the risen One.

The disciples in Acts 1 were suitable to the risen One through what He had effected for them by going into death, and through His being accepted for them in resurrection, He could shew Himself to them, and speak to them, and assemble with them, and let them handle Him; He could have them to eat and drink with Him. If Christ as risen is accepted for us we are attired in suitability to Him; we are in "shining raiment". Let us never forget it!

The *counting* of Deuteronomy 16: 9 suggests that the resurrection of Christ is not to be viewed merely as a fact, but as involving the taking up, and working out to completion, of certain exercises on the part of His saints. The *counting* of seven weeks would be a definite and progressive process from day to day, and from week to week. The result in view is not brought to completion until the "weeks" are accomplished. The Lord intimated this when He said, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but do ye remain in the city till ye be clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24: 49). And again in Acts 1: 5, "Ye shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit after now not many days".

In Deuteronomy 16 the *weeks* are to be counted; the feast gets its name therefrom. The week is not a period determined by the course of nature like days, months, or years. There is nothing in nature to indicate the duration of a week; it is a divine period marked by the working of God. It was so originally in creation (Genesis 1); it was a period of divine working which secured a definite result. *Here* we have that thought intensified, for there is a counting of "*seven* weeks", which conveys a very full thought of spiritual completeness. In Leviticus 23: 15 it is expressly said, "they shall be complete". It is typically the period which began with the resurrection of Christ, and ended with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. But during that time a wonderful counting was going on in the souls of the disciples. They were passing through entirely new exercises of which they had previously no idea. They had to learn to count, not only from Christ as incarnate, or as the One who had died, but from Him as risen; and their exercises were brought to completion by the outpouring of

the Spirit upon them. His being accepted for them gave them suitability to take up this new exercise connected with an out of the world condition. Speaking spiritually, they were in shining raiment.

The "feast of weeks" directs our attention to the period covered by the first chapter of the Acts. Jesus was not taken up immediately after His resurrection, nor was the Spirit given at once after His ascension. There was a period of forty days during which He was seen by the apostles before He was taken up, and a further period of ten days between His taking up and the pouring out of the Spirit. It was necessary that time should be given for things to take form in the souls of the brethren as standing in relation to One who was raised from among the dead. This gave a new aspect to everything; it put everything on a new platform. A risen Man could not be connected with the course of things in this world at all, but He was to be the subject of testimony (Acts 1: 8, 22). And in view of this "He presented himself living, after he had suffered, with many proofs; being seen by them during forty days". They had time to become familiarised with Him in His new condition as living beyond death. He was living in an out of the world condition, but He was presented to men so as to be fully verified to them. It was not only that they saw Him, but they heard Him. How wonderful must that speaking have been from the lips of a risen Man "of the things which concern the kingdom of God"! Indicating that the kingdom of God stood in relation to Himself as risen; it formed no part of the course of this world. It was a sphere where the Holy Spirit would be the power (see Acts 1: 2,8), and which would be characterised by saints coming together (verses 4, 6; 2: 1). The disciples would be qualified for that new sphere by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and in the power thus come upon them they would be witnesses of the risen One "to the end of the earth".

But there was more! Having fully verified Himself to them as risen, they beheld Him taken up and going into heaven. He was coming again, but for the present they knew Him as having gone into heaven. They returned to "the upper chamber". It is well that we should mark the character of what was there. Jerusalem was a wonderful city; it is called, even after the death of Christ, "the holy city". It had its magnificent temple with continual services going on. But there was only one spot in that city which was in the light of a risen Man who had gone into heaven, and that spot was "the upper chamber". It answered, for the moment, to the place which God chose to cause His Name to dwell. The one hundred and twenty were unified in the apprehension of a risen and heavenly Christ, and in the apprehension, too, that they were His associates. We may be sure that their prayers related to Him as in heaven, and to His testimony here. And Peter, guided by the Scriptures, indicated that

there must be one to take the place of Judas in the complete testimony of the twelve to Jesus' resurrection.

The Spirit has thus traced for us how the "seven weeks" were counted before the first "feast of weeks" was celebrated. Every time they saw the risen Lord, and every time He spoke to them, a spiritual process was being carried on in definite and progressive exercise. To use the typical language of Deuteronomy 16, they were counting the seven weeks. When that exercise was completed the Holy Spirit came out of heaven, and sat upon each one of them. We have all to do this counting in a spiritual sense. Probably we all believe it to be a fact that Christ is risen, but have we really begun in our souls to *count* from His resurrection? If so a definite exercise has begun with us which stands related to One who is completely outside the course of this world. The counting implies that it is an exercise which takes time to come to maturity.

The Lord takes great pains with us to verify Himself to us as the risen, living One. What He did for Mary of Magdala, for Peter, for the two going to Emmaus, He would do by the Spirit for each one of us. He would cause it to be borne in upon our souls that He is living, but outside the life of this world, and that He has a company who also live outside the life of the world as bound up with Him. He would have us to reckon in a definite way in our souls from His resurrection; we shall not keep the "feast of weeks" unless we do. But as *we* count, *God* works in our souls to complete His own pleasure in regard to us, so that we come before Him as the "first-fruits of wheat harvest" (Exodus 34: 22) — a company of persons in this world definitely identified in mind and affection, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, with the risen and heavenly Christ.

The feasts, as viewed in Deuteronomy, do not typify things as being reached once for all, but as taken up recurrently as the subject of assembly communion. They speak of what is renewed periodically as a matter of fellowship amongst the saints. As holding the feast of weeks the resurrection of Christ, and what it involves for us as taken up in exercise of heart, and the gift of the Spirit in relation to the completion of that exercise, are kept before us in a fresh and living way as the substance of our communion and joy. The pleasure of God is bound up with this being so. It gives us a precious and elevated thought of the living character of the communion which pertains to the assembly viewed as in the land.

What marks the feast of weeks is "a tribute of a voluntary-offering of thy hand, which thou shalt give, according as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee; and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy bondman, and thy handmaid, and the Levite that is in thy

gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow that are in thy midst in the place that, Jehovah thy God will choose to cause his name to dwell there" (verse 10, 11). This is beautifully illustrated in Acts 2: 42 - 47. The company of saved ones there constituted the place where God caused His Name to dwell. And the tribute of a voluntary-offering was there, both spiritually and materially. There was a fulness of blessing from God which was made available for all. Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, all heard in their own tongues "the great things of God". The apostles taught; a risen Christ was the Substance of their teaching, and it formed a fellow-ship marked by voluntary offering. The saints were so enjoying together what was wholly outside the course of the world that they were delivered from all natural selfishness. The spiritual communion of the assembly, and its normal effects, are seen there in a very striking way. The fellowship of the apostles was the fellowship of men who had counted from Christ's resurrection, and in whom things had come to completion by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It was, as we have said, the first-fruits of wheat harvest. The feast of weeks was held there in spiritual reality.

This is another aspect of the communion of the assembly viewed as in the land. It is the assembly viewed as having learned to count from the resurrection of Christ, and to complete the counting so that a spiritual result is reached that the Holy Spirit can identify Himself with. There is then ability to render what is spiritual in character. There is voluntary offering, and rejoicing, and a spirit of grace that brings everybody in to share the joy. And this is essential to the pleasure and service of God. It is the communion which is brought about as the result of divine working in relation to Christ risen. The liberty and joy of it is contrasted in verse 12 with the bondage which had been known in Egypt.

Joy is not mentioned in connection with the Passover. "Bread of affliction" and "a solemn assembly" have their place there. But in the feast of weeks there is joy in which all participate. It is not here, as in Leviticus 23, two wave loaves brought out as first-fruits, with testimony in view, but a spiritual result in voluntary offering for assembly enjoyment, and for the pleasure of God, because the spiritual joy of the saints gives joy to God. The joy typified here is joy in the Holy Spirit; it is not that unworthy imitation in which human and natural elements are utilised to attract and give pleasure. The assembly of God is characterised by spiritual joy, and this joy can only be brought in or enjoyed in a spiritual way. "If one member be glorified, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Corinthians 12: 26). If one member is glorified by being enabled to bring in what is spiritual it is for common assembly joy, and in result there is something for the pleasure of God.

The Old Testament gives us "a *shadow* of the coming good things", but it is ours to have the *substance* of them.

The "feast of weeks" has to do with the time of *first-fruits*, whether of barley harvest as typical of Christ risen, or of wheat harvest as setting forth what was secured at Pentecost in the saints. *First-fruits* suggests the beginning of a crop, of which the greater part will be gathered later. But the feast of tabernacles is when the whole harvest and vintage have been gathered in. It conveys the fullest thought of blessing and joy which the typical year presents. The feast of tabernacles is the crown of the festive year — the time when that beautiful verse in Psalm 65 is realised; "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness". God would not have us to stop short of the crown of His year; He would have us to come to the full measure of His thought, and the purpose of His love. Many of His people are content to have very little, but this is not honouring to the Giver of *all* good.

What marks this feast is unmixed joy. "And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast ... and thou shalt be wholly joyful" (verses 14, 15). The time for being "wholly joyful" has not come publicly yet. No doubt the feast of tabernacles speaks of a coming time when all evil will be set aside and all good will be brought in for the joy of God's people in millennial conditions. But that is anticipated in the assembly, and it is possible for us to know fulness of joy even though outward circumstances are not yet changed. This is surely an attractive goal set before us, even if we have to admit that we have not yet reached it in soul-experience. There are not only first-fruits but the full harvest, and then the vintage. The remembrance of the wilderness is not brought in here, though that is prominent in Leviticus. It is here the "wholly joyful" character that is the result of God's blessing. The thought of dwelling in booths is only retained in the name of the feast; its *character* here is fulness of blessing and joy, the communion of which extends to all who are in our gates.

These things, as we have said before, are the word of God to *us*; the primary application of them is to saints who are of the assembly; we are the first to understand them, and to come into the value of them. That is true of the passover and of the feast of weeks, and it is also true of the feast of tabernacles.

The Deuteronomic aspect of this feast is limited to seven days; there is no "eighth day" as in Leviticus 23. It contemplates fulness of joy as brought in at the present time, not as in eternal conditions (which the eighth day would typify), but as in reference to household conditions, and also conditions marked by lack and sorrow. We should not connect the thought of strangers,

or fatherless, or widows with the "eighth day"; such may be found in the "seven days", which is a period answering to the present time. For Israel the seven days would answer to the millennium, while the "eighth day" looks on to what is eternal. But the "seven days" in Deuteronomy 16 have typical reference to the present time. God proposes to give us such a fulness of blessing that we can have a "wholly joyful" communion in the place which He chooses. We may say reverently that God has given us all that He has to give; He has given His greatest and His best. What is brought out here is the completeness of God's blessing, and the fulness of joy which it affords, as constituting the substance of the communion of saints as in the land.

It is to be noticed that it is said, "when thou hast gathered in the produce of thy floor and of thy wine-press", not of thy fields and vineyards. That is, the full wealth of the land has been gathered, and made available for food and joy; it has all been threshed out in the floor, or made into wine. There has been an application of spiritual diligence so as to make it available for common enjoyment. Typically it regards the assembly as in the full wealth and blessedness of the inheritance, so that the end of all God's ways in grace is reached; there is nothing to be added.

Practically our joy is in proportion to our spiritual formation and growth. John divides the family of God into little children, young men, and fathers, which clearly indicates increasing spiritual development. As we thus grow we are more and more able to gather in the rich harvest and vintage of all that is found in Him who is from the beginning. John could say of the fathers, "ye have known him that is from the beginning"; they had gathered in of the produce of the floor and the winepress; it is persons formed in the divine nature who can do that. The little children are able to "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ"; they know the Father in the blessedness of His grace. But there is growth after that. It will be noticed that there is a long interval between the feast of weeks and the feast of tabernacles, a period of constantly added fruitfulness until the whole harvest and vintage is gathered. For us it suggests that from the reception of the Spirit there is continual increase in our apprehension as we move on towards "the fulness of the blessing of Christ".

As we follow the line suggested to us by the passover and the feast of weeks we shall come to the feast of tabernacles. Complete deliverance from the world, and the purging out of all leaven, sets us free for what is spiritual, and on that line we can reach fulness of joy, not only individually but as characterising our assembly communion.

In Leviticus 23 rejoicing before Jehovah is a prominent feature of this feast, but the *communion* in that joy is what is marked in Deuteronomy. "And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy bondman, and thy handmaid, and the Levite, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are in thy gates" (verse 14). The communion of it is emphasised. The fuller our present enjoyment the more will there be to share in grace with those less favoured. It is an immense favour from God to be enabled to secure some of the wealth of the land in such a way that it increases the joy in communion of the people of God as gathered together. But there is also great encouragement to those of us who feel unable to gather in much of the floor or of the winepress for ourselves, or for others. We may have the joy of it as sharing with those who are spiritually wealthy and diligent. Such is the blessed grace of God that we can participate with those who have much greater wealth and diligence than we have. One great gain of being set together in assembly relations is that we are privileged to enjoy the wealth of the inheritance together.

We have to remember, and I often remind my heart of it, that through marvellous divine favour we are living in the time of God's best. God never gave, and never will give, such wealth to His people as He is giving at the present time. It is a grief to the heart, of God if we do not value the greatness of His giving. We all know that if we give a gift we like it to be appreciated, and the choicer the gift in our estimation the more we feel any lack of appreciation. God would encourage every one of us to appreciate the fulness of His blessing in Christ. This is not a matter only for old saints, or persons of great spiritual maturity, but it is for us all — the youngest babe in Christ, the feeblest believer — to recognise that the communion of the assembly of God is a communion of profound joy, because the substance of it is nothing less than *God's best*. It is good that we live at such a time.

In the assembly of God all are not alike wealthy, but such is the constitution of that assembly, and the nature of its communion, that the spiritual wealth of the richest is shared by the poorest, or is available to be shared. So that in this happy sense "the rich and poor meet together" (Proverbs 22: 2). It is not that the spiritually wealthy have to come down to the level of the spiritually poor, but all are to be elevated to the joy that is in the heart of the richest! What a precious thought this is! What a gracious and elevating thing is the communion of saints! Everything that the most spiritual person has of Christ, and of the knowledge of God, and of the joy of divine beneficence is available for my enjoyment. That is the character of the communion of saints as in the land. Even the stranger, the fatherless and the widow may participate in it! Do we know any rich man in Israel who has gathered in abundantly of the floor

and of the winepress! We are privileged to share with him; and, indeed, in a very true sense this is how we come to participate in the joy of the inheritance, if we have done so at all. I suppose we have all known some wealthy persons in the land? I know some, and I have noticed about them a great readiness to invite all their poorer brethren to share the joy of what they have, of the floor or of the winepress!

John was one of those wealthy persons, and Paul was another. The apostles were men who had come into the wealth and blessedness of the land; they knew what it was to cultivate it, and to gather in its produce. They threshed out its corn in the floor, and they trod out its grapes in the winepress; they knew the "wholly joyful" character which its fulness affords. But they have let us know that it was their great desire that we should participate with them, and that their wealth should be the substance of communion for the whole assembly of God. "That which we have seen and heard we report to you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is indeed with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we to you that your joy may be full" (1 John 1: 3, 4). I think that answers to the feast of tabernacles.

John was enjoying the full wealth of the inheritance, and he would have the whole company of saints in the communion and joy of it. He brings out the character of the blessedness which we can enjoy together. "If what ye have heard from the beginning abides in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise which *he* has promised us, life eternal" (1 John 2: 24, 25). It is remarkable that he should write thus to "little children" — the babes in the family of God. He would have them to abide in the Father in His measureless thoughts of grace, and in the Son as the One in whom all those thoughts have been substantiated. Then the brethren are loved as those begotten of God and called to enjoy together in family affections the children's portion, "*We* know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3: 14). They are our joint-heirs, and our happiness lies in sharing with them. The more we appreciate the wealth of our common portion the more we shall covet to furnish what will minister to the joy in communion of the brethren. It is in that way that the feast of tabernacles is held at the present time.

Then, Paul too, gathered in abundantly, and he has shewn his willingness to share with others, with all saints. See Ephesians 3. In the ministry of the apostles we see the gathering in of the floor and of the winepress. We see the fulness of "the unsearchable riches of the Christ". There is nothing beyond; it is the end and climax of all that God has to give. But it is brought in in the way

of infinite grace, for all to share in the joy of it. The highest and most precious and holy thoughts of God are made known so as to be the blessed subject of the assembly communion of His saints. This would surely suffice to make us "wholly joyful"!

The things spoken of in the epistle to the Ephesians are the crown of our spiritual year; that epistle answers for us to the feast of tabernacles; it gives us the highest and fullest conception of blessing in Christ. And it is evident that it is intended to give character to the joy and communion of all saints. We must encourage our hearts to think of these precious things as realities which are to be known and enjoyed, and which are divinely intended to be the subject of assembly communion. The state of God's people is often such that He cannot bring His great and holy things before them. It was so at Corinth; Paul would not have written the epistle to the Ephesians to *them*, for they were in a carnal state. But God's great thoughts remain, and they are held in reserve even for those who are not able, for the time, to appreciate them. So Paul says to the Corinthians, "But we speak wisdom among the perfect ... that hidden wisdom which God had pre-determined before the ages for our glory ... . Things which eye has not seen, and ear not heard, and which have not come into man's heart, which God has prepared for them that love him, but God has revealed to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God" (1 Corinthians 2: 6 - 10). He brought the wealth of the inheritance before them in all its attractiveness, and let them know that he held it in his affections for them. It was an incitement to wake up out of their carnal state, and go in for what would make them "wholly joyful". God revealed the blessed things of the land to the apostles by the Spirit, and they have communicated those things in a spiritual way, and if we are spiritual we shall appreciate and discern them. Surely none of us want to be carnal persons, unable to appreciate *God's best*! The enjoyment of those blessed things is the normal communion of the assembly, and it is available for all who appreciate it.

Paul told the saints at Rome that when he came to them he would "come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ" (Romans 15: 29). He would come prepared to open out to them the precious things spoken of in Colossians and Ephesians; "fulness" is characteristic of both these epistles. We have obtained an inheritance in Christ; God has given it to us in love according to His eternal purpose; He would enlighten our hearts as to it. Ephesians 3 tells us how Paul came to have the knowledge of the great thoughts of God "that they who are of the nations should be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of his promise in Christ Jesus". Paul was illuminated, and he wrote in order to illuminate us. "To me, less than the least of all saints, has this grace been given, to announce among the nations the glad tidings of the unsearchable

riches of the Christ". That is the wealth of the inheritance. These are the things which form the substance of the communion of saints as in the land; they are things to make us "wholly joyful".

And the more we enter into these things, and enjoy them, the more there is to share with others. Instead of a spiritually wealthy brother complaining of the impoverished state of his brethren he looks upon it as a privilege to share what he has with them. We are to look at every saint as a joint heir and a joint partaker. The communion of the joy is a marked feature in Deuteronomy. If our fellow saints could see that we were in the joy of a communion to which they were as much entitled as we are, and that we were going out to them in affectionate desire that they should participate in it, I feel sure it would make an impression on those who love God.

It is striking that from the "first of the fruits of the land" (Deuteronomy 26) to the gathering in the complete produce of the year there is always to be the recognition of the place which Jehovah chooses to cause His Name to dwell there. We are never to be isolated from our brethren, and we are never to lose sight of the fact that God's Name — that is, God known in the light of revelation — is the great rallying point for His people. If we approach God it must be in the light of the revelation He has made of Himself, and it must be in moral suitability to Him, and it must be according to the truth and principles of His assembly and the fellowship pertaining to it, and all these things are universal. We have to take up our local relations with our brethren in the light of what is universal. Any local action, even of a disciplinary nature, must be governed by principles which are universal. It must be taken in the light of what is suitable to the assembly of God everywhere.

We have been told that in decline "the top shoot goes first"; the highest, or brightest and best, that God gives will be the first to be given up. The feast of tabernacles was the first feast to be given up, for it was not held from the time of Joshua until revived in Nehemiah's day (Nehemiah 8: 17). It is doubtful whether during many long centuries after the days of the apostles there was anything really answering to the feast of tabernacles in the assembly. The true spiritual wealth and joy of the inheritance was departed from, and the communion of saints before God in assembly character as in the land was practically unknown. But there has been a reviving, a day of recovery, and God is graciously recalling the hearts of His people to that which was from the beginning. His thoughts of love are unchanged and undiminished, and He is working by His Spirit to bring us back to them, so that the joy of them may characterise the communion of His saints.

The three feasts — the Passover, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles — are obligatory upon "all thy males", and "they shall not appear before Jehovah empty". To be "empty" would deny that we were "full of the blessing of Jehovah"; it would be the sad evidence of hearts unmoved in response to Him.

The principle of "just judgment" amongst, the people of God comes before us in verses 18 - 20. It is of God that there should be amongst His people "in all thy gates ... throughout thy tribes" those who can "judge ... with just judgment". This intimates to us that matters are sure to arise which call for the action of judicial discernment, and it is an exercise that ability for this should be found amongst us. To be without right judgment in relation to matters which need adjustment is unsuitable to God who is "the judge of all". We learn from Matthew 18 that in all such matters the assembly is the final court of appeal This will come before us in Deuteronomy 17. But chapter 16: 18 - 20 would shew the Lord's intent that there shall be provision for the settling of many differences without carrying them to the supreme court. "If then ye have judgments as to things of this life, set those to judge who are little esteemed in the assembly. I speak to you to put you to shame. Thus there is not a wise person among you, not even one, who shall be able to decide between his brethren"! (1 Corinthians 6: 4, 5). Probably the "judges and officers" were there, but they were being disregarded.

Paul does not hesitate to say that it was "altogether a fault" to have suits of this kind before unbelievers; the brethren ought rather to suffer wrong, and to submit, to be defrauded. Indeed those who were doing it were all wrong themselves; he says, "But *ye* do wrong, and defraud, and this your brethren". It is almost invariably true that the one who complains of his brother is wrong himself. It is pretty sure that if I see a mote in my brother's eye there is a beam in my own, and I had better deal with it first. The principle on which we go on together is "with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4: 2). "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any should have a complaint against any; even as the Christ has forgiven you, so also do ye" (Colossians 3: 13) This implies that many things will be treated with forbearance, and quietly passed over, or left with the Lord. It is not supposed in Christianity that every little thing will be brought up for judgment. There are a thousand things which the least bit of grace in our own hearts would enable us to overlook or ignore.

If we bring things to the "judges and officers" we must be prepared to be searched ourselves. Judgment amongst the people of God is, in principle, the judgment of Christ Himself. If saints are going to judge the world and angels

they will do it, as having part with Christ, and being able to view things as He views them. And this is the true character of any judicial function which is exercised amongst the saints now. It is taken up in view of the administration of a coming day; the saints as in the land anticipate the conditions of the world to come in this regard. The offices which are spoken of in this chapter and the next are really offices of Christ; He is the true Judge and Priest and King. But the glory of these offices is reflected in His saints, so that, in measure, they shine in the same glory. Any right judgment is according to the mind of Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, penetrating to the inmost recesses of the moral being.

I believe that in every case where the Lord was appealed to for a judgment He dealt searchingly with the conscience of the person who brought the case before Him. He did not adjudicate on the case, but He did on the state of soul of those who brought the charge. We see an instance of this when one came and said, "Teacher, speak to my brother to divide the inheritance with me". That was an appeal to the Judge of Israel. What was the answer ? "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness". It was as much as to say, If your brother is covetous to take the inheritance, you are covetous in wanting your share of it. The Lord disclaimed the public position of "a judge or a divider", but He judged morally the motives at work in each of them. (Luke 3: 13 - 15).

Another conspicuous instance is in John 8. They appealed to the Judge of Israel as to what should be done with a woman taken in adultery. But He replied, "Let him that is without sin among you first cast the stone at her". If I come to the Lord for judgment against my brother He will search my soul, and lay bare what is wrong in me. If I appeal to Him for vindication I must be prepared to have my own motives searched. One who really knows grace, and himself too, does not object to be searched. He knows that all that is contrary to God in him has been judged in the death of Christ, and he is conscious that God has searched him and known him, and he desires that God may still search him, because he has found how wholesome and purifying it is to be searched. See Psalm 139.

The judgment which God sets up amongst His people could not be different, in principle, from His own. What moral elevation, what true lowliness, is required to be able to judge of things and persons as Christ does, and not in a merely human way! It was written of Him, "He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor and reprove (or maintain the right of) with equity the meek of the earth" (Isaiah 11: 3, 4). There was with the Lord a principle of judgment altogether different from the sight of His eyes, or the hearing of His

ears. It was in quite a different sense that He said, "As I hear, I judge" (John 5: 30). "As I hear" referred to what He heard from His Father; He judged of everything, and discerned everything, according to what His Father told Him, He said, again, in John 8: 10 "And if also I judge, my judgment is true, because I am not alone, but I and the Father who has sent me". He judged everything in communion with the Father.

Judgment is not to be wrested, nor are persons to be respected, nor a bribe taken to blind the eyes or pervert the words. Things are to be adjusted according to God that everything may be removed that would interfere with the true life of saints, and their possession and enjoyment of the land. A mere legal settlement would not suffice for this; it involves the rectification of soul-condition, and this is the real question at issue in almost every case that calls for judgment amongst the saints.

AT A MARRIAGE MEETING (FER 21)

Deuteronomy 16: 3; Numbers 29: 12 - 16; John 7: 37; Revelation 21: 10, 11; Revelation 22:1 - 3

Blessing can only be in connection with God's throne; man is all upside down and withered under the curse.

The tabernacle (dwelling) is not yet fulfilled. God's purpose will be accomplished in a vessel, viz., new Jerusalem. Rejoicings come after the accomplishment of God's ways, then His purposes get fulfilled. Mysteries are connected with His ways; when these have come to an issue, then He displays purpose in a vessel. The harvest is all for God, the vintage is vengeance.

In Numbers, in connection with the burnt-offering, you get the extra day — the eighth, the heavenly. The kid of the goats for a sin-offering shows it will not yet be a perfect state. Joy is in the connection of heaven and earth.

The bride is of Him and expresses Him. The wife is declared relationship, celebrated and owned. Purposes are accomplished in the New Jerusalem; God's throne is there, God's sway in righteousness a sine qua non — no temple, tree of life and river of life.

The sway of man brings in infidelity and darkness; the city has the glory of God, i.e., perfect conciliation of righteousness and love. Measured by the reed, it answers to all the requirements, and all is precious stones — reflected light. A reflex of the cross, the medium is the Lamb; it has the gain of all the names of God.

Testimony was given to purpose when Christ was here (the church has no inherent value). Christ being rejected personally — now the purpose is fulfilled in the church.

	In Christ	In the city
Reigning:	Matthew 2.	Nations and those that enter the city.
Dwelling:	'Emmanuel' — a river from His lips — words 'spirit' and 'life'.	River from throne.
Blessing:	Works of blessing, goodness and power.	Source of blessing for man.

Saints are now here in Christ's place — the christian is a continuation of Christ; the time of display is not yet because the vessel is not complete yet. We are

now in the place of testimony that God's purposes are accomplished in Christ.. .. He is glorified (rule, kingdom subsists), the Spirit is here (dwelling), and the water flows through the saints (blessing). It is all witnessed to by what we are.

The kingdom is the celebration of righteousness — God's delight in what was accomplished at the cross. Jesus is glorified — resurrection is a testimony to righteousness. The Spirit is here and brings us into the joy of the kingdom, not merely into subjection. The Spilt establishes unity here — flesh hinders it, also worldly ways. "Out of his belly", because all is enjoyed inwardly. Speak the truth, i.e., the revelation of God and of His will.

Watford, May 18th, 1898.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 16 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 16

— 9 - 12. The day of Pentecost was evidently thus — whatever day the first handful could be had, it was offered on the day after the Sabbath (Sunday); thence to the seventh Sabbath was forty-nine, and then on the fiftieth (Sunday) Pentecost was celebrated. In itself it had no connection with the previous feast of unleavened bread — historically it was so, but they were distinct ordinances. See also Leviticus 23:15, 16.

LECTURE AT ROCHDALE (JND 42)

Deuteronomy 16

There were three great feasts when all Israel had to go up to Jerusalem.

Other feasts there were, such as the Sabbath constantly, the new moons, and the great day of atonement; but these three, the Passover, Pentecost or Feast of Weeks, and the Tabernacles, were solemn feasts in this way, that they were the gathering times of the people who all had to go up to keep them.

We shall see that whilst, in the bringing of the people thus together before God, there is a thought common to all, each of them has a different character.

As is well known, we have a distinct antitype to two of these feasts: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us", and, "When the day of Pentecost was fully come"; but of the Feast of Tabernacles we have had no antitype, i.e., there has been no fulfilment of it. The true Passover has been sacrificed, but the great gathering of the Feast of "Tabernacles" has yet to come; people will then own Christ to be their Passover, who will not have done so hitherto. That is, however, still future.

But there are important features for us in these three feasts. Notice that Pentecost is in immediate connection with the unleavened bread rather than with the Passover. It was then that they offered the first of the first-fruits, type of Christ risen from the dead; and from the time of putting the sickle to the corn, they counted seven weeks, i.e., typically, to the Church at Pentecost. On the day of the first-fruits they offered ears of corn without leaven; but seven weeks later, when the first-fruits were offered, leaven was put in the two cakes, because there the Church was, in type, offered to God.

But they could not be burnt at all. Our bodies are offered *to* God, but they are not like Christ — a sinless, unleavened victim.

Leviticus 2 gives us this more fully; there, they were to take fine flour, mingled with oil, and anointed with oil, and so on. That is Christ without leaven or honey; no sinful nature and no sweetness of nature could be allowed in sacrifice. In Christ, there was no leaven and no honey, nothing but the perfectness set forth in the oil and frankincense. "Mingled with oil" — "that holy thing which shall be born of thee"; then, "anointed with oil" — Jesus of Nazareth anointed "with the Holy Ghost and with power". In the end of the chapter, we find the oblation of the first-fruits offered to the Lord. Salt was to be offered with all their offerings, that is the separative power of holiness as consecrated to God. The Lord refers to it in Mark 9 — the separative power of holiness by the Spirit of God.

Then there was a meat-offering of green ears dried by the fire; this typified Christ offered up in His perfectness, and with only sweet savour coming out of the sacrifice.

But in the case of the two cakes of the first-fruits, a sin-offering was offered with them, which met the question of the presence of the leaven. The two cakes were first offered with seven lambs for a burnt-offering, i.e., Christ in pure perfectness; then came the sin-offering as meeting the leaven, "if *we* say that *we* have no sin, we deceive ourselves".

But let us turn to the character of the Passover. This was first held when Israel was coming out of Egypt, and for seven days they were to eat unleavened bread.

It is also one of the feasts in Leviticus 23; and in verse 10, you have the time of the first offering of the wave-sheaf — "When ye be come into the land", etc.; and it was to be waved on the morrow after the Sabbath. That was, in type, when Christ was raised from the dead. Seven weeks later on, the wave-loaves were offered. The coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost connects itself entirely with this new place of man, and the church is viewed in the wave-loaves. In Christ is seen the new place of man in resurrection. After He had been "made sin" for us; after death; after the judgment of God had been passed upon Him, God raised Him from the dead. Having perfectly glorified God as to the wickedness of man, Christ is *then* raised from the dead; and now, consequently upon what Christ has done, man is in a wholly new place before God. It is a new state and place altogether. Lazarus came back into this world; but this is, in Christ, a totally new state; The responsible man having failed, God has met that failure in the death of Christ; He then raises Christ from the dead, and thus puts man into a totally new condition altogether; death hath no more dominion over Him, for He is in a place which is the result of having perfectly glorified God.

That is where Christianity begins.

The offering of the first-fruits introduces this, and the Feast of Pentecost is connected with the first-fruits, i.e., seven weeks from that day; and the coming of the Holy Ghost likewise connects us with Christ in that new condition. This is what I would press upon you.

You may turn to what was in the Passover, where man as man is a judged and condemned race. But the pride of man is such that he refuses this, and seeks to restore himself as he is. They make Christ coming into the condition of the children of Adam, as if it were to raise up men as men.

This is all false. On the contrary, it is a totally new place altogether into which Christ has entered. It is all over with the world, and God has proved His righteousness in setting Christ at His own right hand.

The righteousness of the Father has come out. As the Lord says, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee". The righteousness of God has been proved, not only in resurrection, but in setting Christ at His right hand. The world had cast Him out and slain Him. There where we find the fruit of righteousness, is in a Man sitting at the right hand of God.

God does not wait until the future when His Son shall come in the glory of the kingdom, but now already, in virtue of Christ having glorified God in the place of sin, there is a Man at the right hand of God. Man's malice, Satan's power, God's judgment, and God's love were all made manifest at the cross.

God has thus been perfectly glorified as to everything. He has been glorified in infinite love. Resurrection, now, is the first grand thing. Christ has been raised again for our justification. But God's answer to His work was not complete until He had set Him at His right hand in glory. There is now man in a new state altogether, consequent upon death and judgment having taken place.

All was settled at the cross.

I was one of the poor sinners who brought Christ there; but now I am not in the flesh at all; I am in Christ where He now is. My place and state is no longer that of a child of Adam.

For the old thing there was no remedy. It was tried without law, and under law, and by prophets. Stephen sums it up when he says: "You have broken the law, killed the prophets, crucified Christ, and resisted the Holy Ghost". That drew out their enmity; they stoned him; he went to heaven. That is the historical beginning of the new thing.

What I still press is, that it is man in a totally new state as to his place with God. But we have not yet got this as regards our bodies.

Now let us turn and look at the state of soul connected with this. In the Passover you will see this state of soul. There was to be no leavened bread, nor were they to eat any for seven days. Bread of affliction was connected with it. If you look at holiness, which you must have, is it not the bread of affliction for you? Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord, but alas! I am not holy. The unleavened bread of sincerity and truth is connected with affliction.

Then mark another thing connected with the Passover in Deuteronomy 16:7: "And thou shalt cook and eat it at the place which Jehovah thy God will choose; and in the morning shalt thou turn and go unto thy tents". No communion, no joy, no fellowship — not a bit. Unleavened bread is the bread of affliction. They were saved, but that is all, taking it as a present thing. They were a people in bondage and slavery, and God was going by as Judge; but the passover-blood shut God out from them, I mean, the blood on the doorposts. How can I escape judgment, for God must have holiness, and I have none? Well, there is the blood, and God will not come near me, and so it is the bread of affliction.

Conscience is always individual.

Many a true soul finds his happiness in the contrast between what he has got out of, and where he has got to. And what has he got into? Into the wilderness.

This is constantly the case; the blood saved them from God's judgment, and that was all. Are there not many in that state? He sees he is ruined in Egypt, and that God is here as a Judge; that is the way he thinks of God, and the blood-shedding has met him in that state, and he is safe. I am glad he is. Look at the hymns that are sung, and where do you find anything more than the simple fact that I have got out from the ruin?

But conscience and justification must be individual; so they had to go to their tents and remain there.

The condition of many a soul is that of merely looking to get safe out of Egypt when God is acting as a Judge in respect of sin. Many true believers, alas! are not clear that God as a Judge does not now reach them in their sins. They certainly have no Pentecost, and still less have they any Tabernacles. They go to their tents, so to speak, where God is to them only a Judge. They see love in Christ in doing that which was needed to meet the judgment of God; and since it is met, they are therefore safe. Of course, that is perfectly true, and it is the foundation of everything. But we have not that only, but we have also the Holy Ghost, and that in our new place in the risen Man. That which characterises the Christian position is the presence of the Holy Ghost and the waiting for Christ to come again.

Having drunk that dreadful cup, and having glorified God as to sin on my behalf, Christ has entered heaven as my Forerunner; and the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, indwelling me, is what associates me with Christ where He now is at the right hand of God, and unites me to Him also. So that if death itself come, it is gain to me.

What, then, about my sins? They are put away.

What about righteousness? Christ is it.

And the Holy Ghost has come down with this blessed testimony, to bring me into the full sense of the effect of what Christ has done, and of the place He has now taken as Man. Christ is my life, and the Holy Ghost identifies me with Him; "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit".

The sufferings of Christ are over, and He has entered into the glory as Man in consequence; and now what? The Holy Ghost is given to us, and we know our relationship; as the Lord Himself declared it, saying, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God". The babes in Christ know the Father; they cry, "Abba, Father"; but it is not until they have received the Holy Ghost. "Ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus", and, "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father". "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father".

Again, in John 14, the Lord says that, "in that day" i.e., when the Holy Ghost is come, "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you". We shall *know* it, that is what He says.

All springs out of the love of God. What is the proof? He gave His Son. How do you know it? By the Holy Ghost. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit".

So the day of Pentecost is brought to us.

And then, what about the inheritance? The Holy Ghost in us is the earnest of it.

He throws back all the light of divine knowledge upon what Christ has done, and makes known to us perfect, present, divine favour and that we are loved as Jesus is loved. We understand thus our place, and we live in it day by day.

If I believe that the blessed Son of God became a Man and died, was made sin for me, and suffered in my stead, then I can say there is nothing too great for me; He will freely give me all things; I am become part of Christ's glory. Supposing Christ were in His glory without His redeemed! Where would be the glory of the Redeemer?

"Seven weeks shalt thou count: from the beginning of putting the sickle into the corn shalt thou begin to count seven weeks. And thou shalt hold the feast of weeks unto Jehovah thy God with a tribute of a voluntary offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give according as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee".

Now then, it is that I come with a freewill offering.

There was no freewill offering at the Passover.

But the Holy Ghost having given us the knowledge of what is ours in Christ, He enables us now to carry up a freewill offering from the heart, just as Israel did when put into possession of Canaan. It is not merely what we are saved *from*, but what we are saved *to*; that which fills up the affections and the heart. I *know* I am in the favour of God, that is the present grace wherein we stand. Christ dwells in me, and I in Him, and I come with these first-fruits to God. The heart comes to God and the Father with the things it has got from God and the Father.

The Feast of Tabernacles is not fulfilled at all, because it gives us the actual result in full. But Pentecost produces grace in power in the heart. Still, I am to bring "according as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee". I may be in a cold state — the crop may be a bad one, and I have not much to bring. But even so, "Thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God"; you do not get that at the Passover. Not that I have forgotten that I was brought out of Egypt. Far from it. The spirit of grace in the power of the Holy Ghost makes the soul rejoice in it: "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt". I remember that I was once a captive, and that I have been set free in the power of the Holy Ghost.

As to the Feast of Tabernacles, if you look at John 7 you will see how the Lord acts there. His brethren say to Him, "Go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest"; "shew thyself to the world". But He answers, "I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come". In the last day, however, that great day of the feast, i.e., the eighth day, which the other feasts did not have, "Jesus stood and cried, saying If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" There we see that, pending the fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles, those who came to Christ should receive the Holy Ghost. The Feast of Tabernacles came after the harvest and after the vintage, i.e., after the judgment at harvest, discriminating between wheat and chaff; and after the vintage, which is simply pure vengeance — the indignation and wrath of the Lord God Almighty. But at the Feast of Tabernacles all that was over; and so they dwelt in booths, etc., etc. It prefigured in an earthly sense just the rest of God for the Jews. The time for its celebration had come in the seventh chapter of John. But *we* have a much better rest, and therefore there was an eighth day; and that is for us. It

belongs to that which is new and heavenly, after judgment and vengeance are past. We were strangers, and pilgrims, and wanderers, but now we are such no more. Judgment is past, and here we are to enjoy the land. For us, of course, this is the heavenly thing.

The risen and glorified saints are the centre of heavenly blessing; just as the Jews will be the centre of the earth in the millennium. In verse 14, we read, "Thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord (Jehovah) thy God in the place which the Lord (Jehovah) shall choose: because the Lord (Jehovah) thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase" — not *according to* thine increase now, but "*in*" — "and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice".

God's rest and everlasting joy, that is the Feast of Tabernacles.

We have the Holy Ghost, which brings us into the present enjoyment of our relationship to God; and, what is yet more, He shews us things to come.

Because the Lord has blessed us in everything, we can keep the feast; besides which, coming things are shewn to us.

How can I understand what He says, "Set your affections on things above, and not on things on earth", if I do not know what the things are?

Now, instead of the Feast of Tabernacles, Christ gives the Holy Ghost; but when the Feast of Tabernacles is come, Christ will shew Himself to the world; He could not do so *then*, as He told His brethren; but everything will yet be fulfilled.

And now arises this question as regards what we have been speaking of: How far do our souls realise, not only present grace and favour, but also our portion in that which belongs to us, so that our conversation is in heaven? It is only this that will take our hearts out of earth.

It is part of the very condition in which a Christian stands, that he should know the things that are freely given him of God. They *are* revealed unto us by the Holy Ghost. People think them so great, and wonderful, and blessed, that they cannot be known, but the Apostle shews that is not true. They are not revealed in the Old Testament, but they are to us Christians. No doubt one Christian may see and enjoy more of them than another; we may differ as to spirituality; still, we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, "that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God". It is expressly for this that we have received the Spirit. Many are the

things thus revealed to us in this way. Christ, and Moses, and Elias were seen talking together on the mount; and therein was revealed something that which is yet going to take place. Moses and Elias go in to there from whence came the Father's voice.

We get a multitude of things in that way.

The Lord says, "The world seeth me no more, but ye see me" — not with natural eyes, of course.

Again, I shall see every one of you as perfect as Christ's heart would have you be; is not that a joy revealed and known now — that we shall be like Him absolutely? Fully glorified; and it is only by the Holy Ghost that my heart gets hold of this.

Down here, I have to watch every step of the way, lest my feet get into the mud; but there is no mud in heaven; I shall be walking there upon the street of gold, where all is holiness, and there I cannot pick up anything else. Is that not something newly revealed to us?

I see that Christ is going to give me a white stone and a name written on it that nobody knows but the one who gets it; there is a special interest between me and Christ, just as I call my child by a pet name.

And we shall sit upon His throne. But that is a lower thing. The Holy Ghost brings all this with living reality to our souls. Only, remember that now we walk by faith, and not by sight.

Never to lose the Lord, never; for ever to be with Himself, with the One who has drawn my heart to Himself, with the One who loved me and gave Himself for me!

But up there, I shall not want to think of myself, because sovereign grace will have made me like Christ.

For ever with the Lord; no longer to wish for Him, or to hope for Him, but to be there, and, in the highest sense of it, to sit down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit to be sweet to my taste!

The Lord could not keep the Feast of Tabernacles, but nevertheless the Holy Ghost was to be sent down, so that there should be acquaintance with divine and heavenly things, and also that we should know the things that are freely given to us of God. Abounding in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost; having our affections set on things above, and not on things on the earth.

Mark the character that this will give, even to our worship. So often it is, "I was once a poor lost sinner, and here I am washed and saved". But is that all?

Suppose there was a storm destroying everybody, and that I found shelter in a house, am I only to say, I am saved from the storm? Have you found nothing in the house into which you have got? Yet how many are in that state!

What is the level of our intercourse with God? There is divine favour and present grace, but if we are really walking with God, He will lead our souls into acquaintance with these things, which as yet are matters of hope, and He will shew them to us.

In this feast, which the Lord could not keep, the Holy Ghost is given to us that our hearts might live in the power of what He reveals; and when the Lord comes, it will be to put us in full possession of that which our hearts have been in meanwhile, for now is our conversation in heaven.

Thus even the holiness of our walk here is identified with our hope there.

Can our hearts, and how far can our hearts, look up above and outside of this world?

We have to plod through the world, of course; I know it. Christ had to go through it, and He did so for us; and now we follow Him through it, so that at least the character of our passage through it should be the manifest effect of our citizenship being in heaven. There is such a thing as having, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, so that we should be living where Christ sitteth, the One who has gone to prepare a place for us. We have to pass through this world; but where are our hearts, beloved friends? Can we say that our associations of life are all up there? Is that where our hearts are living? Does our worship bear the stamp of our conversation being in heaven? The stamp of the happiness and blessedness which is the expression of our association with Him there? “The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal”.

Let us, then, remember that the blessed Lord has spent Himself for us that we might have the unseen; and also that He has Himself entered there as our Forerunner.

NOTES OF READINGS ON DEUTERONOMY (4) (JT 7)

Deuteronomy 16

WK There must be a good deal of importance attached to "the place where the Lord thy God shall choose", for it occurs in this chapter many times.

JT Yes, prominence is given to it here. Inasmuch as it is not seen at the institution of the passover in Exodus 12, one is led to the conclusion that it is in accord with Deuteronomy principles, namely, that it is not the passover as in its bearing for the believers in delivering them out of the world, but rather the gain that is acquired through the exercises spiritually, so that God gets His portion out of it. Whilst the believer is in Egypt, or in the world, and is exercised, for the moment it is not God that is before him, although, of course, God is in his soul, presented to him in the gospel, but it is a question of his deliverance out of the world; and in all that process he is exercised, and the exercise brings about spiritual growth, which is sure to show itself in reference to God in time. Now, Deuteronomy supposes that all the exercise has taken place, and that the believer is happily with God, and now he connects all that which he had gone through before with God with the *place* where God's name is.

WJB You would say he is affected by what God has done for him, and now there is some response to God.

JT Yes; I think as coming up to appear before God he recognises the part that God had in it all: not only am I delivered from the world, but I see that God has had an end in view in my deliverance; and I think that Deuteronomy supposes all that.

WK You mean Deuteronomy supposes that he is in the sense of it.

JT It supposes that the work is there; that the effect of the exercise is in his soul, and that now you are free to recognise the divine end of it.

TMG That is a very great thing to recognise.

JT I am sure it is; it is that which leads to the believer being rightly formed for the assembly.

JM It is not so much a question of your deliverance through the death of Christ, but the object that God had in regard to it.

JT Yes, the exercise that we go through in the process leads to spiritual growth, so that there is that by which one may approach God.

TMG You attribute all to God, and in the sense of that you have before you what God has in view.

JT Yes; it says "thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God, of the flock, and the herd, in the place which the Lord shall choose to place his name there". Deuteronomy 16:2. In Egypt it was in one's *house*.

TMG Here it is more the assembly that is in view.

JT Yes, I think it is the groundwork of it; where the soul has God before it. If you have a number of people with God before them there is material for the assembly.

EM Would you not say that the passover is in the mount of His inheritance?

JT Well, it is here an ordinance for Canaan; it supposes that they are to be in the land.

WH This is the formation in view of taking up the privilege?

JT Yes; I think that from the Christian point of view it is what he has gained through the exercise; his deliverance out of the world has resulted in spiritual gain, and God is now before him. The progress that you have made enables you to see that it is not your own house that is before you now; it is the place where *God's name* is. You consider for God. That is the great point with the Christian. There is now a place in which God's name is placed. One's house is where one's own name is, in a way. But now you come to see that *God* has got a house, and a Name.

TMG You must be in the liberty of it first before you can have this.

JT It is a great thing to be right in one's house; and hence the necessity of the passover being there. Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us, so that one cannot allow in one's house any principle inconsistent with that. There was a great object in an innocent lamb being slain; first being brought in and kept from the tenth to the fourteenth day of the month. There it was, so that every member of the house might see it and say, 'Surely there is nothing in that little creature to merit death; why then should it be slain?' That raises the question as to the cause of its death, and that ought to affect our houses. So on the fourteenth day it is slain and then the feast of unleavened bread fellows, which signifies self-judgment. That is, in the light of the death of the lamb; if that little creature, which merits no death, has to be put to death, then it must be on my account; and that leads to self-judgment.

EM Is deliverance looked at here as an accomplished fact?

JT Quite. You see here that while you have the three main feasts, there are seven in Leviticus 23. There are only three here because Deuteronomy has an allusion to the state of the people, that is, to the effect of their exercises; whereas Leviticus has reference more to God's ways. The sabbath is placed at the head of them, showing that that is what God has before Him; then the other feasts show how He reaches that. But here, we have the outcome of the people's exercises contemplated, God's portion in them. There is no book in the Old Testament that is more peculiar than Deuteronomy; because it sets forth that it is the mind of God that we should enter heaven now in spirit; and He sets before us the motives why we should do so; and then all that is based upon the exercises that we already have had in the wilderness.

EM Is this what is meant by "to do thee good in thy latter end"? Deuteronomy 8:16.

JT Yes; Canaan is the latter end. But "to humble thee and to prove thee, and to know what is in thine heart" Deuteronomy 8:16; not that God might know, because He knows beforehand, but that thou mightest know, and to do thee good at thy latter end.

TMG That He might bring us into a large place.

JT It would help one greatly as to the wilderness to pause over Deuteronomy 8; it is a crucial chapter, in one sense, because it is the chapter the Lord Jesus quotes from. In all the discipline in the wilderness, in all the things that we endure, God has in view to search us, and to prove us, that we might know what is in our hearts: the depths of evil we are capable of. Now God probes, and probes until it is all out. He means to replace it all by Christ. So that in Deuteronomy 26 you have a basket filled; you come in with your basket full. Of course, your basket is yourself. That is to say, the depths of your heart have been disclosed to you, and displaced; and it is filled with Christ now. "Three times in the year shall all the males appear before me" Deuteronomy 16:16; but no one is to appear before God empty, the Word says. Now, if you are not to be empty, what are you to be filled with? Christ.

TMG It is more the Colossian idea. Ephesians is in Christ; new creation.

JT Yes; Deuteronomy is more Colossian; that is to say, Christ is in your heart; and how did Christ get there? God put Him there. He put you in the wilderness that you might discover how bad your heart is; and when we discover how bad it is we judge it.

TMG Is not that what God is doing with every one of us?

JT I think so; and all the discipline is to that end.

TMG It is a great thing to think in connection with discipline how interested God is in us when He takes such pains, such trouble with us. It helps one greatly to think of it.

J.T. We were singing:

> In the desert God shall teach thee
> What the God that thou hast found. (76:6)

So that whilst we discover how bad our hearts are, we come to understand that God supports us. Nothing can be more interesting than to trace the latter part of the book of Numbers, where the Holy Spirit is formally recognised in the springing well. That is the basis of Deuteronomy; the Holy Spirit is recognised in the believer, instead of the flesh. Romans 7 is equivalent to the experience of the wilderness; because the effect of the law is seen. By the law is the knowledge of sin. The inner depths of the heart are exposed to the believer; not to anybody else. The apostle, who speaks there, was outwardly a most exemplary character. As we were saying last night, we have a public history and a private history. Now Romans 7 is to bring out what you are; and the need of it is to make room in your heart for the Deliverer.

Rem We used to hear that we would not be true here without Romans 8.

JT You cannot be a truly delivered soul without the Deliverer being in your heart. That is very important point to get hold of.

JM Deliverance is a positive thing.

JT I think one is really free when Christ is in the heart. Who can come up before God unless he has Christ in his heart. God will not have anyone else but a person who is full of Christ. Christ becomes known to us in each of these feasts in a peculiar way. In the feast of the passover it is, that He was judged on account of my sins; that endears Him to me. In the feast of weeks He gives the Spirit, and that endears Him to me. In the feast of tabernacles He comes for me; that is what answers to it in Christianity. Literally it is the introduction of the millennial world for the Jew; but what corresponds with this for us is going to heaven. In Christianity these three feasts are all together.

JM I am glad of that remark, because I could not see how the passover was connected with the place where the Lord chose to place His name.

JT You see the three are put together in Deuteronomy. You are a fully developed Christian if you appear before God in the light of these three feasts. Christ is in your heart according to all that He is.

EM Are not the three feasts in a way entered into in connection with the breaking of bread, and in entering into the privilege of the assembly?

JT I think so; they underlie the assembly. If you bear in mind that it is a question of the state of your soul, it simplifies it. You come before God in the light of the passover; and in the light of getting the Holy Spirit; and in the light of Christ coming for you. So that you are a fully developed believer before God.

PL I suppose it is anticipative in the feast of tabernacles? In verse 15, "in the place the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name" is left out. Would that indicate that when that feast comes the gathering will be to the Lord; He will probably be there Himself?

JT And there will be no contrary element any longer.

WJB When the assembly comes together there is the past, the present, and the future.

JT So that you have the full position of the believer. It is not exactly your deliverance, nor your joy, but it is the light in which you have apprehended Christ in these three connections. If it be the feasts of the Lord given formally as in Leviticus, you have, as I remarked, seven of them, beginning with the sabbath; because there it is the means by which God reaches His end in the dispensational way. What is in view here is the state of the saints, the three appearings before Him being complete testimony that He fully controls the heart.

TMG He will rest in His love and that is what He has before Him.

JT Yes; He begins with the sabbath. It is God's way to state first what He has in His mind; and then to show us how He reaches us.

PL It is not so much the wilderness that is in view, as the land.

JT It is instruction *for the land*; because we should have Christ in our hearts in the way in which this chapter suggests. We are thus prepared for the land; it is the normal thing for us.

PL As in chapter 12; "These are the statutes and judgments which ye shall observe to do in the land which the Lord God of thy fathers giveth thee". Deuteronomy 12:1.

JT The thought of the Lord's name involves so much for us now. Every man has his house, and his name and honour are bound up with his house. So God is pleased to connect the passover with a man's *house*, in order that *it* might be in accordance with the judgment that was meted out to Christ. But when

you come to God's house, everything there is also in accordance with the death of the Lord.

WK It shows the importance of having your own house right first, otherwise we shall not make much progress in the house of God; He would have unity practically in our minds and spirits so that we may feel that we are one.

JT And in our unity are the principles that govern the house of God.

JM That would be a test as to people assuming to have the Lord in the midst.

WK You cannot eat the unleavened bread if you have not the passover.

JB Would you say that the place where the Lord puts His name is connected with being "knit together in love"? Colossians 2:2.

JT The Lord's name carries with it all that He is. I suppose the idea of "name" has reference to what a person is. We have come to recognise what is due to that name.

WHM Jerusalem was the place where He put His name. In Zechariah 14:17 there is a very interesting passage in connection with the feast of tabernacles "It shall be that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain".

JT We have no choice on our part in regard to the place. The Lord chooses the place.

WK And every other place is forbidden. It is a great thing to have the sense of that.

JT It settles everything; it disallows all party spirit and system.

WK There can be no such thing, there can be neither class nor party.

JT You may come up from Beersheba, and I may go down from Dan, and another may come from Reuben; and they all meet there. You cannot say I have no sympathy with the Danite, if he comes to the place where the Lord's name is; and if the Lord has accepted him I cannot say I do not like him. If I cannot have fellowship with a Danite or a Reubenite then I have to leave the place where the Lord's name is. We have no choice. It is the place where divine principles are. That brother may not be very congenial from my point of view; but if he is walking according to divine principles I must go on with him.

JM Likes and dislikes are not according to divine principles.

TMG It is a very great mistake, when persons are before the mind, instead of divine principles. What a serious thing it is!

JT Then I may have very different surroundings, and very different circumstances to a Reubenite or a man of Judah but, whilst in that place, there is no difference. We are in the light of the name of the Lord; we are not simply those who believe in the doctrine of the Lord's coming; we are not to be classified as pre-millennialists. We wait for Him; we wait for our own Lord and that is because we love Him.

Ques The last feast involves the truth of His presence.

JT Present conditions will not continue; the Lord's coming will change them so that it will be no longer His *name*, but *Himself*.

WH Is not something of the spirit of the new conditions realised by the saints now?

JT The feast of tabernacles may imply what we enjoy below when the Lord is in the midst. Where there is the consciousness of His presence we pass out of time circumstances anticipatively into what is eternal.

> And see the Spirit's power
> Has ope'd the heav'nly door,
> Has brought us to that favoured hour
> When toil shall all be o'er. (74:5)

Well, that is the principle of the feast of tabernacles.

WK "And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast". Deuteronomy 16:15.

TMG It is heaven begun.

JRM Is not the sabbath God's great end in view? Would that be the eternal state?

JT Well, the sabbath is a relative term; that is to say, it has allusion to the previous days of labour; and as far as I understand it, it has a millennial state of things in view. When you come to eternity you cannot compass that; it had no beginning nor ending. We have part in that. The sabbath has relation to God's ways on earth; it is the seventh day. The first day of the week is an *eighth* day in one sense, and in that sense it may go on to the eternal state. But for us it is the first day, because we belong to the beginning. The Jew does not come in on the first day.

JRM I was thinking of God's rest.

JT I know; but God's rest is at the end, not at the beginning; therefore it is a relative term, it refers to six days of labour. But when you come to our period there is nothing previous to that; hence Christ is the beginning of the creation

of God, and we have part with Him in that. Hence the Jew comes in after us. The first day is connected with eternity, whereas the sabbath is the end or the completion of a period.

JMcF What is the difference between the sabbath and the feast of tabernacles?

JT Well, as to time they are both realised together. But the feast of tabernacles has another side to it. Look at Leviticus 23:33-38; Leviticus 23:39,40; Leviticus 23:42,43. There are certain points in that scripture that show a very great difference between the feast of tabernacles and the sabbath. The eighth day is connected with it; and it is when all the produce is gathered in, and they are reminded that after they came out of Egypt they dwelt in booths. It is a sort of reminder of what they were in the wilderness, and what arrangements and care and attention God had given them when they were there. Also it is an allusion to the peculiar way in which we learned God in those circumstances, and that *now* we are at home with Him.

JMcF It would seem that all these three feasts spoken of in this chapter have the same thought connected with them: "that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life" Deuteronomy 16:3: that is in connection with the passover; and "thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt", Deuteronomy 16:12 in connection with the feast of weeks; and the same thought is connected with the feast of tabernacles.

JT That is all on the side of our state, and enjoyment; whereas the sabbath is really God's rest.

Rem Would you say that all these feasts were to bring that about?

JT No doubt. God rests in His love; and you can understand how He rests in us as we are thus gathered around Him. But this chapter is presented from the side of our experience. In the feast of tabernacles we are dwelling with God, but dwelling with Him as known through all the experience of the wilderness. 'There no stranger-God shall meet thee'; it is that side more.

WK "Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine". Deuteronomy 16:13. They were looked at as in the enjoyment of all that God has to give. The previous experiences are all summed up here.

JT Yes, it is all the effect of the wilderness experience: the fruit of it, gathered up. So that God is dwelling with a people who can reciprocate His affections.

APPEARING BEFORE GOD (JT 32)

Deuteronomy 16:16,17

It will be known to most of us that Deuteronomy gives us the words of Moses himself. He is in the position, not of being commanded to say certain things to the people, but rather of saying them of himself, and in saying them, he would convey the affection that he had for the people of God. Thus this book brings out uniquely the "man Moses". In Numbers 12:3, the Holy Spirit tells us that "the man Moses was very meek, above all men that were upon the face of the earth"; thus he is a figure of Christ. We have to take account of the Lord Jesus as the representative of God here, but we have also to take account of Him as He was, or as He is, "the man Christ Jesus", (1 Timothy 2:5). Moses was but a figure; the Holy Spirit says all that is possible about him, there was none like him! He will say all He can about any of us: we may be sure that our good qualities shall not be unheard of. We need not advertise, the Spirit of God will place His own estimate where it will be known. And so, as Moses is envied, and, alas, by those nearest to him, Miriam and Aaron, the Lord came down to the tent door, so concerned was He as regards His servant and the place he had. He was one of three; God had sent before the people Moses, Aaron and Miriam, (Micah 6:4). Moses was one of three, but he was the first of the three. There is always that principle with God, and He has a very good reason for it. So that the man Moses was entitled to the place, not only had God given it to him, but he filled it well; and God came down to the door of the tent of meeting to settle the matter. We never need to defend ourselves, for it is a matter that God undertakes for everyone He came down specially to adjust this matter, and in the record of the adjustment the Holy Spirit says that the man Moses was the meekest in all the earth.

We get the man in this book — what a place the saints of God had in his heart! But, as I said, he was not the Man Christ Jesus: he was the best there was in those days, but the heavens were never opened upon him, nor did a voice announce heaven's delight in him. So that over against this you have in Christ substance that God approves: "that *holy thing*". It is not only that holy babe, but that holy thing essentially, holy in all the growth "in wisdom and stature". There was substance in what He said: the Lord Jesus, in saying what He said, was what He said, "Altogether that which I also say to you", (John 8:25). John, in his epistle, in bringing out the peculiar distinctiveness of Christianity, that it was a substantial thing as over against all other religions of the world, ancient or modem, deals with a thing: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, that which we contemplated, and our hands handled, concerning the word of life;

(and the life has been manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and has been manifested to us:) that which we have seen and heard we report to you". You have thus presented in Christianity what is substantial. Moses being what he was, could not be referred to thus; indeed, in this very book he reminds the people that God had spoken to him and said: "Gather me the people together, that I may cause them to hear my words", (Deuteronomy 4:10). And he says: "Ye saw no form", "the day thou stoodest before Jehovah thy God". It was a question of words, of what they heard, not of what they Jew. Whereas in Christianity it is what has been heard, what has been seen, what has been contemplated and what has been handled with hands. It is important to bear this in mind. But it was suggested in the man Moses. He was the best; he came nearer to Christ than anyone of his day; so much so that God came down and spoke with him mouth to mouth, face to face.

And so He says to Aaron and Miriam: "If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known to him in a vision ... Not so my servant Moses ... Mouth to mouth do I speak to him openly, and not in riddles; and the form of Jehovah doth he behold", (Numbers 12:6 - 8). So that there was a remarkable correspondence between Moses and Christ. What a reflection there must have been in him at times because of what Moses saw! He saw the tabernacle in pattern on the mount. No one could have set up the tabernacle save Moses; the specifications alone would not have sufficed. In Moses you have a man who *saw* the thing, and who *saw* the form of Jehovah. He was an ordinary man like the rest of us, but what flashes of light, not only in his words but also in his manner, would at rimes emanate from him! But then think of Christ! "In him all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell", (Colossians 1:19). What infinite substance you see in the Lord; what shining out, the very expression of the divine substance!

Well now, in this book you have the man Moses and what *he* said. "These are the words which Moses spoke"; that is how the book begins. So that it is not a question of repetition, but of a presentation of truth from the standpoint of such a man. In chapter 16 he takes account of Israel's year. Elsewhere our days, our weeks and our months are taken account of, but in this chapter it is a question of the veal. However many years an Israelite might have lived, they would all be filled out; that is to say, Moses is making room for God in the people for every year. There are the days of our years, but then there are our *years*.

The idea of compression is important with God. The life of Jesus represents more compression than any other life. If God takes account of Jesus for a day,

it is as if he took account of me for a thousand years: "One day with the Lord is as a thousand years", (2 Peter 3:8); for what can that be other than what was in Christ. That is the idea of compression. And so the life of Jesus was wonderfully compressed: He was cut off in the *midst* of His days — that is to say, they were but a half of seventy years — but it was not until every item of the divine will was expressed.

David lived seventy years, his was a wonderfully compressed life. Several men of God were employed to write it, such as Samuel and Nathan; it was a life of events; he was full of days, full of experiences with God. There were blemishes, but generally all those years of David were precious in the sight of God. No believer can but admit that our years should be filled up with God. Or, as I might put it, that God, in so far as we can fill, should be filled with us, to use such an expression reverently — and we have to use human expressions. God has a heart, and He looks for something out of us every moment of our lives, but certainly every year. "Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before Jehovah thy God in the place which he will choose". You see how love in Moses by the Spirit provided for God, and for the years of the lives of His people, how these years were to be occupied. And so in the first month of the year a godly Israelite would be thinking thus: 'Fourteen days hence I have got to come before God'. What heart-searching there would be as the tribes in their different settings would be thinking thus of God! It is said of one that "God is not in all his thoughts", (Psalm 10:4), whereas this provision is that God should be ever in the mind. In spirit Jesus said: "I have set Jehovah continually before me", (Psalm 16:8).

In these verses the first, feast was the feast of unleavened bread, (Deuteronomy 16:16,17). Earlier in the chapter it is the feast of the passover. Now, what I want to say is, dear brethren, that what the first feast would impress upon the mind is: if I am to appear before God, I cannot be there as inflated. Because we cannot deceive God;

God is not mocked. I may, so to speak, make a good show in some of the synagogues up north, or down in Beersheba, or toward the west, but how am I to appear before *God*? The first suggestion, therefore, is deflation; it is the feast of unleavened bread.

The feast of the passover has two sides. The one is more objective: "our passover, Christ, has been sacrificed", (1 Corinthians 5:7). I do not do that, it is done for me. But the point here is the feast of unleavened bread — the state in which Israel was to go out of Egypt. They were to seize the lamb, a lamb for a house, each according to the measure of his eating; the lamb was to be according to the capacity of the house, and if perchance the capacity

was too small for a lamb — for it was to be a yearling — then the neighbour next unto his house was to share it. It was not only the neighbour, but the neighbour next unto him, for there are graded neighbours contemplated in Scripture: it was not the neighbour at a relative distance, but the neighbour nearest who was to share with him. If I am to sit down and eat the lamb with the neighbour nearest, then I must be careful as to the feelings I have for him. But there is no question of the *quantity* of unleavened bread. The neighbour is to bring the unleavened bread as well as I, and it is not likely we will have too much: but the Israelites were enjoined not to have leaven in all their houses.

So that the feast of unleavened bread is not the objective side. The objective side is connected with the lamb, and my measure, my capacity in relation to that. It is a whole Christ, and so the basis of unity is laid in the passover. Not a bone of Him was to be broken. There was a whole idea, and I bring my neighbour in to share it with me. One lamb, as it were, for the whole of Israel. And it was not to be sodden with water, it was to be roast with fire and eaten that very night. That is all objective.

But then, as I said, the quantity of unleavened bread is not given, but the more I have, the smaller I shall be. What I want to show is that you have deflation here in the first feast; then you have expansion in the feast of weeks, and then again reduction in the feast of tabernacles. Now all this is very practical. It is a question of how we begin the year, and with us, of course, of the maintenance of littleness, a self-imposed littleness. God will not lose an opportunity to make me small, as here in the flesh. He knows how to do it. He brings in circumstances to this end. And the saints as a rule do not miss an opportunity to make you feel small, and that is a service. But self-imposed littleness, self-imposed reduction is what God highly values, and that is the feast of unleavened bread. The neighbour comes in — how much unleavened bread has he got? That is really the test; because ordinarily each lamb of a year old would be about the same size, but the difference would be in the quantity of unleavened bread and bitter herbs. How much has the neighbour got? How much have I got? So that it is not a question now of my meeting the brethren at Jerusalem; the point here is that I *appear before God*. How am I to appear? Throughout the Old Testament, in the types especially, you have the idea of God appearing to men, a most interesting subject; but this is, how am *I* to appear before Him? I have come down from Dan — a long journey — and I am here at Jerusalem, the place where Jehovah has placed His name, and I partake of the passover; I have got the unleavened bread with me. But now I say, that is not all. Earlier in the chapter they were directed to go back into their tents after this feast. But now I am to appear before God, God is

going to take account of me, it is a question of appearing. In Chronicles God was looking out; not simply looking down on the mercy-seat, but looking out; that is one beautiful phase of the type, that God is looking out for any comer. And here are Israelites coming from all parts, and God is looking out for them. It is a most searching matter at this first feast — how much deflation? how much reduction? — for in my spirit, if I have any idea of worldly status or if I have a little money, all these things are leaveners in themselves. I cannot appear before God as marked by any of these. I can appear before the world with them, they will help me there very much, but they will not help me in Jerusalem; I shall be ashamed of them there. The godly Israelite has come to Jerusalem to appear before Jehovah, and the first thing God would remind him of is, that it is the feast of unleavened bread, that sin must be judged, that all that would inflate must be disallowed. That would be the light that governed the position the first month of the year.

Well, I begin with this reduction in which God has pleasure. Although the lamb was a year old and developed, it was to convey what is attractive. The Lamb of God is lovable, attractive, John 1. I feed on that; that is the great objective thought presented to me in Christ, what Jesus was here, "a small round thing"; it was a complete thing, but it was small.

Now, the second feast is "the feast of weeks". God said, as it were. You can stay here as long as you wish. At first I am limited to seven days; I go through an exercise of reduction in the presence of God. Now, He says, you are capable of being filled to the full. The Corinthians were straitened in their affections; the apostle says: "For an answering recompense, let *your* heart also expand itself", (2 Corinthians 6:13). And so in the feast of weeks the idea is enlargement. It is the Spirit, the Holy Spirit — the period of the Spirit. Think of what is opened up to me in the Spirit of God! It is called the feast of weeks, which just means it takes place at the end of a period; but there is no limit at all. Love will never limit us; it is a question of my capacity, whether I can take in all these things. As you get on to the feast of weeks you see what God has prepared before the world for our glory! And God says, as it were. You can stay. It is the one feast on which there is no time-limit. And we can understand it, for in the Holy Spirit we have access into eternity. It is a marvellous thing God has opened up to us! Jacob spoke about the gate of heaven, but he did not go in.

> 'And see the spirit's power
> Has ope'd the heavenly door,
> Has brought me to that favour'd hour
> When toil shall all be o'er'. (74:5)

This is your home. When the two disciples said to the Lord, "where abidest thou?" He said, "Come and see", (John 1:39). We have come to it now: "The day of Pentecost was now accomplishing ... . And there came suddenly a sound out of heaven as of a violent impetuous blowing, and filled all the house where they were sitting. And there *appeared to them* ..." (Acts 2:2,3). They were to get a conception of it, for Christianity is a substantial thing; it is not only what came out in Christ, but the Holy Spirit is here. Christianity is not a theory. The Holy Spirit is a Person. He appeared to them and He sat upon each of them — that is where He is. So I have come to the realm of the Holy Spirit; I appear before God now in the largeness of the capacity which the Spirit gives. As it says elsewhere: "Borrow vessels ... let it not be few", and only when all the vessels were filled with the oil, it stayed, 2 Kings 4. God does not give His Spirit by measure from His side. But as for me, the measure is my capacity, when that is reached it has to stop. Think of the capacity that was in Jesus! The Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove, bodily, that is to say, the whole idea.

This is a marvellous feast! A good deal of time was given to prepare: from the morrow after the sabbath on which the sheaf of the first-fruits was presented to Jehovah. How glorious was Christ in resurrection! — for that is the thought. In the sheaf being presented, waved, you get the idea of what God is looking at in Christ. Now God says, I will give you fifty days to prepare for this; there was to be 'a new meat offering'; the saints were to be presented as corresponding with Christ. God would have us thus before Him. It is His eternal counsel that we should be before Him in love, holy and blameless. I need not say that a good deal more could be said about this feast. The wave-loaves were to be baked with leaven — sin is owned to be there, but rendered inactive by the fire. Pentecost involves access into eternity, what was before the world, prepared "for our glory". Not for beings of that time, but for ourselves; prepared for us before the world by God because He loved us, and because we love Him now. Love delights in company, it abhors distance, and so God would encourage us to remain in His presence, as this feast indicates.

The next feast is "the feast of tabernacles". There Leviticus. There it is a question of the whole course of God's dealings with His people; but not so here: the point here is appearing before God, and God selects three. All the males (the saints viewed in the intelligence which the Holy Spirit gives them) were to appear. The question now is, how small can I be after being in heaven? What the Holy Spirit leads me into as in the feast of Pentecost shuts out all that is of man all that is of the flesh. How much of that heavenly principle can I carry back? That is the idea of the feast of booths, for the word is "booth", it is a small idea. And what it means, I apprehend, is, how small I

can be — how great I am is illustrated in my smallness; because, really, from this point of view, my smallness is an evidence of my greatness. I disregard for ever greatness according to man; this is greatness according to God. And greatness according to God is smallness *here*, as exhibited in Christ, the "small round thing" — that is, the life of Jesus outwardly. No attempt at show whatever, it was all a question of bringing heaven here. The ark of the covenant illustrates it. How small it was relatively! Now the idea is, can I dwell in a booth with two or three brethren? I am in a small place, not in a big house where I can occupy a room of my own, but in a booth; there are no compartments there, the idea is smallness. And so, to bring it down to practical working out, it is a question of whether I love the brethren, whether I can be with the brethren in smallness and reproach; whether I can *live* with them, or whether it is simply a question of tolerance. In Nehemiah's day, you will remember, they had this.

The feast of booths has two parts. Compare Leviticus 23:34 - 36; Leviticus 23:39 - 43. The first had a fulfilment in Solomon's day, but not, the second. The first had reference specially *to God*, it was a "holy convocation"; the second part of the feast is brought in at the end of Leviticus 23, and the kind of things they were to use to make the booths is mentioned, branches of trees, and the like. The latter part has the love of the saints for one another in view and their mutual joy before God.

It is said of Nehemiah's feast that there was none like it since the days of Joshua; that is to say, Solomon's did not come up to it. Solomon had the first part of it, from the fifteenth day to the twenty third day of the seventh month, but there is not a word about the booths, 2 Chronicles 7:9,10. Solomon had a great house, things were big in his day, according to God, of course, but the corresponding smallness was what was wanting. That is what I take the second part to indicate, and I believe that it marks, or is intended to mark, the end of our dispensation. As I enter into the truth of the Holy Spirit, I come out here in this world in littleness and in readiness to share with the brethren; it is no hardship to me to live with them in the smallest circumstances. Moses had experience of living in very great circumstances in the king's palace, but it says that he fled to Midian, and in Midian he sat by the well. He says, as it were, I see now that it is no question of natural energy, of slaying Egyptians with my own hand, it is a question of the Spirit of God. He *sat by* the well, as much as to say, I have arrived at this, that it is a question, not of my energy, but of the Spirit of God. Then he watered the flock of the daughters of Reuel, he did not slay any of the shepherds. The presence of the Holy Spirit means that I am able to help, not to destroy. Then it says that he was "content to dwell with the man", the priest of Midian. So whatever the circumstances into which I am

led in the government of God, I am to be content. In my relations with my brethren, or in my financial circumstances, I am restful; I know what I have got up there, by the Spirit, and I am content with what I have got down here; I make no effort to change. Moses was content to dwell with the man, and during all those years he stayed there he never-asked for my wages. Jacob did; it was a question of wages with Jacob, but not with Moses. The man who sits down by the well is not serving for wages; he that does so, when the wolf comes, will leave the sheep. At the end he is said to have led the flock of his *father-in-law*, showing what good terms existed between them, to the backside of the desert, to the mount of God, to Horeb. Could he have done better? I do not think so. He led them to the backside of the desert and came to the mount of God. What a word for every servant of Christ! And God said to Moses, as it were, I see what you are at, and He appeared to him in the bush and called him by name: "Moses, Moses!" (Exodus 3:4). Moses understood this in his own experience, and therefore he could speak feelingly about the feast of booths. God said through him to the people earlier: "I caused the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt", see (Leviticus 23:43). So God, when He takes us out of Egypt, would teach us love. Now He would teach His people how to love; as the apostle says to the Thessalonians: "Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another", (1 Thessalonians 4:9). So He puts me alongside His people in humble circumstances, and teaches me how to love them. He says: 'I do not want you ever to forget how to love: keep this feast on the fifteenth day of the month. Appear before Me during this feast'.

It is very beautiful. Shall we not enjoy it in heaven being near to one another? We are now being taught for heaven. He took them out of Egypt eating the passover lamb. They were to replace Egypt. Egypt was slain in its first-born. Egypt is to be superseded by Israel. But what is the Israel that eats that lamb? Small outwardly, like Christ. So He says, I will put you into booths and you will love one another. The point in this book is to make them fit for heaven, for Canaan. Balaam saw them dwelling thus, they were like lign aloes by the waters, he looked on them with the vision of the Almighty. He saw them dwelling in tents, dwelling in love, for they had the Spirit typically there. God says. You must never forget this. The Lord said to His disciples: "Have love amongst yourselves".

Well, you will see that these are three important feasts — the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles. May we understand them!

Deuteronomy 17

- DEUTERONOMY 17 (CAC 5)
- ADMINISTRATION (JR 1)
- READING (JT 26)

DEUTERONOMY 17 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 17

The first concern of the judges would be to maintain what is due to God by the exclusion of everything idolatrous or imperfect in His service, and next to that would come the adjustment of all differences, or "matters of controversy", between His people. These are the subjects brought before us in the section from chapter 16: 21 to chapter 17: 13.

God will have His altar safe-guarded from that which would defile it by idolatrous associations. To set up an image or a statue as an adjunct to the altar of Jehovah might not appear so serious as setting aside the altar altogether, but it would associate that altar with things idolatrous and hateful to God. His altar was identified with the revelation of Himself, for it was in the place where He would cause His Name to dwell. All that tends to obscure the revelation of God, or the grace of His glad tidings, is really of an idolatrous nature. Much that has been introduced under plea of helping worship, or making the service of God more attractive, is really idolatrous in the sight of God. There are many things of a material nature which appeal to natural religious sentiment or superstition,

and which men, deceived by Satan, regard as helping to produce feelings of veneration. In practice these things invariably tend to obscure the light in which God has come out in the revelation of Himself in His beloved Son.

Then chapter 17: 1 forbids the sacrificing to Jehovah of that "wherein is a defect or anything bad". Our approach to God is to be in all the precious perfectness of Christ Himself; anything other than this is "an abomination to Jehovah thy God". A wrong thought as to the God whom we approach will always have along with it some "defect" in the apprehension of how we approach. If Christ has been identified sacrificially with us that we might be identified with all His acceptability, this excludes any thought of defect. We approach in the consciousness that we are in the acceptance of a perfect Person and a perfect work. What is defective or bad could only be expressive of what we are according to the flesh, and God has no pleasure in that. It is, indeed, "an abomination" which God utterly condemned in the death of His own Son. The only acceptable approach now for us to God is in the sweet savour of Christ.

We may learn from this section of the book that things are to be judged of in the light of divine revelation, and of approach to God only according to the perfection of Christ. There is to be no toleration of departure from this. The

man or woman who should work abomination by bringing in what was idolatrous was to be stoned that evil might be put away from the midst of God's people (verses 2 - 7). But such a judgment was not to be executed without "thorough inquiry", and the establishment of the truth and certainty of the matter, and this on the testimony of two or three witnesses; one witness was not to be held sufficient. This principle is important, and the apostle Paul told the Corinthians that his judgment of things amongst them would be based upon it. It is a divine principle of judgment in the assembly of God (2 Corinthians 13: 1). There is ever the possibility of *one* witness being mistaken or biased, but we have the Lord's own word that it was written in the law that "the testimony of two men is true" (John 8: 17). If two or more should conspire together to give false witness "thorough inquiry" will bring to light that their testimony does not agree (Mark 14: 56 - 59), so that the matter charged is not really established. If evil is proved, and has to be judged, "all the people" have to put their hands to it (verse 7). It is not to be the work only of the witnesses, or of the judges and officers, but of all the people. It is incumbent on all to clear themselves individually and collectively. All such judgment has in view the preservation of purity in the worship and service of God.

Then verses 8 - 13 shew that there is an ultimate court of appeal for "matters of controversy" which are "too hard" to be settled "within thy gates". "Then shalt thou arise, and go up to the place which Jehovah thy God will choose". The people of God, even viewed as in the land, are by no means perfect, and divine provision is made for judgment in regard to things which may arise as "matters of controversy". It is part of divine assembly conditions that there is ability to declare "the sentence of judgment". The priests, the Levites, the judge, are there, and "the man that shall act presumptuously, and not hearken unto the priest that standeth to serve there before Jehovah thy God, or unto the judge, that man shall die". God commits Himself to the decision, and woe to him who is presumptuous and disregards it!

"If also he will not listen to the assembly, let him be to thee as one of the nations and a tax-gatherer" (Matthew 18: 17). The Lord puts the assembly precisely in the position assigned in Deuteronomy 17 to "the place which Jehovah shall choose". In any case of difference between brethren, the assembly is the ultimate court of appeal on the earth, divinely constituted so. But it is well to read the whole of Matthew 18 in connection with this subject, because it shows the spirit in which brethren are to act towards each other in their own gates before bringing any case before the assembly.

The Lord set a little child in the midst of the disciples as the pattern of greatness in the kingdom of heaven. If I am wronged I am to seek redress in that spirit. If I have a matter of controversy with a brother let me see first that I am converted, and have become in my spirit as a little child — all self-importance gone, and a spirit of true self-humbling in its place. Then let me see that I have got rid of all offences within myself. If my hand or my foot or my eye have caused me to sin have I cut them off and cast them from me? Then have I the shepherd spirit that would go and seek one who has gone astray? What a powerful and touching appeal such a one could make to a brother who sins against him! The brother has to be reproved, but in what a beautiful spirit is it done! The object in it is to *gain* him. He is, for the moment, a sheep gone astray, but this makes him the subject of a special care and solicitude, more than the ninety and nine brethren who have not so gone astray. He is sought diligently. It *may* not be possible to gain him, for here there is a question whether the straying sheep will be found. "And if it should come to pass that he find it". The possibility is implied that he may not succeed in his quest, but he makes every effort to do so. "But if he do not hear thee, take with thee one or two besides, that every matter may stand upon the word of two witnesses or of three". This links Matthew 18 with Deuteronomy 17, and it safeguards the assembly from being appealed to in regard of trivial or imaginary grievances; there must be two or three witnesses to the seriousness of what has occurred. The "one or two besides" would bring an enlarged appeal to bear on the sinning brother — more of the little child humility, and of the evidence of severe self-judgment, more shepherd seeking! What an activity of faithful love in our own "gates" before the case is carried to the supreme court, the assembly! It is when all private appeal fails that the Lord says "Tell it to the assembly".

There is no court on earth invested with such authority as the assembly. "Verily I say to you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on the earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on the earth shall be loosed in heaven". There is no other court which judges in the light of the revelation of God in grace. The assembly stands in the grace of the revelation of God, and it judges in the light of how He has acted, and of how Christ has acted. Everything that is not according to grace comes under judgment in the assembly. The bondman, having been forgiven a debt of ten thousand talents, went out and seized his fellow-bondman who owed him a hundred pence, and cast him into prison. His lord called him a "wicked bondman"! He had not acted according to the grace shewn to himself, and it ended in his being delivered to the tormentors till he should pay all that was owing.

In the place which Jehovah chooses everything will be judged according to the Name which dwells there, and that is the Name of ineffable grace. If one's conduct is not according to grace it will assuredly be visited by God governmentally. One who will not listen to the appeal of grace, as voiced by the assembly, makes himself a spiritual outlaw. He need not be recognised any longer as a brother. Such is the Lord's own word.

It may be asked, Where can we find the assembly today? In the present broken and scattered state of the people of God does there still remain any ability on earth to pronounce on moral questions with an authority which is recognised in heaven? These questions are humbling, for they serve to remind us that the public failure and ruin is deplorable. But in Matthew 18 we see the mind of Christ as to the assembly, and we also see certain additional words which were uttered by the Lord in immediate connection therewith, and which seem to indicate that He had in view — as He surely had — the time when the assembly as a complete entity would not be available to hear things or to speak. He said, "Again I say to you". It is a definite and important addition to what He had said as to the assembly, and it is as authoritative as His previous utterance. "Again I say to you, that 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 unto my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18: 19, 20). In this additional utterance the Lord speaks of "two of you", that is, two *of the assembly*. He brings things down to the smallest possible collective number, and while emphasising the dependence in which such would be found, for all would come to them through prayer, He pledges the Father and Himself to them. Even if only "two" are available for spiritual agreement in the Lord's interests it is possible for them to be gathered together to His Name, and their being so gathered would answer to the chosen place of Deuteronomy. It is still the privilege of two of the assembly to be gathered together unto the Name of the Lord Jesus, and to be agreed in what they ask, so that it comes to them from His Father. Yea, He declares, "there am I in the midst of them". No outward ruin can invalidate this. If such were called upon to express a judgment in regard of matters connected with the honour of the Lord's Name, and humbly and dependently prayed to the Father, an answer would assuredly be given, and one would view with the gravest possible concern any disregard of the judgment at which they arrived concerning matters within their responsibility. One would tremble lest in thinking lightly of such a judgment one might prove to be guilty of that presumptuous acting which Deuteronomy 17 declares was to be punished with death. If the Lord sets in the assembly, or even in two or three of the assembly, what answers to

"the judge that shall be in those days", and "the priest that standeth to serve there before Jehovah", He will not suffer those spiritual elements to be disregarded. One fully admits weakness and failure on the human side, but the truth of God abides, and one part of that truth is that where assembly conditions are found, even though in extreme weakness, He can and does maintain ability for priestly judgment, and faith regards this, and would not decline from it to the right hand, or to the left.

"Matters of controversy" have arisen, and will arise, but we may be sure that upon all such matters there is a divine "sentence of judgment". When that sentence is pronounced it is a most serious matter to disregard it. Much exercise, and priestly nearness, are required to get the Lord's mind, but it is impossible that there could be any "matters of controversy" too hard to be settled in the place which God chooses.

From verse 14 we have the mind of God as to a king. It is not looked at here as being a wrong thought; it is rather God anticipating that His people would take up a thought which was in His own mind. The thought of a king was one of those conceptions of dignity which were created by Christ according to Colossians 1: 16. "Whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities; all things have been created by him and for him". It was a dignity created that it might be ultimately taken up as part of the glory of Christ.

Melchisedec was the first type of Christ as King, but historically Nimrod came before him. And there were "kings that reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned a king over the children of Israel" (Genesis 36: 31). But, though kings first appeared in man's world, they had a definite place in the mind of God as that which He would introduce in due time. He said to Abraham, "Kings shall come out of thee", and "kings of peoples shall be of her" (Sarah). And to Jacob He said, "Kings shall come out of thy loins" (Genesis 17: 6, 16; Genesis 35: 11). Jacob declared by the prophetic Spirit that "The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and to him will be the obedience of peoples" (Genesis 49: 10). These scriptures clearly convey royal thoughts. The thought of a king was of God, however wrongly it might be taken up by men, or even by the people of God. We know that the people's state and spirit were wrong in wanting a king in Samuel's day; it was really rejecting Jehovah as their King (1 Samuel 8: 7). But God had His own thought of a King; David and Solomon were typical of Christ as His Anointed One.

The true thought of a king is one who exercises influence over others on God's behalf. It does not seem to me that Christ personally is in view in Deuteronomy 17, but rather those kingly features derived from Christ which

are to be found in rule and leadership amongst the people of God. Christ is the true Judge and Priest and King, but judicial and priestly and kingly features are to be found amongst His people as derived from Him. It is important that kingly characteristics, such as are here described, should be found amongst the saints.

No observant person can fail to notice the immense effect of influence either for good or evil. We all come under influence, and it is of the utmost importance that we should make sure that the influences under which we come are according to God. "Thou shalt only set him king over thee whom Jehovah thy God will choose" (verse 15). The choice of the creature, whether it be our own or that of others, is not to be trusted. We must assure ourselves by every available evidence that the influences which we allow to act upon us are divine and spiritual. Certain persons at Corinth were puffed up, and were getting influence amongst the saints in a carnal way. But Paul called attention to the house of Stephanas as persons who had "devoted themselves to the saints for service", and he besought the brethren to "be subject to such, and to every one joined in the work and labouring" (1 Corinthians 16: 15, 16). There were persons, even at Corinth, who could be looked up to as giving a spiritual lead. It was, therefore, more to their shame that they had set as kings over them men who were not chosen of God, but who were really "false apostles, deceitful workers". We are to look out for such persons as are chosen of God to be leaders of His people, and to welcome their influence. "Be imitators all together of me, brethren, and fix your eyes on those walking thus as you have us for a model" (Philippians 3: 17).

"From among thy brethren shalt thou set a king over thee; thou mayest not set a foreigner over thee, who is not thy brother" (verse 15). How important it is that no alien influence should be permitted to be in leadership! The king must first be a brother; he must be marked by the features of family relationship. John's relations with the saints were of this character, "I, John your brother" (Revelation 1: 9). Diotrephes was of a very different stamp; he loved to have the first place, and he had apparently got it, but he was not a brother; he did not receive the brethren. He had none of the family features of the children of God. How sad that such a man should have got leadership in the assembly!

The king's heart was not to be "lifted up above his brethren". Kingship amongst the saints is not what it is in the world. "The kings of the nations rule over them ... . But ye shall not be thus; but let the greater among you be as the younger, and the leader as he that serves" (Luke 22: 25, 26). It is said of Zion's King that He is "lowly" (Zechariah 9: 9), and all that is truly kingly

amongst the people of God must have this character. If we aspire to exercise influence for God amongst His people, and it is right and pleasing to Him that we should desire to do so, we must see to it that we are with them in brotherly relations and affections, and that our hearts are not lifted up above them.

The saints are going to reign with Christ, and it is fitting that royal features should mark them now. It is written, "And they lived and reigned with the Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 20: 4). If we live with the Christ we shall be able to reign with Him; we shall bring a beautiful and heavenly influence to bear upon our brethren. God would delight that one who is truly a brother, and whose heart is lowly, should have a place of influence amongst His people. Such a one would be kingly, as setting forth the excellencies of God, while having low thoughts of himself. We should be ready to honour all who bring such influence to bear upon us.

"Only he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor lead back the people to Egypt, to multiply horses; for Jehovah hath said unto you, Ye shall not return again any more that way" (verse 16). The horse is a figure of natural strength, and it is identified with the world as the place of human resources. No lead in that direction is to be permitted to have influence amongst saints. It is as true today as it was of Israel, that "the guides of this people mislead them" (Isaiah 9: 16). Human ability, natural wisdom and prudence, things which commend themselves to man as in the flesh, are "horses", but they are vain things for safety (Psalm 33: 17). We must beware of every influence which tends towards the world; such influences are an ever-present danger, as they have been in all past ages. There is no more solemn warning in Scripture than the history of Solomon. Beginning in a lowly spirit, seeking wisdom from God, highly favoured by Him, and yet drifting into every snare against which Deuteronomy 17 was designed to safe-guard him! Do not let us think that *we* are in no danger of going back to the world out of which we have been delivered. If the secret history of souls were laid bare it would be found that many were moving in that direction. With some, alas! the public course is the plain evidence of it. Every worldly-minded Christian more or less influences others in the same direction. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we should not allow ourselves to fall under such influence. It is directly contrary to all that is kingly in a spiritual sense as suited to be in leadership amongst saints.

"Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold". It is necessary for us all to take heed to the word, "Keep thy heart more than anything that is

guarded; for out of it are the issues of life". (Proverbs 4: 23). But this is especially needful for those who exercise influence over others. The affections must be guarded. There must be vigilance lest anything turn the heart away. "Silver and gold" tend to make one independent of God, and make it easy to live a life of self-pleasing. Paul had truly kingly features; he lived to Christ and for the saints; he could say, "I have coveted the silver or gold or clothing of no one" (Acts 20: 33).

None of us can influence others beyond the measure in which we are influenced ourselves. Therefore the king is to "write for himself a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests, the Levites; and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them" (verses 18, 19). The king was to be a model of subjection and obedience for all the people. He was to be the expression of God's will, as carrying it out himself. The best way to write a copy of what is in God's will for His people is to become the living transcript of it ourselves. I doubt whether we have any true influence for God beyond the measure in which we are a model for others to imitate. The Lord has Himself left us a model (1 Peter 2: 21); He was altogether that which He said (John 8: 25). Paul tells us that he was a model (Philippians 3: 17), and he exhorts Timothy to be "a model of the believers, in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4: 12). He says that the Thessalonians became models to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia (1 Thessalonians 1: 7). That is how to have true kingly character amongst the people of God; we cannot exercise influence for Him in any other way.

ADMINISTRATION (JR 1)

Matthew 18:15-20; Deuteronomy 17:8-13

JR The Lord may help us to consider His provision in view of sin coming in, in view of failure on our part. Where would any of us be, or where would any of our localities be, if the Lord had not made ample provision for failure and breakdown? The Lord has foreseen what we needed and made certain arrangements for us, that when there is sin or failure on our side, there is a remedy, there is an answer to it. There is provision made for sin coming in between brother and brother, or, of course, between sister and sister; there is provision made for offence being settled between them according to the divine standard. If that does not succeed there is something in reserve, that is one or two besides, and then the great reserve is the assembly. I trust we may be helped to see how the assembly is available to us in this setting at the present time: "Tell it to the assembly". There is a certain level of things where there is the answer to every difficulty; whatever comes in, there is a full answer. We need to learn how to arrive at this, how the assembly is available, how it operates and how we come into the good and benefit of it in facing difficulties which come in, have come in and, if we are left here, very likely will come in. What do you say?

AJEW It just affects me that the spirit of the new covenant enters into this. God has come in from His side in the work of Christ to resolve everything, and that is the point that is to govern us. Matters are not to be left, nor to be ignored, but to be resolved according to God, and the new covenant enters into that.

JR I am sure it does. We need to see that matters can be resolved. There is no matter that cannot be resolved.

RSR In the beginning of the chapter the Lord Jesus called a little child to Him and set it in their midst and there is no suggestion that the child was taken away. Is that the spirit which would help us?

JR Yes, I am sure it would. If we had read the whole chapter we would have seen that in the first section down to verse 14 a little child is very much in mind: the Lord refers in verse 14 to "one of these little ones". A little child is in mind and not withdrawn throughout the whole chapter. You will notice that down to verse 20 is one statement of the Lord Jesus.

"The disciples came to Jesus saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of the heavens? And Jesus having called a little child to him, set it in their midst" and began to speak, and His speaking is without interruption down to the end

of verse 20. In verse 21 Peter has another question to ask, but down to verse 20 it is one statement of the Lord Jesus therefore it all hangs together. We read in verse 2, "Jesus having called a little child to Him set it in their midst", and in verse 20, "Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them". There is a link between a little child being in their midst and "there am I in the midst of the them". Do you think so?

ECB Yes, I do and it seems as if the Lord is really saying to them that this little child is exemplifying features of Myself. What Mr Welch said is of importance, because it is the same sense in which the spirit of the new covenant underlay the old covenant, God providing for sin being dealt with with grace on His side, was it not?

JR That is right; even in the old economy there was provision made for sin coming in, and there was an adequate answer to it which satisfied God; how much more in Christianity!

ECB If God had not provided means of dealing with things He would have to come in in judgment; but He has left a resource.

GWB Do you understand verse 20 to apply to an expression of the assembly in any place? It behoves us to have great respect for the assembly in any place even if there be only two or three.

JR Exactly. "Again I say to you", in verse 19, would make way for conditions in our own day. Down to verse 18 would be strictly applicable before the breakdown came in but "Again I say to you" makes provision for days such as we are in now.

GWB So that we must not give up any of the truth that we have been brought to in relation to the assembly, however few there may be in the locality.

JR In connection with what you are saying, verse 17 says "Tell it to the assembly" and verse 18 says "Whatsoever ye shall bind on the earth". Who are the "ye"?

GWB The assembly, surely.

JR The "ye" would be the personnel of the assembly. The Lord then says in verse 19 "Two of you". These are the same kind of persons as He speaks about in verse 18, are they not? "Whatsoever ye shall bind on the earth shall be bound in heaven". The "ye" would be the personnel of the assembly. "Again I say to you, that if two of you", that is the same kind of persons coming through into our own day. Is that what you understand?

GWB It is the greatest comfort and support at the present time where there are only two or three in many places.

AJEW It would not be going too far, would it, to say that the little child was still in their midst? The Lord had set it there and, as you say, it is one statement right through. So that the Lord would include the little child in the "ye" in the spirit and character of it.

JR That is just it.

FCM So that, whilst accepting the humbling character of the public position, it is not assumption, should the sad necessity arise, to call a meeting of assembly character. I only remark that because some no longer with us call it claiming high ground, but this passage would emphasise the rightness of it and the necessity for it.

JR I am sure that is just it. We would fail the Lord if we did not resort to assembly character when needed. To go on with sin would be dishonouring to the Lord.

SGS In that regard, referring to what we touched earlier yesterday — the mind of Christ — would we expect the Lord's mind about a matter?

JR Yes, I am sure that is so.

CH Does this suppose assembly-minded persons, persons who take heaven's view? It explains what you have enquired about in verses 18 and 19. Whilst there are the two or three, there is a qualification: "Gathered together unto my name".

JR I am sure that is right. The scripture in Deuteronomy speaks about the place which Jehovah will choose and, as is added in chapter 12, "to set his name there", v 5. I think there is a link between the place that Jehovah has chosen to set His name there and "unto my name". "Unto my name" is not presumptive claiming, it really makes way for what the Lord can put His name to. What do you think?

CH It involves moral qualifications because 'unto his name' eliminates every other name. I was thinking about Mr Welch's suggestion as to the covenant. You referred to verse 14: "It is not the will of your Father who is in the heavens that one of these little ones should perish". It means, do you think, that you have the Father's feelings as you approach the brother?

JR That is very helpful.

FNS Is there an identity between the "two or three", or the "two of you", and the "those" of 2 Timothy 2:22? If we take any ground at all it is that we call

upon the Lord out of a pure heart. That would involve having unmixed motives as to His own rights and claims, and this would make us morally qualified for being in this position that you are speaking about in Matthew 18, and in character have assembly features.

JR Exactly. It speaks in that chapter about the Master. "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. But youthful lusts flee, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart", vv 21, 22. Your suggestion is that these are the same kind of persons as the "two of you" or "two or three... gathered together unto my name". I think that puts the matter rightly.

LAB Is the Lord's commendation of Philadelphia a link with this: "not denied my name", Revelation 3:8? I wondered whether it meant that in a day of breakdown there was the maintenance of the rights of the Lord here in this scene.

JR Exactly, that is right.

SDKR Regarding this passage, "If thy brother sin against thee", it has been claimed that this is only a personal matter. If a brother compromises the fellowship, is that a sin against me?

JR I should think it is, if you get to know about it. Maybe nobody else knows about it but you know about it.

SDKR This passage amongst some has been ruled out in connection with matters affecting general fellowship, that it is only a person that has done something personally against me.

JR In verse 21 it says, "Then Peter came to him and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times? Jesus says to him, I say not to thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven". That is a new covenant attitude. It is the attitude of forgiveness regarding personal matters.

SDKR That is helpful.

J.R. What do you think?

ECB It almost seems as if Peter missed what the Lord had said. He "came to him" and asked a question which took the Lord back to the beginning of what He had said. The Lord said "If thy brother sin against thee, go, reprove him between thee and him alone" and Peter says "How often" shall he sin against

me? What the Lord says to Peter would obviate the rest of the procedure because you would forgive him; but if it went on and it was not possible, it would have ultimately to come to the assembly. But there is something implicit in the question that Dr Roberts asked, that we easily tend to think it more important to deal with offences against ourselves than offences against the rights of Christ in the assembly, and we then get the thing the wrong way round.

JR That is very helpful and very important.

JM-l In regard to Dr Roberts' question, do you think that, if it is possible, priestly persons would cover matters, and the more that can be dealt with in this way the better? But then if matters have to be told they are told to the assembly.

JR That is the truth, the more things can be confined the better. If they can be satisfactorily settled in a confined way they are satisfactorily settled as far as God is concerned. Is that right?

JM-l I think so. Care should be taken not to tell things that involve individuals. Do you not think we should be very guarded as to matters becoming the subject of gossip, for instance?

JR It is "thy brother". It is a setting of the kingdom and discipleship, yet it involves the family feelings: "thy brother".

CH Is it also priestly? You go to the brother in a priestly way to show the true nature of a thing; reprove means that. We do not go as legislators exactly but as those who have the Father's feelings; and that involves giving place to the Spirit to show the true character of a thing, to help the brother to judge it if possible.

JR That is very helpful. Your reference to verse 14 "the will of your Father who is in the heavens", is very interesting because it is "thy brother" in that relationship.

CH Quite so. As to Dr Roberts' question, it is after all a fellowship, a partnership, is it not?

JR Exactly.

SNC If we keep more before us the family idea there would be more affection entering into our dealings with one another, would there not?

JR That is right. The Lord says "your Father". We would say 'our Father': "Our Father who art in the heavens", Matthew 6:9. Our appreciation of our

relationship with Him would help us to view each other in a respectful and affectionate way.

SNC I am sure that is right because naturally you do not want your family matters to be divulged abroad. It is just as a man would not go speaking abroad about his wife, he keeps that to himself, does he not?

JR That is right. He would be jealous as to the family dignity.

EMW Does the Lord make provision for the unusual? He speaks about the spirit of a little child and then later of His being in their midst; but He says "if thy brother sin against thee", as though it should really be unusual; and yet there is a provision, as you said, to meet it.

JR That is very fine. If we were all in the good of what we had yesterday the unusual would not occur, but we all know how far short we come in practice of what we had yesterday in the normality of what is available for us. We ought to live in the joy and good of it. What you say as to the unusual is important.

AAB As in John's epistle, "if any one sin" (1 John 2:1), so it would be in the spirit of advocacy in our relations with our brother.

JR John begins that chapter by saying "My children, these things I write to you in order that ye may not sin; and if any one sin"; that is the unusual coming in, interrupting, do you think?

AAB Yes, I think that greatly helps. In another connection, I would like to ask for further help as to the link between the Deuteronomy scripture and Matthew 18. Is it your thought that "the place which Jehovah thy God will choose" is something available in each locality, not necessarily another place literally?

JR Yes, it would be available in each locality, yet it is above the details and circumstances and the feelings and all the kinds of things that arise. In Deuteronomy 17 a journey is involved, a journey from where the difficulty is. We know how we can become obsessed with the difficulty, the details of it, the circumstances, the persons involved, sometimes prejudice, sometimes preference, and all that kind of thing; we get bogged down. But they take a journey. It says "arise" in verse 8: "Then shalt thou arise, and go up to the place which Jehovah thy God will choose". You can understand in Israel something happening within certain gates, but then they arise and take a journey and the further they get away from the place where it happened the less the details would count, and they come into another environment, another area. That transferred to "tell it to the assembly" is what we need to experience.

AAB It is a higher level, as you say, above the detail of the matter, involving the augustness of the assembly. You used the expression, the assembly being available to us. How does that work out?

JR This area we are speaking about, this elevated level of things, is available to us, were we all able to drop the other things that bog us down. The tendency (and I speak from personal experience) is to go, as we say, into assembly with feelings and obsession with details and all that kind of thing, whereas we need to take this moral journey. If we actually took a journey it would help us in a sense, but it is a moral journey we take.

AAB The way Paul approaches the Corinthian issue in the first nine verses of the first chapter would involve what you are speaking of. He approaches the whole matter at the level of the assembly of God before getting into the detailed side.

JR Exactly.

AJEW 1 Corinthians 1:2, "called saints, with all that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours": is not that, in a sense, the moral journey? That is "in every place" that one name and what belongs to it is governing us.

JR That is very helpful.

ECB I think what is being said is of the greatest importance, as to getting out of the atmosphere of the trouble. When you come to Matthew 18 you come to it by way of chapter 16, and the assembly to which you bring it is "my assembly" where cause and cause and stroke and stroke and controversy are relegated to their own level and the atmosphere is His.

JR Quite so.

JAP Would Acts 15:2 confirm what you say? It says "A commotion therefore having taken place, and no small discussion", and so forth. But when the matter came into the assembly what order, what grace among the brethren, what unity was reached in that chapter!

JR "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (v 28) is the conclusion arrived at. It is a sphere where the Spirit dominates, the Spirit's mind is available. It says in Deuteronomy 17, "Thou shalt come... and inquire". The place that Jehovah will choose is in a certain contrast to "within thy gates". "If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between cause and cause, and between stroke and stroke, matters of controversy within thy gates, then shalt thou arise, and go up to the place which Jehovah thy God will choose". It is of interest that in the instructions

given in 1 Corinthians 5, which has in mind a meeting to deal with evil, Paul says "For I, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged as present, to deliver, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (ye and my spirit being gathered together, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ)" (vv 3, 4) — "ye and my spirit". Paul was not there personally but his spirit was there. It just gives some idea of the place that Jehovah will choose. The thing is faced locally but has in view what you referred to in Matthew 16, the assembly universally.

ECB Yes; what you are saying makes me wonder whether we would not be better advised to revert to the old custom that an assembly meeting for discipline was a meeting specially arranged, and that if after discussing something in care we, as we used to say, go straight into assembly, we may not be leaving time for the journey you speak of.

JR I think that is just right. If we go into assembly character immediately, we tend to go in with feelings, details, controversy, preferences, maybe prejudices: all these things in our minds.

ECB Sometimes it may even be proved to have been valuable that the Supper intervened. The Lord knew that the thing was being carried in a priestly way, but the Supper helps you to get to the place that He chooses.

JR Exactly.

HAH So would it be right to connect this thought of the place, and what Mr Welch has said as to the new covenant, with the reference to Jerusalem above, "which is our mother", Galatians 4:26?

JR It is another level, it is above. We need to take this journey to get to the above, what is above the level of what is controversial which our own personal feelings often enter into. To act with these feelings is not going to help. We go and enquire, it is a matter requiring patience.

PJH What an opportunity in the interim for getting into the sanctuary and learning the way of things! Did not the psalmist say "Then understood I their end" (Psalm 73:17) when he went into the sanctuary?

JR He viewed things differently. It is the place that Jehovah thy God will choose. "Thou shalt come unto the priests, the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days".

ETM It says "arise, and go up to the place which Jehovah thy God will choose". It is a matter involving what is gradual, what is deliberate, and counting on the Lord's support. The Lord uses the same term: "if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all to me", John 12:32. That would be in mind in a

person who is considering for God, arising and going up to the place; and the Lord is with persons who are considering for God firstly.

JR That is right. You were giving us movement last night, the way to return. This is the way up. It is necessary that we take this way up if there is going to be a satisfactory answer to any difficulty.

PvdB Would the mount of transfiguration and the scene of glory coming in between chapter 16 and the practical working out of it locally show how this glory and this new covenant character of things would affect the working out of things locally? Then in the end of that chapter the sons are free.

JR That is fine, because on the mountain "His face shone as the sun", Matthew 17:2. It is the benign influence of Christ. The sun on which all life on the earth depends is the position Christ has in relation to us.

NTM "Boaz went up to the gate", Ruth 4:1. I wondered if that was the idea; he went up, there was a very important matter on which a good deal depended, even David finally.

JR Very good, it is an upward movement.

DLS What comes out in this movement is the tenor of the word, and instruction, and then the thought of the law, bringing in, away from the detail of things, the way that God would speak and give right judgment.

JR That is very confirming. The judge that shall be in those days is spoken of in verse 8. Between verses 18 and 19 of Matthew 18 we can think of the Lord's appearance in Revelation 1 taking place; that is, the breakdown comes in and the Lord appears as the Judge. In this chapter of Matthew, that would be between verse 18 and verse 19. Therefore we have to do with the Judge and what the Judge says to each assembly. We read, "His eyes as a flame of fire" and so on; He appears in the garb of a Judge. They "come unto the priests, the Levites and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire". It is all to be in the light of, and in keeping with, the Lord's judgment.

CH Mr Taylor sen epitomised it in what he said, that we should be governed by the light that governs the position. What the Lord would accredit the assembly with, we at least try to act in the light and spirit of. An action taken in any particular locality is really in the light of the whole, is it not?

JR Exactly. I think that is a very important thing. Paul's spirit would be gathered with the Corinthians; they have to take the action but he is with them in it. It is just a suggestion of what is universal, a certain standard entering into the action which takes place in a locality. Do you agree with that?

CH Mr Taylor also spoke a great deal about the universal priesthood. That enters into this chapter, does it not? If there is godly exercise everywhere about certain matters, that is to be carried by what is done in any particular gate.

JR Yes, that is very important. We can help one another to experience this assembly level we are speaking about. We can help each other to take this moral journey when the occasion arises, leave behind the detail and the controversial side and really reach an assembly judgment on that level. It comes down to two, two can do this.

ACC Both Matthew 18 and the scripture in Deuteronomy give the idea of something greater: "Tell it to the assembly" and then "the place which Jehovah thy God will choose". You get the feeling of something being greater than what you may be dealing with; there is this august vessel that is your resource. In Matthew 18 the man makes a journey; he finds he has lost his sheep and he goes after it to find it, as if he is coming into the matter as having had this journey. What he would bring in in the way of feelings and care!

JR Very good, it is the will of your Father expressed in one down here.

RS Does verse 12 support that? Also is it in line with what you said as to the Judge, which enters into the teaching in Matthew? The shepherd leaves the ninety and nine on the mountains, whereas in the Luke setting he leaves these in the wilderness. I wondered if the Lord's teaching on the various mountains in Matthew has to be followed up to get the importance of the level you are stressing.

JR Yes. In Luke 15 the sheep is lost, in Matthew 18 it goes astray.

CH In Luke the sheep is found.

JR Yes. The one that is lost is found. "Gone astray" puts more responsibility on the sheep, whereas, as to the one that is lost, the shepherd accepts the responsibility.

CH Yes, in Matthew it is "if it should come to pass", the Lord leaves it there. There is perhaps the moral issue there; but Luke presents the divine system operating, the three Persons active in it in view of recovery.

JR Exactly; the assembly, therefore, would come into that. We need to see that the assembly, as we are speaking of it, is available to us as we are prepared to take the moral journey necessary. "Then shalt thou arise, and go up to the place which Jehovah thy God will choose". Everything in that area is according to His approval, according to His thoughts, the place that He

chooses; He does not choose any place, it is what is in suitability to Himself. Now, we provide these conditions. In the Old Testament it meant that the house had to be built. There was in that building an answer on the earth to the place that Jehovah will choose. That is what Matthew 18 presents really: "if two of you shall agree on the earth concerning any matter".

ECB Is the place which Jehovah thy God will choose the place in which He is known as "the holy, the true", Revelation 3:7? That is to say, you are in a sense beyond the descriptions of Himself in chapter 1 of Revelation, which are broken up in some of the other local assemblies that He addresses, but the atmosphere of "the place" is "the holy, the true", is it not?

JR That is fine.

AAB Would the matter of judgment involve the distinguishing of both good and evil? We are somewhat prone to think of judgment in relation to evil only. What is commendable comes into the Lord's adjudication of the seven assemblies.

JR That is right. He finds in two of them, Smyrna and Philadelphia, what He finds no fault with.

AAB Would that help us practically not to lose sight of what is referred to sometimes as assembly status?

JR Quite so.

JAS "If two of you shall agree on the earth concerning any matter": that is said and very often left short, but I think the important thing is "whatsoever it may be that they shall ask", which brings in the note of dependence upon the Father and gives us the link with the little child. What do you say to that?

JR That is right. It gives a link with the priests, too, in Deuteronomy 17: "thou shalt come unto the priests". Now this we are speaking about is available to two or three in a locality.

PHB Does it refer to what Mr Taylor sen called attention to, the highest court of appeal? That would be final, would it not?

JR Exactly. It is final in Matthew 18 and it is final in Deuteronomy 17 and it is final because it is God's judgment expressed locally. It could not be final otherwise; unless it were a right judgment according to God it could not be final. There is the suggestion of what is normal in Matthew 18 and in Deuteronomy 17 and we need to get into these normal conditions. The assembly is animated by the breath of Jesus; it is a place where the mind of

Christ is and where the Lord's headship operates. It is coming from the unusual into the normal, which moral journey has to be taken.

EMW I think that is both helpful and important. Do you not think it essential to emphasise that the place where Jehovah has set His name exists today? I think Mr Coates says somewhere that we should not be prepared to admit that the place where Jehovah has set His name does not exist today.

JR It exists: "where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them". Is that not where the place that Jehovah has chosen to set His name exists?

EMW That is how I understand it.

FvR What do you say about a brother sinning against you? Often we take offence in the heat of things and our judgment is not right. We have to go to God about the matter and we find that what we interpreted as sin was not really intended.

JR Yes, Mr Burr said earlier that we tend to have more regard for things personally than we have for the rights of Christ being violated.

CWH Is there a link between this place where Jehovah would place His name and the way that the Lord speaks of the Spirit coming: "Whom the Father will send in my name" (John 14:26), the peculiar character in which He is available?

JR Yes, the name of Christ is here. He personally is up there, He is in heaven, but His name is here, and the Spirit is identified with His name here, and we are to be identified with His name here in the maintenance of what is due to that name and the rights that belong to it.

CFD I think what is coming forward is instructive. It would help us to get back to the dignity connected with the way things are presented in Matthew 18, which I believe was lost. Telling it to the assembly carried a certain dignity, so that actually there was an announcement in assembly at one time.

JR That is right, the anointing, in that sense, was identified with it. I think what you say is important, that we get back to the dignity of the assembly, because things were done with much lack of such dignity.

GWB That usually included a word from the Scriptures. Do you not think that was very profitable and something that, if necessary to have such a meeting, should be in our minds? The judgment should be supported by a word from the Scriptures.

JR I am sure that is right. You remember that came up in your meetings in Edinburgh. It is important to go over it because that is part of the dignity of the occasion of assembly character.

EJJ What about the time factor? I am thinking of the Lord saying "I gave her time that she should repent", Revelation 2:21. Our brother has mentioned about action being final. Mr Darby, I believe, says somewhere that it is the last possible thing we should think of; so every avenue would be explored. Both these scriptures suggest that there is time taken, a journey taken and consideration given. I wonder sometimes whether we are in such a hurry to act that we overlook this, and it would link with what Mr Welch suggested as to the new covenant. Is this in line with what you are saying?

JR Very much in line and very important, because we knew to our shame something of that haste during certain years. What Mr Dadd says about the dignity that belongs to the assembly needs to have due regard with each one of us in our local settings.

RDP Do you get the two things in Isaiah 42:4: "He shall not faint nor be in haste"? Do you think there are the two sides in that, both the not fainting and the not hasting?

JR Yes, that is very important too. We are not to faint. There is not to be a lack of facing up to what requires to be faced.

DER Do you think, too, that if sadly the assembly has to deliberate on a matter we might well be reminded of what we have been taught as to the seriousness of compromising such a judgment?

JR Exactly. That is what we have, both in Matthew 18:17 and in Deuteronomy 17:11-13.

BWW Does that mean that the breakdown about which we know something and form part does not alter the gravity of what is set out in Matthew 18?

JR That is right. An action taken according to verses 19 and 20 is to have as much authority with us as if it had taken place at Corinth when the first epistle was written.

WCL Is there something in the fact that in the breastplate of judgment the twelve stones are set in order? I am linking it with what is in the affections, for all those stones were of great value. Every one would be on the priest's heart as he operated.

JR That is right. They would represent local settings. The individuals would come into it too, but the stones were set in four rows of three which

corresponded to the four camps of three. Is that right?

WCL That is what I was thinking. It involves the whole. There is a glory about judgment which maintains all the rights of God in the assembly.

JR Quite so. The great public breakdown must have begun through lack of making use of the Lord's provision in unusual circumstances. That is how it must have happened. There must have been a violation, or a lack of respect or a lack of making use of, the Lord's provision. Now, we are to respect the Lord's provision for us when unusual things happen. There is ample provision. Do not let us think that we are deprived of anything, there is ample provision for anything unusual happening.

FCM Would you see a link between the stress earlier in the reading that things exist now, and statements in Hebrews 12: "Ye have come to mount Zion; and to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem"; then it adds "to God, judge of all; ...and to Jesus, mediator of a new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling", vv 22-24? Is this the area to which we are to resort and where there is every divine provision and yet all in relation to what God is, Judge of all?

JR I am sure that is right. We have come in Christianity to the greatness and dignity of these things you refer to.

AKT Would gathering "together unto my name" involve on our part self-judgment lest any personal or natural motive might intrude, but that the rights of the Lord might be paramount?

JR That is it, I am sure. We have been taught that "there am I in the midst of them" is a consequence of two or three gathered together unto my name; it is not exactly a promise but a consequence. That is, we provide the place which Jehovah will choose. That is to be in our minds. As we were saying, the house had to be built, satisfying divine requirements; there was a building on the earth which answered to Jehovah's desires as the place He would choose; it became tangible when the house was built. Thus we need to provide the conditions and two or three can do that; two or three in a locality "gathered together unto my name" provide the conditions that the Lord would say, This is what I choose.

WL Mr Taylor sen used the word 'franchise'. What would you say about that?

JR That is authority to act and is important. That depends on conditions.

AT Others ought to discern where the Lord is in a matter when the priests act rightly.

JR Yes, if it is right according to right judgment it is normal for it to be recognised.

AT Yes. Sometimes you find two agreeing this way and two agreeing that. The brethren need discernment, do they not, where the Lord is in the matter and where the enemy is in the matter?

JR Yes. The exercise before us now is to take this moral journey and arrive at true assembly conditions and thus right judgment. Of course these conditions are in persons and can be in two or three. The Lord says here, "if he do not hear thee, take with thee one or two besides". He does not say in verse 17 'take with thee others also', as if it is on that level. "Tell it to the assembly" is another level altogether involving a moral journey to reach this level of things, for divine judgment is available for us. Is that clear?

ECB Yes, and I think these things are of the greatest importance and are reviving us to something that we once knew. But is all this actually the counterpart of purifying it in Ephesians 5? That is, Christ does that from His side, but then there is the responsibility on our side. The way in which He does it sets the standard for the way in which we maintain responsibility.

JR I am sure that is so. There is to be a corresponding moral answer, practically and tangibly. It is this practical and tangible side where we need help. We must have the truth of the assembly abstractly but we are to be exercised to provide the tangible answer, and that is possible. It is not a glorious impossibility, it is what is open to us and available for us.

ECB Does not all this, from another aspect, emphasise that ministry generally should be calculated to raise the level of things amongst the brethren?

JR Exactly.

HCH Psalm 122 speaks of "set thrones for judgment, the thrones of the house of David". Would that speak of dignity?

JR That is right. The Psalm opens with "I rejoiced when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of Jehovah. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem". It is the going up; it is the tangible answer. "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem". It is what we put our feet on, not something that is vague and distant.

HCH Quite. Another scripture is "them that turn the battle to the gate", Isaiah 28:6. This is the standard.

ETM The "O Jerusalem", do you think, would be a result of the benefit of the inbreathing? "O Jerusalem" would be the expression of deep feeling.

JR That is good.

AB Would Hebrews 12:14, 15 help us to find the right way? "Pursue peace with all, and holiness... watching lest there be any one who lacks the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you".

JR Yes, it certainly would.

FvR Must we be preserved from trying to cover things up out of sentimental reasons? Brethren sometimes say, Let the matter rest, it will find a solution. But you cannot do that, can you?

JR It depends what the matter is. Certain things you can allow to rest and forget about. Other things, of course, have to be taken up. If a matter involves the rights of Christ it has to be taken up. Mr Becker refers to "Pursue peace with all, and holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord". That is priesthood. "Watching lest there be any one who lacks the grace of God". It is the pursuing peace positively and "watching lest" wrong things should come in.

RJC Would you say something more as to "the place which Jehovah thy God will choose". It is not the place that we choose. Is there a certain standard, a certain level, a certain elevation that must be maintained. Have we to come to that viewpoint?

JR That is it. I think "unto my name" really understood would involve all that you have said. "Unto my name" is not what we claim; it is not that we act and claim that this is in His name, it is what He can put His name to as if He could say, I put My name to that action. It is the place that Jehovah will choose to set His name there.

CB So He says "tell it to the assembly", not 'My assembly'.

JR That is right. It is the assembly locally, "My assembly" is of universal character, what is on the earth for His pleasure. In its fulness, I think; 'My assembly' must include the assembly from Pentecost until the rapture, because it is the object of attacks coming in during the whole dispensation; but the assembly according to Matthew 18 is an expression of that locally.

AT So there is always an odour with the name, when things are taken up.

JR That is right. There is the odour, and there are the rights attaching to that name.

WMcK Would you say that the actual presence of the Lord with the saints is the confirmation of the whole thing? You referred to Christ in heaven and His name down here. It first says they "are gathered together unto my name", but

then He says "there am I in the midst of them". It is not His name now, it is the Person Himself "in the midst" of the saints as arriving at this.

JR That is very encouraging and helpful.

JCE In that connection why is it that things come from the Father? "Whatsoever it may be that they shall ask, it shall come to them from my Father who is in the heavens". I had connected it rather with the Lord's name and His looking forward to His being absent personally, though He would be known spiritually where His name was honoured and recognised, and yet things would come from the Father, so great was the Father's interest in these matters in the Lord's name.

JR That is very helpful.

DTH Does what the Lord says in John 17 link on with that? He says "Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one as we", v.11.

JR Yes, that shows the Father in His supremacy. Would not that again refer to the Lord's absence? He said "When I was with them I kept them". "Unto my name" involves the Lord's absence publicly but, as Mr McKay said, "there am I" in His presence. It is how He is personally absent and yet how He is present. Judas, not the Iscariote, said "How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us and not to the world?", John 14:22. He could not understand it. It is by the Spirit, is it not?

WMcK The same distinction is made in 2 Timothy 2. It is those who name "the name of the Lord"; but later it is "those that call upon the Lord", not His name but the Person. So that it raises the test in all matters as to what our relations with divine Persons really are, do you think?

JR That is basic. We will not take this moral journey we have spoken about without having right relations with divine Persons.

JAT Would Abraham set that out in Genesis 18:22? It says "And the men turned thence, and went towards Sodom; and Abraham remained yet standing before Jehovah". Then there is the intercession as to righteous persons not perishing with the wicked. I wondered whether that is very important. It would be a question of pausing and considering as to righteous persons.

JR Yes, it would emphasise the importance of being with God.

JAT The men moved on but Abraham remained there.

JR Yes. It says before that, "the men rose up thence, and looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to conduct them". That is, judgment is

in mind. Abraham conducts them and then "remained yet standing before Jehovah". That is a man with God, one man with God. Matthew 18 suggests two men like that in a locality. In John 14 the Lord comes down to one person, what one person could be: "We will come to him and make our abode with him"; but in Matthew the Lord comes down to two, because it is a matter of administration, of acting. Two or three can take action.

EP Would two or three extend to every person in the place committed to the Lord and the fellowship, gathered together unto His name? I was thinking of the matter of responsibility, as to whether all of us, and I speak of myself first, carry the responsibility that we should in regard to what is due to the Lord. Every one of us would be encouraged to take it on.

JR I am sure that is right. When it comes down to two they must accept responsibility: similarly where there are three; but if you get twenty or thirty the optional side comes in sometimes.

FvR What about husband and wife?

JR Well, in the broken state of things we are in, the remnant conditions, that is all we have meantime in some localities, yet "unto my name" has in mind due regard for the Lord's rights and shows what is possible in small localities. It is a great encouragement.

JM-I If state is there, there is no less status. Is that right?

JR That is right. We do not require big cities and big numbers, it is a question of what the Lord is working out with two or three. It ought to be a great encouragement to us at the present time.

C.G H. As to verse 17 of Matthew 18 — "if also he will not listen to the assembly" — if there is listening, there is something to be heard. You said that the Lord might say as to a certain thing, I can attach my name to that. How is His preparedness to do that conveyed?

JR It is a question of what, to use the language in verse 17, the assembly does and says, which He puts His name to. It is the acceptance of responsibility to which we have just referred. Jehovah intimates in Deuteronomy as early as chapter 12 what He has in mind: "the place which Jehovah your God will choose... to set his name there", v 5. He just suggests what is in His mind. Many chapters come in between that intimation and the tangible result, the tangible answer in the house built by Solomon. We are to provide such an answer now. We are meant to provide certain conditions and do certain things that the Lord can put His stamp upon, His name upon.

CGH Quite so. But then to be authoritative, and so taken account of by others, there must be some evidence of that. Is that evidence in that which is to be listened to?

JR Well, it says "if also he will not listen to the assembly". If he does listen to the assembly then the person is saved. If he does not listen it amounts to presumptuous action such as is described in Deuteronomy 17. But I may not have got what is in your mind.

CGH If the Lord has a mind about something it has to be conveyed. You cannot limit the Lord, of course, but normally He conveys it through a channel. Now, what is that channel?

JR It would be in some person, I suppose. It might involve sitting down and enquiring and arriving at a judgment: "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us", Acts 15:28.

CGH What I am trying to get at is the source of what is said.

JR It seems to me it is what the assembly does and says which He can trust. As persons are animated by the breath of Jesus, have the mind of Christ and are under His headship, He can put His name on what is done. Normally that would be accepted.

ECB "The heart of her husband confideth in her" (Prov 31:11) is the basis of it, is it not?

JR Very good.

ECB What may emerge from what Mr Hitchcock was saying is, how do we discern that it was the Lord's mind? Normally the fact that He confides in the assembly is justified by the assembly's actions, but being in a day such as we are the Lord will, in His own time and if necessary, manifest that He was not in what was done, but that would be abnormal.

JR Exactly. What Mr Brown said, too, as to the reference to the Scriptures would be important, that is, of course, the Scriptures rightly applied. So there is wisdom involved in all this.

CM In 1 Corinthians 5 they are gathered together "with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ", v 4. It should not be entirely unknown today.

JR That is right. It speaks too, about "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ". I remember Mr Hammond in Edinburgh some years ago helped me in this matter. He said that we always have authority to act and the authority is the name of the Lord but the power for it lies in the Spirit. We are not to say we

have no power to act; we have authority to act and the authority is the name of the Lord. Is that right?

CH Yes, that holds true today.

JR I am sure it does.

EMW We cannot say that we must not act because our state is too low to act.

JR Exactly.

CH As to Mr Hitchcock's question, do you not think that what is said and done in relation to any particular action would bear the evidence that those who have acted or spoken have been with God in it? That requires, of course, priestly discernment on the part of us all. It is not a technical thing. We can get so bogged down in detail whereas, do you think, if we were with God, we should discern where His mind is and whether what is done is accredited or not accredited? I mean, the priest here seemed to determine the situation.

JR That is right. The priests, the Levites and the judge are all mentioned together in the one verse.

DLS These persons in Deuteronomy are in the habit of going up and appearing before Jehovah in the place that He shall choose.

JR Very good. That is the place where He is served. It is mentioned in chapter 12. It says "His habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come"; that is in normality, "and thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings and your sacrifices", vv 5, 6. That is a very helpful allusion to the fact that they were accustomed to come there in the normal service.

London 19th October 1974 Key to initials:

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Chippenham; P.van den Berg, The Hague; F.von Rein, Port Elizabeth; E.M.Walkinshaw, Gillingham; B.W.Ward, London; A.J.E.Welch, London *This reading is included here because it was first published in A Word in its Season; it appeared again later in a book from the three-day meetings, The Lord's Provision For Our Times.*

READING (JT 26)

Romans 7:22 - 25; Romans 8:1 - 4. 1 Corinthians 14:37; Leviticus 1:1,2; Deuteronomy 17:8 - 13.

JT I wanted to show, by the Lord's help, during this enquiry how Romans develops the priestly, believer, or as we may say, the spiritual feature; and that as it is thus developed, the believer is qualified to have part in the assembly in its relations Godward and manward; and I had particularly in view the relation of the priesthood to the law.

JMcL Were you thinking that in Christianity all these things which we enjoy are open now to every believer?

JT That is what I was thinking, and that that feature — the priestly feature — begins as deliverance is known, indeed even before, because this passage in Romans 7 shows that the believer delights in the law of God even earlier than deliverance. His delight in it would increase, and chapter 8 shows how the righteous requirements of it are fulfilled in him now as walking after the Spirit; that is as he values the law of God, delights in it, and fulfils its righteous requirements, he becomes accustomed to law in its spiritual significance, because he sees that the law is spiritual. And as becoming accustomed to law, he is prepared to take up that principle as applying to the assembly; not that the law of Exodus applies directly to the assembly, but there is what corresponds in the commandment of the Lord as in 1 Corinthians. So the element of priesthood runs through all the types, showing that whether the assembly functions in relation to God, as in the offerings in Leviticus, or whether in discipline all would come under the hand of the priest.

AP Would the husband in the first part of the chapter answer to the priestly side?

JT Yes, but the element of law necessarily comes under the hand of the priest. The law that governed the offerings of the people as in the early part of Leviticus, was given to Aaron and his sons. The discipline of the assembly — the public government of the assembly — also comes under the priests, and when it is seen that every believer is a priest, then it would be clear that each believer should accept the obligations of priesthood. The offerings of God are regulated by a law, under the hand of the priest; there was the law of the burnt offering, the law of the meat offering, and so in regard of all the offerings. Then, too, if there be matters requiring judgment, the priest has his part in that, and there is to be no appeal from a decision rendered in that priestly manner.

HB Would the change of the priesthood necessitating a change of the law set that forth?

JT Yes; we, of course, are not speaking of law in the assembly as the law presented in Exodus, but of new principles that have been unfolded.

JMcL Have you in mind the thought of administration?

JT Yes. One is struck with the occurrence of the word 'law' in these verses; the believer becomes accustomed to the principle, so that when he comes to have to do with the law of the assembly he is prepared for it.

Rem "Legitimately subject to Christ?" 1 Corinthians 9:21.

JT Yes. And you will recognise that "the things that I write to you, that it is the Lord's commandment", 1 Corinthians 14:37 and as it is in the singular it refers to the whole epistle. It is one thought — the Lord's commandment, and His commandment takes, as it were, His place in authority. He is absent from the scene but His commandment is to govern us, and the priests are particularly responsible, so that every one in Corinth would have to take the thing home to himself and say, 'This is the Lord's commandment to me', and if it is, it must be enforced, and it is my responsibility to see that it is enforced. If I profess to be a Christian, to be spiritual, that is my obligation. It is for every one in the company, and the principle of law should not be foreign to any Christian, because he begins experimentally with this, that he delights in the law of God after the inward man. He looks at it as of value.

AP The Lord's commandment would be fulfilled in regard of the law of the house, I suppose?

JT The righteous requirement of the law of Exodus is fulfilled in those who walk after the Spirit, but the commandment of the Lord directly given to us in Corinthians is also to be fulfilled, so Romans prepares the believer for the assembly.

HH Are we to understand that the delighting in the law of God after the inward man is a priestly instinct?

JT Yes.

HH And chapter 8 would be a further thought we are delivered so as to carry it out, that is to fulfil the requirement.

DG Then are the priestly instincts there right from the beginning of the work of God in the soul?

JT Yes. The responsibility of the Lord's commandment must not be put upon the shoulders of others; it is the obligation of every one to enforce it.

JMcL Every one working for the good of the whole, you mean?.

JT Yes, you take it up in relation to the whole. So Leviticus 1 is to the saint in his capacity as a responsible person in this world. Chapters 1 - 5 are words spoken to Moses to speak to the children of Israel in regard to their offerings. It is the word of God to us as having anything to bring to God in a spiritual way, but the sons of Aaron are there all the time, and they are essential to the thing, essential to the offerer. The offerer can bring the offerings but the priest offers them. Then when we come to chapter 6 the law of the offerings is committed formally into the hands of Aaron and his sons, that is, they as priests are responsible. So that we have first the offerers addressed, and then the divine law committed to the priests. The priest is concerned as to what is due to God; he was called to that; "to minister unto me in the priest's office". Exodus 29:1. So offerings should be presented according to God; they should be presented in due order.

JMcL "This is the law", Leviticus 6:14 would be chapter 6.

JT Yes. The word is to Aaron and his sons, not to the children of Israel, and all through this and the next chapter it is a question of what is committed to the priests. Thus I thought we might see how the element of priesthood is there from the outset. If the priest is true to the exercise, he begins that way, he delights in the law of God.

JMcL Whom do Aaron and his sons set forth?

JT Christ and the saints in connection with the priestly service.

Ques Would priesthood be there before the Spirit is received?

JT Yes, the element is there.

J.R. Do you think so?

JT Yes. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit". John 3:6. "God is a Spirit". John 4:24. New birth involves that which is born is spirit and that is developed — that is, instincts Godward. They may be feeble but they develop. In John 4 the Lord speaks to the woman of living water springing up in her. Notice that it is living water; that is, there is the element of cleansing, and then it says she left her waterpot and went her way into the city. She had become spiritual, she had come to see that her body was the waterpot the vessel in which there was living water, the element of cleansing being there. She left the literal for the spiritual. She was beginning to be spiritual. Then look at Peter in chapter 6 confessing the Lord, "Thou art the holy one of God". John 6:69. That was development on spiritual lines — he recognised the *holy one of God*.

HH Where the priestly element is, there is material for the Spirit to work upon?

JT Yes. So in chapter 8 you get deliverance and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ which has set him free. He is now a son of Aaron. It is the priestly element that is developed.

AP He only refers to himself there.

JT Yes, he wants to establish a principle. It may apply to you or to any believer. He could not say it definitely of the Romans, for he had not been there, so he puts it in this way that they might see the principle.

DG And take it up.

JT If it were true of Paul, it may be true of all; it is a question here of setting out the truth, not of the state of the Roman Christians.

HH Would you say that those who come under the hand of the priest in chapter 8 would become good material for the assembly?

JT Yes, that is the point, Romans and Corinthians go together. In Romans, I think, the standpoint is the mercy-seat, and believers are brought into correspondence with that so, saying that you "delight in the law of God after the inward man" means that you are in accord with the ark, of which the mercy-seat was the lid — the Lord had the law in His heart.

HB Would you develop a little what you say in regard of being in accord with the mercy-seat?

JT Well, the mercy-seat was the lid of the ark, as I said, underneath it were the tables of the covenant, and the Lord Jesus coming into this world as man took that up; He came to do the will of God,

delighting to do it, and the formal expression of that will was the law. What was there had to be taken up; for the law was the testimony to the rights of God, and by it was the knowledge of sin. The Lord Jesus took it up and maintained it absolutely, and that underlies His death; so that the blood is on the mercy-seat and the believer is to be brought into accord with that, and he expresses it when he says I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

RF In John 14 the Lord says, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me". John 14:21. Is that on the same line?

JT Yes. That is 1 Corinthians. There you come out as a priest. You must not expect to lead others to do it unless you do it yourself. This is a matter of the greatest importance, especially for young believers amongst us, as we often put things into the hands of a few in the assembly. That is not the divine

thought. Every one is a priest, and so each one should take up the obligation of the assembly. Romans lays the basis in the soul, so that such a one becomes accustomed to law, and develops in the understanding of the epistle to the Corinthians, which is the law governing the assembly in its relations Godward and manward.

Rem The woman is brought under new domination — a new husband.

JT Yes. Her body is for the Lord; as in John 4 the woman leaves her waterpot, so the truth in Romans leads to presenting the body a living sacrifice.

JMcL The woman did not know the import of what she was doing!

JT But it is put down for us by the Holy Spirit.

HH It is not only that we are free from the pressure of sin and death, but that we might be free for the Lord's service.

JT Yes, the Lord took up the law — "thy law is within my heart"

— and the Holy Spirit enables the believer to fulfil the righteous requirement of it. It must be taken up by the believer in this way; it cannot be ignored.

Rem I thought that one got in a measure new covenant blessings in chapter 5, and the law that you delight in is in chapter 7 The love of God shed abroad in our hearts is the new covenant; but you must not pass over the old, that is, viewed in the spirit of it its newness of spirit: "that we should serve in newness of spirit". Romans 7:6.

DG Do you distinguish between delighting in and the power to carry it out?

JT Yes. But you do delight in the thing, that is, after the inward man. It is collateral with the new birth; it is 'spirit' and it is in virtue of that, that I delight in the law of God. It is the inward man. So priesthood applies to the youngest believer, if he is truly a believer; it is not something in the distance, but it is there, and as you receive the Spirit you are set up in it; that is in the law of it: in "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus". "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit". Now, I think, that man has qualified to be a priest, for he is maintaining the law in the spirit of it in his conduct.

HH And he has power to fulfil it.

RF But in chapter 7 does not the believer learn to distinguish between what is natural and what is spiritual?

JT Quite. He sees now two principles, two laws working — the law of his mind, and another law warring in opposition to that but he gets deliverance. I do urge the word 'law' here. Are you acquainted with the thought at the beginning of your spiritual history? There is today much lawlessness, but as you are acquainted with 'law' you are brought into subjection. It is not only the Spirit of life but the law of it that brings liberation. I believe if Romans 7 were gone through more, the younger Christian would be more subject, and thus more prepared for the assembly, because I think when you delight in the law of God after the inward man you are qualified for your place as a board in the tabernacle, so to speak. You are fitted to take your place in relation to the assembly. There is no doubt that in years gone by Romans 7 was much more dwelt upon. I believe if it were more understood, there would be more subjection and we should fit in together better, because the element of subjection would be more there. The boards stood up, and the principle is that the believer stands up in righteousness, in subjection; and then there was a bar of gold binding them all together. What is of the Spirit binds us all together.

RW This man who delights in the law of God is a wretched man. You would not think that he would be fit for priestly service.

JT Not yet, but the *element* is there. The stone in the quarry has to be squared off.

Rem He is not able to accomplish it!

JT But in the next chapter he gets deliverance. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free". He has now come to it. Would you say that?

Rem Yes. I say that, but he would not be happy in chapter 7.

JT No, that is so. We do not know joy until we know righteousness and get the Spirit. The process has to be gone through, so that I learn to distinguish between "I myself with the mind serve God's law; but with the flesh sin's law". That is the end of the seventh chapter.

Ques Is it a spiritual mind?

JT So far. You get the renewed mind later.

The Holy Spirit is not brought in yet. It is what he has come to. In the next chapter you get deliverance.

JR How far can we delight in the law of God without having received the Spirit?

JT We cannot go far, but the *element* is there: "I delight in".

HB Is it not always the case that you get the thing itself before you get the light with regard to it?

JT The germ of it is there, but there is a process of exercise through which you come into the fulness of it after you get the Spirit.

RF That is what really lies at the basis of all true fellowship?

JT Yes. It is an element that implies subjection. Law is to get you under control, and it is necessary to begin with it, and as the principle is seen, it forms you. It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which sets free.

Ques Would our responsibility be that we allow the Spirit to have His way?

JT Yes. I think you will remember that in Numbers 21 the well is dug at the direction of the 'law-giver' that is to say, the element of law is carried over in relation to the Spirit. I have no doubt the word 'law' in the sense of authority is used more frequently in Romans that in any other book in the New Testament because it is a question of obedience. "Ye have obeyed from the heart". Romans 6:17. The believer moves in relation to the law, which cannot be neglected.

HH It is very interesting that in Deuteronomy 33 it says, "From his right hand went a fiery law for them", Deuteronomy 33:2 and yet it says, "Yea, he loved the people". Deuteronomy 33:3.

JT Yes, and the law in that chapter is considered the inheritance of Jacob. "Moses commanded us a law the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob". Deuteronomy 33:4 it is not against them, it is their inheritance.

HB What we sometimes sing, 'Free from the law, oh happy condition', etc is only partially true?

JT Yes. The Lord Jesus took it up and put it in His heart, and the believer would take it up, too.

Rem It is not the law as applied to men in the flesh?

JT Not at all. As to the law in its legal and literal application we are become dead to it by the body of Christ, so that we are to serve in newness of spirit.

JR The principle of obedience is implied in the principle of law?

JT Quite.

JMcL Is the body of the believer in view in the laying down of these principles?

JT Yes. So we are enjoined to present our bodies a living sacrifice. You are available as having given yourself over to God, and that comes under the priest. Every *sacrifice* comes under the priest. Romans does not develop that, but the sacrifice is there and the priest takes it up and presents it to God. So it goes on to say, "We, being many, are one body in Christ" Romans 12:5 not yet Christ's body, because you do not get that in Romans but in Colossians; in Romans it is "one body in Christ"; we do not go beyond that. The boards are not only brought to light but set up.

JMcL The idea of insubjection would be quite foreign to the principle of the body. We learn to be subject to one another.

JT Yes. So Romans underlies Corinthians.

AP The priestly side of the Old Testament would come out in chapter 12?

JT Yes. That is where you begin to offer. You may not have a bullock, but you have your own body. It is an 'intelligent' service, a *priestly* service.

Rem In chapter 15 we have a wonderful priestly service of the apostle: "that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable". Romans 15:16.

JT Yes. That is what he was doing. In Romans 12 we do not go beyond our service as believers — presenting our bodies a living sacrifice.

AP In chapter 8 we only touch life. It is "shall live".

JT Quite. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live". Romans 8:13.

Ques What is the difference between the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath set me free" and "ye shall live"?

JT I think "set free" in chapter 8 is what is contemplated in view of flesh, and the law acting on the law in his members which warred against the law of his mind. Deeds of the body are your own conduct. It is what your body is capable of. You live as you put these to death. As an unbeliever you are actuated by the natural emotions of your members, but that is given up. "Life in Christ Jesus" is governed by a principle that is true to itself.

Now I wanted to show how understanding priesthood in this way would bring every believer under obligation. You cannot say "*they* are doing this or that"; what responsibility there is belongs to all.

JMcL Instead of complaining that things are not done this way or that way, *you* show the way.

JT It is a good thing to put people into power. People sometimes complain loudly of those in authority, but put them into power and they change their tune quickly. Take the thing up yourself and see what you can make of it. Nobody can consistently say 'No' because all are priests, as having the Spirit. So the word — the law — in Leviticus 6 applies to every such an one. It is to "Aaron and his sons". There you find that the altar is wholly in their custody, therefore the priest was to have a certain portion of the offerings for himself, so that he should be nourished. You will be well paid if you take up the responsibility!

AP So that all may be contributors in the assembly.

JT Yes, exactly, and priestly food is obtained in the acceptance of obligation there. Then in Leviticus, in the case of leprosy, the priest is to determine every thing related thereto, and in Deuteronomy the people are again charged to take heed in the plague of leprosy to all that the priests the Levites shall teach them. Every matter of controversy, too, was to be brought to the priests for judgment.

Rem It is very easy to be occupied with evil in the assembly, and to suffer loss through it, but it is another thing to take it up in such wise as that there is gain by it.

JT I think that is most important; for all things taken up should involve gain to us.

HB With regard to the assembly, should it ever be legislative?

JT The priests had to *carry out* the law, not to *make* it. I do not think there is strictly any law-making. The mischief is that there has been legislation. I think, with regard to the priest, the point is that the law is handed over to him and it is perfect, and it is "at his mouth they seek the law". Malachi 2:7. The Lord says, "On these two commandments the whole law and the prophets hang", Matthew 22:40 showing the importance of divine commandments. It is for the priest to enforce the law, and so in Deuteronomy in the passage read the decisions were to be according to it. In verse 9 of chapter 17 it says, "And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days and enquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment ... .. and the man that will do presumptuously and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die, and thou shall put away the evil from Israel".

The priest and the judge were there to carry it out. The judge's duty is to explain law and apply it. They shall hear law from the priest's mouth.

HH The principles are all laid down to us, but the question is how to apply them at any moment. That is where the priestly function comes in.

JT Yes. It is for them to act according to the law. A decision reached on those lines cannot be set aside. It stands. Here is a case in this chapter, and it is not to be dealt with by any group of persons, it is to be judged by the priests. Priesthood in Christianity includes all saints and the thing has to be put on their consciences. If it is dealt with according to this passage the decision stands, and should be bowed to by every saint on earth as the will of heaven.

Ques Would Matthew 18 be that?

JT Yes.

Rem If we were more in the gain individually of what is unfolded in Romans we would, when it was a question of the assembly consciences being stirred up, be more subject to the judgment arrived at.

JT If he were more in the good of Romans 7 the youngest believer in the assembly would bow. He knows law and he sees that law must prevail.

Ques Is that the direct government of God?

JT God is governing directly through the assembly; indirect government would be outside and we must submit; but direct government is in the assembly.

AP Would not this passage in Deuteronomy that we have read help us to see the great importance of coming under law? It implies death to refuse it.

JT The saints, therefore, should become well versed in 1 Corinthians, particularly in regard of assembly matters.

Rem If the law were known and we were subject to it, there would be no controversy at all.

JG If we all said the same thing, there would be no controversy.

JT The apostle directs then that those who are least esteemed in the assembly should be set to judge as to things of this life, meaning that the least esteemed in the assembly is a priest, which shows what a member of the assembly is.

Deuteronomy 18

- DEUTERONOMY 18 (CAC 5)
- GOD'S PROPHET (CAC 30)
- RESPONSE TO GOD IN HIS OPERATIONS AND INTERESTS (JT 6)
- PRIESTLY CONSTITUTION (JT 13)
- PRIESTHOOD AS BEARING ON YOUNG BELIEVERS (JT 24)

DEUTERONOMY 18 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 18

We have seen in chapters 16 and 17 that God sets up amongst His people ability for spiritual judgment, and that He has also in mind that kingly rule and leadership should be found amongst them. Chapter 18 brings before us the portion of "the priests, the Levites",

and speaks of the Prophet whom God would raise up to Israel. All these features have been seen perfectly in Christ, and they are presented here as characteristic features of the people of God viewed as in the land.

"The priests, the Levites, and the whole tribe of Levi", represent the saints as occupied in ministering to God in a priestly way, or as engaged in furthering His service amongst His people. *As such* they have their part with God; they share in God's inheritance, and, indeed, God Himself becomes their inheritance.

We do not see here the official service of the priest or Levite — there is hardly anything of that in Deuteronomy — but their personal portion; that which as food gives them constitution and strength. There are no official garments here, but the nourishment that will give personal vigour for holy service. A well nourished priesthood is essential if the service of God is to be carried on in suitability to Him. And the sustenance of the priests depends on offerings, tithes, and first-fruits being brought by the people. We have previously considered the import of this. Have we cultivated and gathered the produce of the land so as to be able to contribute spiritually to the nourishment of what is priestly? I do not mean the priest as another person, but what is priestly in ourselves. If I minister to what is priestly in myself I shall minister to what is priestly amongst the brethren.

The holy service of God must not be allowed to get feeble. The decline of priestly vigour led to the setting up of a formal order of service in Christendom. A formal order can be carried on without spiritual power, but true priestly or levitical service cannot. The maintenance of vitality and freshness in that which ministers to the pleasure of God should be our chief concern.

"Inheritance with Israel" would be to have part in what, God has given *to men* in Christ. Life eternal is truly blessed as God's gift to men, but this scripture calls our attention to the fact that as a result of men enjoying their God-given portion in Christ there is a portion *for God*, which He can speak of as His inheritance. What was given to the priests and Levites was in a distinct way

God's portion. It indicates that out of the wealth of their inheritance the people were able to minister to the pleasure of God. The priests and Levites lived on *that*. The saints, viewed as the priestly tribe, are privileged to have what is for God as their portion. They share it with Him; they have ability to appreciate and appropriate what is for God. As "the people of the land" we live upon what the love of God has given *to men*; as priests we live upon what is *for God*. We feed on Christ in relation to the delight which God has in Him. All His perfections have come out as a sweet odour to God in "Jehovah's offerings by fire"; and the tithes are God's inheritance as expressive of what He has reserved to Himself while bestowing upon men with a bounteous hand His wondrous gifts. Priests are nourished on what is for God; their very constitution is formed by the appropriation of Christ from that stand-point. How such food would make it characteristic of us to consider for God! This distinguishes the priestly tribe.

Then "the priest's due from the people" in regard to a sacrifice of ox or sheep is "the shoulder, and the jaw-bones, and the maw". The priest is to be nourished on the strength of Christ's walk for the pleasure of God — the unswerving and unfaltering character of that blessed pathway in which He moved steadily and undeviatingly on in entire devotion to God. What a firm and unwavering step was His! Never halting between two opinions; never turning to the right hand or the left; going straight on; never slipping or faltering. "I have set Jehovah continually before me; because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved" (Psalm 16: 8). Man, from innocence onward, had been marked by weakness, his steps always sliding; but One came in with divine strength, who never deviated from the pleasure of God. "I do always the things that are pleasing to him" (John 8: 29). The strength of the shoulder was there.

It is the function of the jaw-bones to masticate food, so that it is not swallowed whole, but broken up by a chewing process, so as to be prepared to be digested in the maw. However rich the pasture in which an ox or sheep may be, it is only by the action of its jaw-bones that it obtains food or nourishment. There is much food available in ministry, but it is only what we appropriate that nourishes us. There is a spiritual process which answers to eating and chewing our food. We must not be content to hear things, or to memorise them, but we must be concerned to understand spiritually what they mean. The Lord has given us a word which applies to other parts of Scripture as well as the one He was referring to. "He that reads let him consider it" (Mark 13: 14). "Consider" is explained in the note to the New Translation as being to "weigh with intelligence so as to understand". Divine things have to be "apprehended by the mind" (Romans 1: 20), and this

involves a masticating process. It is said of the blessed man that "his delight is in Jehovah's law, and in his law doth he meditate day and night". Jesus as a boy of twelve heard the teachers and asked them questions. He was not a passive listener; there was active interest in what He heard. Every word of God was food for Him, passing into His moral being through intense personal interest. Many scriptures speak of intense interest in the word, and personal appropriation of it. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy words were unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jeremiah 15: 16). There needs to be an active and intelligent exercise on our part to masticate what is put before us as teaching. There is an abundant supply of food, but how much of it have we eaten?

Eating is the first essential in view of spiritual food being digested and assimilated. The "jaw-bones" would refer to that part of the process which lies in our responsibility. I think the Bereans were using their jaw-bones; they were deeply interested in what they heard and received, and they daily searched the Scriptures to see if these things were so; they diligently applied their minds to the understanding of what they heard.

Then the priest has before him in "the maw" the thought of digestion and assimilation. It is important that this should have place with us. No doubt all believers appreciate the features of Christ, in some measure, but many of us would have to admit that we are not what we appreciate. It has not been assimilated so as to become part of us. But as saints we must accept that things which are true in Christ are to become true in us, and our prayers should be to this end. "The shoulder, and the jaw-bones and the maw" are nourishment for the priestly constitution; they are essential for the discharge of priestly service in vigour. If we are to be "nourished with the words of the faith and of the good teaching" (1 Timothy 4: 6) it must be the result of God's word working in us who believe. There is an inward process of assimilation, the activity of which depends on spiritual health being maintained. Then God gives the increase, and fulfils "all the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith with power" (2 Thessalonians 1: 11).

"The first-fruits of thy corn, of thy new wine, and of thine oil, and the first-fruits of the shearing of thy sheep" would indicate that the priest is to be nourished upon that which is new and fresh in the soul. The things which we enjoyed twenty years ago could hardly be "the priest's due" now. Each succeeding year is to bring new stores of spiritual wealth, and the first-fruits of them are for the support of what is priestly. I suppose we can all remember when we had some first-fruits! Spiritual things came freshly to us, precious thoughts of Christ and products of the Spirit such as we never had before!

Things came into our souls in holy freshness. What joy they kindled in our hearts! But is that long ago? Such is not God's thought for us; first-fruits are to come in "all the days" (verse 5 margin). One likes to hear people say that they have had thoughts of Christ such as they never had before. Every fresh spiritual apprehension of Christ is a bit of first-fruits; it is something to nourish the priest and to promote the service of God.

The first-fruits of the new wine and the oil would refer to the Spirit as known in fresh and living activity, giving joy and power. To accept the New Testament doctrine of the Holy Spirit is one thing; to have first-fruits of His presence and indwelling is another. It is the latter which invigorates what is priestly. "The first-fruits of the shearing of thy sheep" would have reference, I think, to the product of the divine nature in the saints. Shearing suggests that it might be yielded at personal cost. Wool formed no part of the official priestly garments, but it might be warming and comforting to the priest personally, and it is from this point of view that "the priest's due" is presented here. It is the nourishment and comfort of what is priestly rather than its official exercise that is before us. The first-fruits of every apprehension of Christ, of everything acquired of the Spirit, and of all that is the outcome of the divine nature in saints, go to make up "the priest's due". If the first-fruits are not there the priest cannot have his due; there will not be support for the service which is especially for the pleasure of God.

We are apt to think that first-fruits belong to early days, when things are first apprehended and appreciated, and that we must not expect to find that they will ever be quite like that again, and we do not, perhaps, look for fresh crops every year! But first-fruits are to be ministered to the priest "all the days". Diligence in the land will result in first-fruits coming in continually. It is encouraging and stimulating to know that this will be the sure accompaniment of spiritual prosperity.

Then (verses 6 - 8) we see that the Levite has the privilege of coming "according to all the desire of his soul unto the place which Jehovah will choose". This contemplates a movement in the liberty of spiritual affections. The coming up of the Levite is not a matter of obligation like the keeping of the feasts in chapter 16; it is the movement of "a willing spirit" (Psalm 2: 12). I think it suggests a way of coming to assembly conditions and service which is peculiarly characteristic of the present time. Assembly obligations exist, and always have existed, but that does not secure an answer to them. The answer is secured through the promptings of individual exercise and desire. All the truth and principles of the assembly remain as at the beginning, but they are reached now through desires of soul. The Levite seen here is a man whose

soul gets a great sense of the holy privilege attaching to the place chosen by Jehovah, and to the service carried on in His Name. Spiritual desire brings him to that place. It is a principle which could always operate, but it is admirably suited to a day of general departure.

If the truth of the assembly is generally departed from, or practically ignored, as it is today, we shall only come to its privilege and service through personal desire. Whatever privilege is enjoyed by the brethren who serve in the Name of Jehovah is open to any Levite whose soul desires it. He can have "like portions to eat" with them, he can serve as they serve; there is a precious and holy fellowship open to him. The circumstances imply that he has come there at some personal sacrifice, because "he hath sold of his patrimony". He has given up something which he might have retained without reproach in order to serve in the most privileged way possible, and he gets ample compensation. This is how assembly privileges and service can be taken up today. Have we got desire of soul in that direction? It is there to be taken up by every one who desires it. The Lord in John 14: 21 - 23 reserves most wondrous privilege for the individual lover, and it is by personal love and obedience, and keeping His word, that all can be secured now that answers to the place which Jehovah chose.

There is personal desire and movement, but if two or more move with like desires of soul they will find themselves in a real and blessed fellowship in which divine Persons will be honoured and served according to divine pleasure. We have often been told that we can have as much of Christ as we want, and I believe it is also true that we can have as much assembly privilege as we have desire for. There is an opened door set before us to devote ourselves to assembly service according to the desire of our soul. Assembly conditions and privileges are available, through the grace of the Lord, for every one whose soul desires to take them up. The Levite coming may serve and eat "as all his brethren"; he may have the gain of all that is there.

From verse 9 to the end of the chapter God's Prophet is introduced in contrast with all the abominations which have come in through men listening to communications from beneath. The eight things mentioned in verses 10, 11 refer to communications from the unseen world. There are many avenues through which Satan influences men. All these things are coming in again under new names, and people hearken to them, but they are all opposed to God. "Thou shalt be perfect with Jehovah thy God" (verse 13) means that we are not to listen for a moment to any communication which is not from Him.

God ever had before Him to communicate with men. He spoke to Adam and Eve in innocence (Genesis 1: 28 - 30), and afterwards they "heard the voice of

Jehovah Elohim, walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Genesis 3: 8). It was His pleasure to be near to man and to communicate with him, and it grieved Him to find that distrust and distance had come in on man's part. Another communication had been listened to, a communication from beneath. Every abomination has come in that way, but deliverance is found in listening to God's Prophet. "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1: 1) is a statement which carries us farther back than any other statement in Scripture. It tells us plainly that from the beginning God had in mind to speak to men. But the serpent has been speaking also, so that there are two kinds of speaking, as we see in the verses before us — the first in verses 10 - 14, the second in verses 16 - 19. Men have opened their ears to communications from the power of darkness, but it is blessed to know that God has not left men without communications from Himself. Man is God's intelligent creature, and God speaks to him intelligibly. All darkening influences in the world have come from beneath, but all illuminating influences are from above, they come down from "the Father of lights".

Divination, auguries, enchantments, sorcery, charms, a spirit of Python, soothsaying, consulting the dead, are all found today in Christendom. But they neither convict men of sin, nor give the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins. They darken men as to the true knowledge of God. The communications which come from God are not dark and mysterious; they are light, and they make known that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all, and that He is now in the light as having fully revealed Himself in a Man, His own beloved Son.

"Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee ... like unto me" (verse 15). That this refers directly to Christ is proved by Peter's quotation of it in Acts 3. It declares unmistakably the true humanity of Him whom God has sent, and who has spoken the words of God. He is "from the midst of thee, of thy brethren". The full communication of God's words, of all that He would have made known to men, has come in One who is truly Man. The One who was "over all, God blessed for ever", came of Israel as according to flesh. (Romans 9: 4). He took part in blood and flesh, He took hold of the seed of Abraham; "it behoved him in all things to be made like to his brethren" (Hebrews 2: 14 - 17). He was not an angel or a spirit, but a Man; God speaks to men by a Man. He was so truly Man that the Samaritan woman could say, "How dost thou, being a Jew", and on His part He did not refuse to speak as one of the Jews in saying, "*We* worship what we know, for salvation is of the Jews" (John 4: 9, 22). Yet was He the true Prophet of God, of whom the woman could say, "I know that Messias is coming, who is called Christ; when *he* comes he will tell us all things".

God has come near to men, and put Himself into communication with them, by Christ. To receive His communications is the greatest privilege and favour. It means that God is known, and if He is known He is loved, and if He is loved He is worshipped.

"Like unto me" emphasises the mediatorial character of God's speaking. Moses was great as having features which made it possible for Jehovah to say that Christ as the Prophet would be like him. God invested Moses with extraordinary dignity in view of Christ being like him. "If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known to him in a vision, I will speak to him in a dream. Not so my servant Moses: he is faithful in all my house. Mouth to mouth do I speak to him openly, and not in riddles; and the form of Jehovah doth he behold" (Numbers 12: 6 - 8). "And Jehovah spoke with Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend" (Exodus 33: 11). God would have us to consider Moses, not merely as representing the dispensation of law, but as having features such as pertain in the fullest way to Christ. Moses had a unique place, and he could speak as one with whom God was on terms of peculiar intimacy. And the "like unto thee" suggests that the promised Prophet would speak as One with whom God was known directly and personally, and not by dreams or visions. But the fact that God spoke to Moses, and Moses spoke to the people, of Another Prophet yet to be raised up clearly intimated that the speaking of Moses was not final. Indeed, as we know, Christ as Son is contrasted with Moses as a servant. When the truth came fully out what marked the speaking of the Prophet was that it was the speaking of *the Son*. See Hebrews 1: 1, 2. It is the speaking of One of whom the Father could say, "This is my beloved Son; hear him" (Luke 9: 35). It has been well said, Who can speak after the Son? The speaking of Christ, of the beloved Son in the bosom of the Father, is final.

Christ was like unto Moses as being the true Deliverer and Mediator. He inaugurated in grace and truth all that was typically set forth in Moses. The covenant, the service of God, and all that is suitable to the inheritance, were made known by Moses, and Christ is like unto him in relation to all these blessed things, giving the fulness of them according to all that is in the mind of God. What a Prophet we have! "Unto him shall ye hearken".

All this was in the minds of the disciples, and it was in the light of it that they hearkened to Jesus. As the Prophet God's words were put in the mouth of Christ, and He spoke what God commanded Him to speak. Hence He could say, "My doctrine is not mine, but that of him that has sent me" (John 7: 16). And again, "The words (the divine communications) which thou hast given me, I have given them, and they have received them, and have known truly that I

came out from thee, and have believed that thou sentest me" (John 17: 8). The One who was raised up "of thy brethren" so near to men as being truly Man, was "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father;" it was He who "came down out of heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven" (John 1: 18; John 3: 13). He was therefore able to declare God in a way of unmeasured fulness, and to speak of heavenly things as knowing them and having seen them. All has been told out now; there is no reserve in the divine communications; "all things which I have beard of my Father I have made known to you" (John 15: 15).

Not everything that the Lord said and did has been recorded in the Scriptures. The Gospels are a divine selection by the Holy Spirit, and they are fully adequate to set forth all that was spoken by the Son of God when here. His works spoke volumes as well as His words. Every utterance of the Lord has a fulness which is immeasurable. There are some verses of which Christians have been speaking and writing for nearly two thousand years, and fresh beauties and glories are being disclosed in them every day. The Holy Scriptures are the greatest marvel in the world, and the Gospels are the greatest marvel of the Scriptures. The four Gospels are a little book which could be read in a day, but there is concentrated there what will fill eternity with its blessedness.

John supposes that if all the things which Jesus did were written one by one, "not even the world itself would contain the books written". If men had written these narratives in their own ability they would never have known when to stop. But the Holy Spirit has given all that was necessary for us in words marked by simplicity and dignity. As we read we are in presence of the ineffable majesty, and yet infinite grace, of *the Word*. There is fulness of divine communication, constraining the soul to worship as it is realised that God has made known in His beloved Son all that was in His heart and mind manward.

The assembly of God is to be characterised by speaking which is of God as to its origin and its power. See 1 Corinthians 14. The speaking there is to take character from Christ's speaking; indeed He is now speaking from heaven in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit speaks in the house of God, bringing out in detail what God has communicated by Christ, and giving it application to the needs of souls and of the assembly. Such prophetic speaking has peculiar value in a day of departure, as reviving in spiritual power that which was from the beginning, and exposing the departure by bringing out the mind of God as it was originally made known. The assembly is God's house; it is the pillar and base of the truth, and the way to speak in it is "as oracles of God" (1 Peter 4: 11). Such speaking would be the speaking of Christ continued in intelligent

communications from God. Not new revelations, but every word in accord with what God has spoken by Christ. In presence of difficulties the prophetic word would exercise consciences so that the moral state might be put right. Whatever matter occasions difficulty the real question is the moral state of saints, and if this is judged in the light of communications from God, difficulties melt away.

I "will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him". Nothing is held in reserve now, save judgment. The Spirit has come in witness to the fact that all the mind of God is out; there is nothing further to be looked for. "As for you let that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you; if what ye have heard from the beginning abides in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father". There can be no advance upon this; any going forward from it must be apostasy (2 John 9).

It is a serious thing not to hearken to Christ. "And it shall come to pass that the man who hearkeneth not unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (verse 19).

With reference to the closing verses of the chapter we may note that God is sometimes pleased to demonstrate that what is professedly spoken in His Name is not really His word at all. Many prophets have fixed dates for the Lord's return, but some of us have lived long enough to see many such prophecies falsified. They were really spoken presumptuously (verse 22). Fifty years ago people told us that the great pyramid made known that the Lord was coming some time between 1880 and 1890, and many are still measuring its dark passages and prophesying. Certain minds are attracted by this kind of thing, but it is not the speaking of Christ. The word from the excellent glory is "Hear him".

GOD'S PROPHET (CAC 30)

Deuteronomy 18: 9 - 22

God's Prophet is introduced in this chapter in contrast with all the abominations which have come in through men listening to communications from beneath. The eight things mentioned in verses 10 and 11 refer to communications from the unseen world. There are many avenues through which Satan influences men. All these things are coming in again under new names, and people hearken to them, but they are all opposed to God. "Thou shalt be perfect with Jehovah thy God" (verse 13), means that we are not to listen for a moment to any communication which is not from Him.

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Not everything that the Lord said and did has been recorded in the Scriptures. The gospels are a divine selection by the Holy Spirit, and they are fully adequate to set forth all that was spoken by the Son of God when here. His works spoke volumes as well as His words. Every utterance of the Lord has a fulness which is immeasurable. There are some verses of which Christians have been speaking and writing for nearly two thousand years, and fresh beauties and glories are being disclosed in them every day. The Holy Scriptures are the greatest marvel in the world, and the gospels are the greatest marvel of the Scriptures. The four gospels are a little book, which

could be read in a day, but there is concentrated there what will fill eternity with its blessedness. John supposes that if all the things which Jesus did were written one by one, "not even the world itself would contain the books written". If men had written these narratives in their own ability they would never have known when to stop. But the Holy Spirit has given all that was necessary for us in words marked by simplicity and dignity. As we read we are in the presence of the ineffable majesty, and yet infinite grace, of *the Word*. There is fulness of divine communication, constraining the soul to worship as it is realised that God has made known in His beloved Son all that was in His heart and mind manward.

The assembly of God is to be characterised by speaking which is of God as to its origin and its power. See 1 Corinthians 14. The speaking there is to take character from Christ's speaking; indeed, He is now speaking from heaven in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit speaks in the house of God, bringing out in detail what God has communicated by Christ, and giving it application to the needs of souls and of the assembly. Such prophetic speaking has peculiar value in a day of departure, as reviving in spiritual power that which was from the beginning, and exposing the departure by bringing out the mind of God as it was originally made known. The assembly is God's house; it is the pillar and base of the truth, and the way to speak in it is "as oracles of God"

(1 Peter 4: 11). Such speaking would be the speaking of Christ continued in intelligent communications from God. Not new revelations, but every word in accord with what God has spoken by Christ. In presence of difficulties the prophetic word would exercise consciences so that the moral state might be put right. Whatever matter occasions difficulty the real question is the moral state of saints, and if this is judged in the light of communications from God, difficulties melt away.

I "will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him". Nothing is held in reserve now, save judgment. The Spirit has come in witness to the fact that all the mind of God is out; there is nothing further to be looked for. "As for you let that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you: if what ye have heard from the beginning abides in you, *ye* also shall abide in the Son and in the Father". There can be no advance upon this; any going forward from it must be apostasy (2 John 9).

It is a serious thing not to hearken to Christ. "And it shall come to pass that the man who hearkeneth not unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deuteronomy 18: 19).

The word from the excellent glory is "Hear him".

RESPONSE TO GOD IN HIS OPERATIONS AND INTERESTS (JT 6)

Deuteronomy 18: 21; Luke 15: 25; Acts 11: 22 - 26

The Spirit of God records, that from the very outset God had sympathy from His creatures in His operations. When the foundations of the earth were laid, we are told that "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy". As God operated to effect His counsels, those who were regarded in the relation of sons were all interested; not some, but "all the sons, of God shouted for joy". On another occasion, at the greatest event, the birth of Christ, He again found sympathy on the part of these angelic beings. They took note of what was going on, and multitudes of the heavenly host were there expressing the profoundest sympathy and interest in that which had taken place on earth; and what had taken place was not specially for their own glory, for the Son of God did not become an angel; He became a Man. His incarnation involved the glory of an order of beings which was at that time inferior to angels, hence if there had been anything in those angelic beings of the nature of envy it would have manifested itself. But instead of that they expressed the profoundest interest and sympathy and delight in that which God was accomplishing.

Now the Spirit of God records these things for us; they are not recorded simply as an historical account. The Spirit of God never would engage Himself in merely writing history. What He records is intended to produce exercise in the people of God now. The Spirit of God records for us that all the sons of God were interested in the operations of God, and that is to produce exercise in us. All Christians are expected to be in sympathy with what God is doing.

The passage I read in Deuteronomy has reference to Israel. God did not limit the idea of sonship to angelic beings, but He gave that place to a nation or family. The fact is, beloved friends, the very existence of father and son in the human family, as a divinely ordered relationship, is but a testimony as to what is in God's heart. If God has placed in our hearts affections for a son and delight in a son, it is but a testimony to what is in His own heart. We have in the creation not only a testimony to "his eternal power and divinity", but we have a testimony also to His affections: for the relationship which God has ordained, called father and son, parent and child, and of brethren, are witnesses to the primary thought which He intended to accomplish through the incarnation of His own precious Son. In taking up Israel He brings His own thought nearer to us. His thought was that men were to be in the relationship of sons with Him.

Now Israel went down into Egypt, and there in the government of God they became bond-slaves. The government of God has to do with discipline, and discipline works out in us appreciation of the relationship. Israel went down to Egypt under the government of God. Egypt was no part of the counsels of God. It formed no part of the promises indeed Abraham was prohibited from going there, and yet we find that Jacob goes there. He is compelled to go there: the very necessities of the times forced him to go. He comes to Beersheba, to the confines of the land of Canaan and there God meets him. Jacob had his misgivings; we also have our misgivings; things sometimes are not clear to us; a cloud hangs over us, but we arrive at a point when God appears to us. God appeared to Jacob, and what did He say? "Fear not, I am the God of Isaac". He does not say the God of thy father Abraham, but of Isaac. Thus God caused light to shine into the heart of His disciplined child, and that light was, that every thought he had cherished, all the result of light previously received, is immutably secured in Christ risen. Isaac is a type of Christ in resurrection, and God intimated to Jacob that every thought he cherished was secured in Him. That is wonderful light to shine into our souls in the moment of discipline.

From Jacob's point of view everything seemed against him, but then he learned that all these things were for him, and were but the occasion of God assuring him that every spiritual thought he had cherished was fixed in Christ Jesus, and established in Him. So the government of God goes on and Jacob goes down into Egypt. There his posterity remain for many years and under the government of God they become bond-slaves. God permitted His governmental dealings to go on till they realised what the bondage of this world really is. But in due time God remembered His people and He takes Moses and causes him to go through forty years of discipline. It is a disciplined man only who is suitable to become the vessel of light to a disciplined people. If we are a disciplined people we are in relationship with God: if not, we are not in relationship with God. Hebrews 12 shows that. Moses was qualified by his experience in the wilderness to become the light bearer to a disciplined people in the land of Egypt.

Now look at the way God takes up Moses and sends him with a message to Pharaoh and to the people.

The message to the people announces God's faithfulness. He did not tell the people that they were His sons. He sends that message to Pharaoh. The message to the people announces His unfailing faithfulness, revealing Himself as Jehovah to them. To Pharaoh He says, "Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go,

that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn". What do you see in that? It is God announcing His eternal thought in regard of man, and He appeals to a well-known affection which had a place in the heart of Pharaoh, an affection which God had placed there Himself; for natural affection is of God. He says in effect to Pharaoh, 'You have a son, and you have affection for your son; I have the affections of a father. Israel is My son, My firstborn, and if you do not let him go I will deprive you of your son'.

He had an avenue into Pharaoh's heart by the affections which He had placed there as Pharaoh's Creator, and yet Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to let the light shine into it. And the result was that God deprived Pharaoh of his son; and more than that, in depriving Pharaoh of his son, God secured His own son. He delivered Israel out of Egypt and led them into the wilderness. As He says, "I have borne you upon eagle's wings".

Underneath those eagle's wings were the affections of a father. The time for the display of them to Israel had not come. Christ must appear for that. When Christ appeared and went up out of Egypt, God does not simply tell others that He is His Son.

No, He opens the heavens and looks down upon the Son and declares to Him, "Thou art my beloved Son". There was God's Son in the Person of Christ here upon earth. God's affections expressed themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, and they are known to us now by the Spirit.

Now I will turn for a moment to the dark side of the picture. Deuteronomy 18 discloses to us how God took account of Israel's rebellion in the wilderness. The wilderness is the place of testing, the place in which is brought to light whether we have answered to the relationship in which we are set or otherwise. The wilderness may be divided into three sections. The first section refers to the people under pure grace; Exodus 15 to 18. All is on the principle of pure grace. The next section refers to the time of the law, and in connection with it you have the formation of God's system. In the first section the individual is under the reign of pure grace. God is revealed in pure grace; then you become associated with the system of things in which God's testimony is placed, and in which God's law must be adhered to. These are two sections of the wilderness, and in connection with both of these you will find irretrievable failure on the part of the people. They failed in both connections. In the first they speak against God and Moses; in the second they made the golden calf and said they would go back to Egypt. That is what the flesh is. Now the third section has reference to the Spirit. It begins with

Numbers 21. When we are no longer debtors to the flesh, we move on in liberty to the land of Canaan, but in each section it is the wilderness.

Now, beloved friends, what I wish to point out in connection with that is that the character of the stubborn son appeared in Israel. Israel was really the "stubborn son", and this is in keeping with the book of Deuteronomy, which deals with the relationship formed between God and His people. The priesthood and the tabernacle are not prominent in this book; it is a question of relationship formed between God and His people; and in the passage I read God shows how He regards the rebellion of Israel in the wilderness and onward. They were rebellious at every point, and wholly unsympathetic with what God was doing.

Now I pass on to show you how that same spirit of rebellion and utter want of sympathy was found in connection with the proclamation of the glad tidings. We have it in this wonderful chapter, Luke 15. That chapter is not, however, so great as chapter 14, which presents the "great supper", representing God's delight in Christ as having accomplished righteousness. God invites all to that. Chapter 15 has reference to God's delight in the returning prodigal; and the close of it shows us that that which delighted God was wholly without interest except in the way of opposition; to those who had the part and place of the "elder brother". The elder brother represents the man after the flesh in the place of privilege, and represents Israel as having the first place with God. There is no reproof in the father's words to the elder brother here: the next chapter suffices for that. It would not be suitable for the father to judge the elder brother; it was all pure grace. But see the hardening of heart expressed in the elder brother. The father comes out to him and says, "this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found".

He appealed to his heart. This should have touched him, but as of old in Pharaoh's case, he was proof against the divine appeal; that of a father; he disregarded the divine appeal to him as a brother; he had no brotherly affection. Pharaoh had no true fatherly affection; if he had he would have had respect for God's fatherly affection. The elder brother had no true brotherly affection; the Jew manifested utter want of it.

Now when you come to the historical order in Acts you will find the stubborn son expressed in Saul of Tarsus. He was the embodiment of all that was antagonistic to Christ, and to the disciples of Christ; and that in the presence of Stephen, who was the most wonderful expression of the Spirit of Christ. What made Saul doubly responsible was that in the testimony of Stephen there was the most perfect expression of the Spirit of Christ. Saul was one of those who held the clothes of those who stoned the martyr. The Spirit of

Christ, the Spirit of the true Son, was brought close to Saul, and in spite of that there was utter hatred; he went out of Jerusalem with authority from the high priest, displaying the greatest hatred to everything that belonged to Christ, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter". Such was the stubbornness of Israel against God and Christ.

According to Deuteronomy there was nothing for that man but stoning, that is what he deserved; but instead of that the Lord Jesus calls to him by name. When the Lord calls you by name it means that you have a place in His heart, and when He repeats it He shows the intensity of His interest in you. He said to Saul, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He would inquire of Saul, 'What have I done?' What damage had He done to Saul? Nothing. When a father has a stubborn son you will notice there the evidence of unreasonableness, and that was the case with Saul, he manifested the most unreasonable opposition. There was no occasion for it, hence the Lord asks him what is his ground for it. Why are you doing it? Saul was kicking against the goads, and it involved suffering for him. He is brought low and becomes known no more as the embodiment of the stubborn son, but the great announcer of the obedient Son; that is Christ. His first preaching was about the Son of God, showing how completely he was converted from stubbornness to the Man who was manifested to him. What does conversion mean? It means that you are turned to Christ who is God's Son. Saul was converted to Christ, and he preached Christ: He apprehended God's Son, and he preached God's Son.

John says of Jesus, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father". Paul becomes the great announcer of this blessed One. The conversion of such a one as Saul shows the effect of the administration of the Lord. There are various services, but one Lord. The whole chapter, Acts 9, is engaged with bringing under our attention the authority of Christ. We must give way to the authority of Christ. The next chapter shows us the operations of God. There are distinctions of operations, but one God. Now God operates in Peter, and the sheet is let down from heaven to intimate what God's mind was towards the world. God's operations are universal, and He wants to enlist the sympathy of Peter in what He is doing. God is not defeated: He secures the sympathy of Peter, so that Peter should become the vessel for the announcement of the glad tidings to the Gentiles. God wanted to enlist the sympathy of Peter, and He did so. And while Peter was preaching, the Spirit of God fell upon those present. God did not wait for the Gentiles to say anything. When they were on the road to Him the Spirit came on them collectively. He had come upon the Jew, now He comes upon the Gentiles. Peter's sympathy

was secured, and when they find fault with him, he said, "What was I" — *God did it*. He did not arrogate the glory to himself.

Now in Acts 11 you find the spirit of the stubborn son in that very Christian profession. Those of the circumcision contended with Peter, and he was forced to vindicate his preaching. He says, "What was I that I could withstand God?" But there was in those Christians at Jerusalem the lack of sympathy with what God was doing. We get a contrast to this in Barnabas; he had the true spirit of a true son; "when he came and saw the grace of God he was glad". The Spirit of God explains that he was glad. In the early chapters Barnabas was in sympathy with the testimony; he sold his land and gave the money to the apostles. In this chapter he is in complete sympathy with God; he was glad when he saw the grace of God. Then we are told why, because "he was a good man". He was devoid of selfish motives. Goodness is an attribute of God, and it applied to Barnabas: Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit; that man is in sympathy with what God is doing.

Now God is doing something today; God is never inactive; from the outset He has been operating. The question is, What is He doing *now*? If God is doing anything, He seeks to enlist the sympathy of His people in it. We should be exercised so as to be set for the promotion of whatever God is doing. He is doing *something*. Let us discover what that is. In a day of small things, He is not acting as in a day of large things, but the great thing for us is to be in sympathy with what God is doing. The widow with the two mites may be taken as a case in point. The temple then represented all that belonged to the interest of God on earth, and she was in sympathy with that. It was recognised as the house of God, and she was contributing to it: she discerned what was of God, and she acted to promote that. She was in sympathy with what God was doing.

PRIESTLY CONSTITUTION (JT 13)

Deuteronomy 18: 1 - 22; Judges 15: 14 - 19

I have in my mind to call attention to the constitution of the priest. Every true believer in Christ is a priest. Aaron and his sons represent the saints in their priestly capacity, and Aaron's sons and daughters represent the priestly family. But the fact that we are priests is not enough. It is God's intention that we should have a priestly constitution, which in New Testament language may be described as the result of *the word of God and prayer*. These two passages suggest first how the word being received is assimilated. You will observe that the priest had as his portion from the people's sacrifices the jawbones, or cheeks, and the stomach, or maw, besides the right shoulder and other things. Then you will observe from the passage in Judges that Samson's great victory was achieved by the jawbone of an ass. Jawbones, as we well know, represent the power for mastication.

Now what I desire to say is simple, namely, that believers on receiving the word of God have to rightly take it in. If we are to be priests the word of God must be rightly received; as it is said in the New Testament, "accept with meekness the implanted word" (James 1: 21). It is to be rightly received. And so the Lord, as ever, is the Model for us, He being the great Priest; it is as Man that He is priest. As a divine Person He was the Word of God; He was so perfectly the expression of the mind of God. Not only the nature of God, and the attributes of God, but the thoughts of God found a perfect expression in Christ. This is one of the most interesting features of the gospel narratives — the manner in which the Lord presented the thoughts of God. I say, the *manner in which He presented them*.

Luke 4: 17 says, that, standing up in the synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus took the roll of the Scriptures from the attendant and read out of it. "He found the place" from which to read. You may be sure it took Him but little time to find the text, although in those days texts were not so easily found as they are now. He *found* the passage that exactly fitted the moment in which He stood in the synagogue; and having read it, He handed the roll back to the attendant and sat down. There was perfect grace, and perfect ease too, in His manner. Then He said, "To-day this scripture is fulfilled in your ears". He let the Scriptures speak. One would ever seek to let the Scriptures speak for themselves. They have their own way of speaking; indeed, they preach, as Paul said, "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations on the principle of faith, announced beforehand the glad tidings to Abraham" (Galatians 3: 8). They preached the gospel to Abraham. And so, the Lord

being the perfect Model for us, let the Scriptures speak. He said, "To-day this scripture is fulfilled in your ears". It was not yet fulfilled in their hearts, alas! It is one thing to have the word fulfilled in your ears, and another to have it fulfilled in your heart. Unless the word is in the heart it bears no fruit. And so in another passage, the Lord says, speaking of the good ground, it represents the one who hears the word of God and understands it in his heart. *Understands* it. Such an one as that bears fruit, thirty, sixty, and an hundred-fold.

But then I must pursue that remarkable passage. The Lord says, "To-day this scripture is fulfilled in your ears". And it says they "wondered at the words of grace which were coming out of his mouth". He was the Word of God. Indeed, Luke himself begins by designating the Lord "the Word". His words were words of grace, so that they became attractive. He was in that way the Model for us,

being the great high Priest. For what priest's lips have kept knowledge like the lips of Christ? "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and at his mouth they should seek the law" (Malachi 2: 7). And so, as I said, the jawbones were the priest's portion from those that sacrificed from among the people.

Now, beloved, do we use the jawbones? It is not a question of natural ability. One might read Scripture, and read books on Scripture, and listen to ministry with natural intelligence, and many can go a great length on that line, gathering up much information; but the jawbones which the priest obtained were the jawbones of the sacrifice of the victim. In other words, the jawbones are taken up as out of death. Natural ability ends there. Everything must come out of death, for that is the divine way. As Paul says, "For *I*, through law, have died to the law, that I may live to God" (Galatians 2: 19). Whatever it is, the principle of death has to come in, and if I read Scripture, or if I listen to ministry, it must be on that principle. From the very outset the believer is in that position; he has come out of death. Baptism is a token of it; indeed, the Lord's supper, and also circumcision; all these things denote that the natural ability or status of the believer have no place in Christianity. What is of nature in that respect has no place. One has to begin anew, and so in Romans 6: 4 we have newness of life after baptism. That is to say, we have to begin with the principle of newness; but it is newness out of death. "Even as Christ has been raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so *we* also should walk in newness of life". In chapter 7 you have newness of spirit, and in chapter 12 the renewing of the mind. That is to say, the life and the spirit and the mind are to be brought into accord with the death of Christ.

Now, if my mind is renewed on that principle, my jawbones are used, so to speak, henceforth on that principle; so that I take in the word of God humbly

for I have to be built up from the outset by it. Peter speaks to us of the sincere mental milk of the word. That is what we need to get, young people or old, the sincere *mental* milk of the word. That is to say, the revelation of the mind of God becomes the food for the believer; his mind is nourished by it. Let no one say that there is not enough in Christianity for his mind. Whatever you have in that way, beloved friends, you will find food in Christ. John, who had a right estimate of Christ, says that if all the things that Jesus did could have been written, the world itself could not contain them; there would be no room for any other books, it would be full of books about Christ. And you would find everything that your mind might desire in such books. So it shall be, for Christ shall fill every intelligence in the heavens and on earth, however great.

So, beloved, it is important to use the jawbones. That is to say, as you receive the word at the outset, so to speak, masticate it so that it may become finally assimilated in the stomach. The stomach is a very great organ for our use, answering as well to the jawbones for building up right priestly constitution, so that one is formed in that way by the thoughts of God. The word of God is the nourishment by which I am built up, and I become a priest in the way of intelligence and of grace. The thing that we speak is, so to say, already ours. The Lord said when one asked Him as to Himself, I am "altogether that which I also say to you" (John 8: 25). He was *altogether* as a Man here in dependence upon God in what He said. That is to say, the true priestly features were seen in Christ. Think of Him saying, "He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed" (Isaiah 50: 4). Think of the Lord taking such a place as that here.

The morning is the best time for learning. The mind is clearer. Not that the Lord was subject to what we are subject to, but He set us the example. So He says "he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed". And He says further, "that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary". True priestly service is to be able to speak a word to a weary one.

Well now, I apprehend that in the passage in the book of Judges we have the result of this. Not, indeed, that Samson shines in a special way as a type of Christ, although he is a type of Christ. It says, "The Spirit of Jehovah came upon him". He is a type of Christ in that way; for the Lord Himself says, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me", and the effect was unlimited power. With regard to Samson, the Philistines shouted against him; it was a question of warfare. It is a great thing, beloved brethren, to be prepared. The late war *was* in everybody's mind and on everybody's lip. But the war — the conflict — is still on; there is no cessation of it. And the books of the wars of the Lord are still open; exploits are constantly being written into them. And it is a question of

who is in the war. Who are the soldiers of Jesus Christ? The priest becomes a soldier. If I am to have the sword of the Spirit, if I am to exercise it, if I am to use it, I must know the word of God. Paul says, "Have ... the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word" (Ephesians 6: 17). We are to have the instrument of aggression as well as of defence, but all war is by the Spirit. So the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Samson as the enemy attacked, and he rent his bands as if they had been burnt flax; for what power can stand before the power of the Spirit of God?

But then this power is in one in whom is the word of God. And so it says he found the fresh jawbone of an ass (for the word is 'fresh', or 'moist').

I suppose it is a typical allusion. The death of the Lord Jesus is as fresh today as it was when it happened — that is, the *effect* of it. It is brought to our hearts on every first day of the week. It is very touching — he bread and the cup taken together attest a dead Christ. There is that freshness with it as if it had happened today. It remains in the Supper in freshness. The Christ that you and I know is the Christ that died — not two thousand years ago, but, as it were, yesterday. The testimony remains in freshness. As Paul said, "Who has loved me and given himself for me". Think of that, beloved! Not 'who loves me', but "who has loved me". You may say, Why do you say that? Ah! because He had me in His mind when He died. We might say, He loved us. He did love us; He loved the church. But when He died He had every believer in His heart. Can anything be more touching than that, "He has loved *me*, and given himself for *me*"? That was yesterday. It was as fresh in Paul's mind as if it had been that day. He might easily and truthfully have said, 'who loves me', for the love of Christ for Paul at that moment was just what it was when He died for him. There is great preciousness in recalling the fact that He had you and me in His mind when He died. He died in obedience, speaking reverently of the Lord, as One who was wholly docile, wholly subject. The Lord, taking the lowly place, was entirely subject to His Father's will: "becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross" (Philippians 2: 8). It is as fresh as if it were yesterday.

The word in connection with the jawbone is 'moist' or 'fresh'. The death had just happened. It was well for Samson that it was so. And how much more for us in our warfare? It must be in the nearness of Christ to us as the One who died. He has been down into death; He has met the foe in his strength and has defeated him,

"that through death he might annul him who has the might of death" (Hebrews 2: 14).

And now the weapon is put into our hands. Paul spoke of fighting with beasts at Ephesus. Beasts! How? As one who died every day. How fresh and real was the death of Christ to him. "I die daily", he says. He died in the light of the death of Christ; no one would die otherwise. We can die in the light of the death of Christ, and the more often we die in that sense the more we realise the nearness of Christ to us.

So Samson found a fresh jawbone, and that the jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand and took it and slew a thousand men therewith. What a victory! And so he composes what we may call an item in the books of the wars of the Lord. "With the jawbone of an ass, a heap, two heaps, with the jawbone of an ass have I slain a thousand men".

This represents the energy of the believer, the energy of the Spirit of God in the believer. He has assimilated the word of God. The word of God is his weapon. It is the word of God assimilated that forms the constitution as a priest, for my lips must keep knowledge; I must know how to speak to God and to men. But it is also the weapon for warfare. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit.

Now, the other thought I want to add is prayer. You will remember when the Lord entered into Martha's house, Mary sat at His feet. She listened to what He was saying. She was, as it were, building up a priestly constitution there. She sat down and listened to the Lord. Martha was cumbered with much serving, but Mary had chosen that good part, listening to the Lord's word, and in that way was building up a constitution that may be regarded as priestly.

The effect of it was seen later when the Lord was about to die. Six days before He died, six days before the passover, Mary had a pound of ointment,

very costly, and she anointed His feet with it. And the house was filled with the odour. It reminds me of one with a priestly constitution speaking to God, or speaking to the Lord. How the effect of it, of what is intelligent and spiritual in that way fills the house: one has often realised that. So that you can see in Mary of Bethany how the priest was formed.

You can see the effect of it in John 12. But then in Luke 11, which follows that, it says the Lord was praying in a certain place. It does not say what the place was, for the point was not the place, but what He was doing there — praying. He had been speaking about God, and now He is speaking *to* God. And the disciples saw Him. We are not told what He said to God, nor are we told what He said to Mary. But one of His disciples says, "Lord, teach us to pray!" That is the other side of the priest's position, to hear the word and learn to pray. These two things together constitute a priest.

But they also constitute a warrior, for we go forth into our battles in dependence upon God. Samuel is indeed suggestive of the praying man in Scripture: his very name indicates it. When the Philistines came up against Israel he offered a sucking lamb and he prayed. He was in the intelligence of the mind of God. He knew what suited the moment. He acknowledged that he had no power to meet the enemy, but God had the power. The battle is the Lord's; let us ever remember that. "Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them" (1 Samuel 7: 10). It is on the principle of accepted and acknowledged weakness, but in dependence upon God so that we "became strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, made the armies of strangers give way" (Hebrews 11: 34), so that the word of God and prayer stand by the warrior as they stand by the priest.

That leads me on to the second point, namely,

"En-hakkore", (Judges 15: 19). That word means, according to those who should know, the spring of the caller, or, the well of him that calleth. Just as the previous word "Ramath-Lehi" (Judges 15: 17) means, the hill of the jawbone. These two landmarks were doubtless landmarks of faith. The one is the strength that accrues from the word of God being in the soul — the word of God coming through Him who died, for the word of God is only effective through the death of Christ. In Luke the Lord applies the Scriptures to Himself — after He arose. "Having begun from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24: 27). That is to say, it is in Christ risen that you see the word of God exemplified fully. He had to die in order that it should be effective in believers. And then in that same scripture you have the understanding of the saints opened, so that they might understand the Scriptures. It is in a risen Christ; it is in a Christ who died and who is risen again that the word of God is effective. It is effective in us; so that 'the hill of the jawbone' is the testimony to the power of the word of God in the believer, made effective in him. In result it represents the exploit of one who had the word of God.

But then, after Samson's great victory, he is thirsty; he is about to die. And that brings in the other point. He cried to God. It says, "He was very thirsty, and called on Jehovah". What a word that is for us. "Does any one among you suffer evil?" says James, "let him pray" (James 5: 13). Samson called on Jehovah. "And God", it says, "clave the hollow rock which was in Lehi". There again we come to another side of the death of Christ. That is to say, the Holy Spirit could only come that way. God could not give His Spirit to us, and all that lies in the possession of the Spirit, apart from the death of Christ. He "clave the hollow in the rock". We can well understand what that means, for

the “Rock” is Christ. One of the most touching things in the wilderness position is that the Rock followed the people. The ark went before, but the Rock followed. It is the Lord taking up a position of service for us in our weariness, and our thirst — our need of refreshment.

So God clave the rock for Samson, “and water came out of it. And he drank, and his spirit came again, and he revived”. We have there the principle of prayer. I am not now for the moment speaking of the gift of the Spirit through prayer, but what is of great importance is learning how to pray and maintaining that attitude both in regard of our priestly service and as to our warfare. There is no possibility of effectiveness in priestly service or in warfare aside from these two things: the word of God rightly assimilated in our souls so that it builds up a constitution in us, and prayer, that is to say, the expression of dependence on God.

May the Lord bless the word!

PRIESTHOOD AS BEARING ON YOUNG BELIEVERS (JT 24)

Romans 1: 1 - 4; Romans 5: 5; Romans 8: 14, 15; Romans 12: 1; Deuteronomy 18: 3 - 5

In what I have to say on this occasion I want to show how the epistle to the Romans lays the basis for priesthood. I wish to speak about priesthood, and to show how it applies to young believers. The Scriptures speak about the sons of Levi being priests, and they also speak more expressly about the sons of Aaron, and Aaron and his sons. The latter are more prominent in the wilderness, the former appear in connection with the land. The wilderness journey required more spiritual power, for the strain was greater, and so the priesthood, in the books that have reference to the wilderness, is generally confined to Aaron and his sons, whereas in Deuteronomy and Joshua the thought is generally extended, although not always, to the whole tribe of Levi. We can understand that special occasions and circumstances require the priestly element as expressive of what is wholly spiritual, as it is said, "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one" (Galatians 6: 1), but it was an entire mistake to restrict priesthood to those only who are spiritual. It has to be extended to all who have the Spirit, and therefore it includes every true Christian, a true Christian being one who has the Spirit.

It is to be noted how even the epistle to the Romans, which is the most elementary and fundamental of all the epistles, lays down the basis for priesthood, so that the youngest believer may apprehend how he has part in it. In that connection, it is necessary to call attention to the manner in which the Son of God is presented in the epistle, for the idea of priesthood necessarily hangs on sonship.

The epistle to the Hebrews shows us that priesthood now is in the Son, as it is said, "A Son perfected for ever" (chapter 7: 28); and so in the beginning of Romans the apostle refers to the theme of his gospel as no less than the Son of God. As moving out in his service, we find that his first preaching was that Jesus is the Son of God, and he tells us later in explaining his commission that God revealed His Son in him that he might announce Him as glad tidings among the nations; Galatians 1: 16. He says to the Corinthians in his second epistle, "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea". We are not told in the Acts that he preached the Son of God in Corinth, but he tells us himself that he did so, and not only he, but two others as well who were qualified preachers, and a threefold cord is not easily

broken. There was a threefold testimony in that city to the Son of God, and we learn from the body of this epistle to the Romans that the intent of the preaching was to bring believers in it into correspondence with the Son.

So you find in chapter 1 that He is declared to be the Son of God with power, not by the announcement of the Father from heaven, as the evangelists record, but by resurrection of the dead; that is to say, the testimony of the Son of God among the Gentiles was that He was "*declared*" to be such; not announced simply as such, but He was *declared* to be the Son of God. A declaration is something that is undeniable. He was declared to be the Son of God with power, it says. We are reminded in that word 'power' as to what marks Christianity; it is a system marked by power. Paul insists that his preaching was in power, and the declaration of the Son of God was in power. The announcement from heaven was not that, blessed as it was, but obviously the declaration of the Son of God must be in power, for it was by resurrection of the dead. Most of you will know that here it is not exactly His own resurrection that is in view, although He rose Himself from the dead, but includes that of others; but whether it be others or His own. He is "declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from [of] the dead". And then, not only so, but it is "according to the spirit of holiness". Now I want to say a word about that, because priesthood involves holiness, and so the idea of holiness is embedded in the soul of the believer from the outset, as he believes the gospel — the *idea*, I repeat, not yet the *thing*. Things are presented to us in testimony that are to become effective in our souls by the Spirit; that is how God works in us. He presents an idea in the way of light, then He brings the soul to it by the Spirit. And so the gospel that Paul preached among the nations, polluted as they were, involved holiness. His preaching was the Son of God declared to be such by resurrection of the dead, and then it was according to the Spirit of holiness. Now, that idea received into the soul (and unless it is received, the *gospel is* not received) is taken up by the Spirit, and so it is said in chapter 5 that the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the *Holy* Spirit. The Holy Spirit! In chapter 1 He is the Spirit of holiness; in chapter 5 He is the Holy Spirit who sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, following on the light of the gospel. Morally the heart is prepared for such a transaction by the reception of the light of the Son of God.

But now to proceed. I want you to see how the Son of God is introduced in this epistle. We read in chapter 5: 10 that we have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son. The element of holiness received is a fundamental thought, and the next thing is the reconciliation; that is, that the very light which has come to me in regard to the Son of God involves that I am to be made as suitable and as acceptable in the presence of God as He is. I am

reconciled by the death of His Son. Think of the light involved in that! I am brought into the presence of God in acceptability. As apprehending the death of His Son, I see that there is not one shade of distance between God and my soul.

All this is a matter of light. And then again (chapter 5: 6) the apostle says, "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly", and in chapter 8: 3 he says, "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh". Now I see that by the Son coming in the likeness of flesh of sin He has dealt with that which would hamper me in the presence of God. The existence of sin is a most serious matter, and God foreseeing how it would act in the believer against the Spirit, and against the development of priesthood in him, sends His *own* Son. I want you to note the expression. Such was the urgency of what was in hand. God sent His *own* Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, and so He has effectively condemned sin in the flesh. Need I say it is in the flesh *of the believer*? Sin is surely condemned in every sense, but the point here is, that it is condemned in the flesh of the believer, so that it should have no place or voice there whatsoever. I am as free of it before God as Christ is; God has dealt with it effectively by the sending of His own Son, and why should I not condemn it? It is simply a matter of light. I shall come to the power in a moment, but this is a matter of light as to what God has done. He has reconciled us by the death of His Son, and condemned sin in the flesh by sending His own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin. One would hesitate to use the expression were it not that the Holy Spirit uses it: "in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh", so that I am entirely unhampered now. It is a matter of light, I repeat, and it has to be maintained by the Spirit, otherwise the Spirit could not work in us. As I receive the light, then the Holy Spirit operates effectively.

Now you see how God has wrought in His Son to liberate us. We have the idea of power and of holiness, we have the idea of acceptance in the presence of God in reconciliation, and of the complete condemnation of sin in the flesh, and now parallel with that we have the operations of the Spirit. The Spirit of holiness in which Christ rose has shed abroad in the heart of the believer the love of God. What can be a greater conception than that the love of God should be brought into the believer's heart? The very first service of the Spirit in the believer in this book is to bring in the love of God, to bring into my heart the very greatest thing in the whole universe — the love of God. That is His first service. It is not new birth. The Spirit does not come into the believer merely to reside because he is a believer; He comes in consequent upon redemption, and consequent upon the believer receiving the gospel. It says,

"After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1: 13), but in coming in, He sheds abroad the love of God in the heart. Now, see what a vessel God has! It is not now that I have light simply; I have more than light; I have the love of God placed in my heart by the Holy Spirit, and what follows upon that, in the doctrine in regard to the Spirit, is that my members begin to act in relation to God.

What I am saying is within the range of the simplest and youngest believer. As the love of God touches you, you begin to recognise His rights over every member you possess, and you yield them to God as instruments of righteousness. I am afraid we mystify that word 'righteousness' sometimes. It is simply what is right, and it is surely right, as the love of God touches your hearts, to acknowledge that He has the right to you, that your members are all His. Then you begin to see that you are connected with the greatest possible things. God is pleased to use your members, your very feet, your eyes, your ears, your mouth; those members that have been employed in the service of sin, are now ready instruments for the expression of what is right in this world. And as you begin thus, the idea of holiness develops; and if you do not begin thus, then you are not a believer at all; you have not yet believed the gospel; but as you begin, then in the most initial way the spirit of holiness within you develops. It is difficult to define how these things work. The Spirit of God alone knows how to define accurately, but your members now begin to work; no longer as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but as servants of righteousness unto holiness. Holiness is not now merely an idea with you, it is beginning to work out by the Spirit, and then the apostle goes on to say, "Ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life". Mark, it is *your* fruit, not God's fruit. The believer begins to see that fruit unto holiness is a fruit to be valued, and as he begins to taste its value, he extends its cultivation. I do urge on every young believer the cultivation of holiness; it is one of the finest crops you can produce for God. You have the idea here of a production; you have your fruit — *your fruit* — unto holiness. I, as it were, come to God with something. I cannot draw near to God without it, and what can be greater in this scene than a fruit like this, by which I draw near to God?

Now in chapter 8, consequent upon the condemnation of sin in the flesh, we have room made for the Spirit to operate, so that all this that I have gathered up in my experience in the most initial way, as I said, enters into the use I make of the Spirit, in speaking to God. The believer in chapter 8 develops into a priest; he develops into sonship, and correspondingly into priesthood; for while it is as a son that I say, "Abba, Father", I say it in the spirit of adoption, but I also say it in holiness. It must be so, and it is holiness which I have acquired by exercise in the practice of righteousness. The foundation

subjectively is the love of God, that is the basis, and moving in that relation I acquire holiness. Now I see sin no longer hampers me, and I can regard myself as free from it, and I am in the Spirit, if so be that God's Spirit dwells in me; and I can say I am led by the Spirit. It is a wonderful thing to come into that — the leading of the Spirit. It is quite right to be governed by light in any position, but to be led by the Spirit is *life*. It marks the Christian company; it is a living state of things; it is constant activity; "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God". Romans is a development in that way. It is not simply a privilege conferred now, but as being led by the Spirit I am greeted divinely and recognised as one of the sons of God. How great the thought to be recognised as a son of God! It corresponds, I apprehend, with the journeyings of the children of Israel after singing to the well — after they recognised the Spirit in type. Henceforth they were not led by the light, objectively, but by the Spirit. There is little said about the tabernacle after Numbers 21, because it is not now what is objective that is in view, but what is subjective. I am led by the Spirit, I recognise I am a son of God, and so I say, "Abba, Father". I have not received the spirit of bondage; I refer back to my experience, my experience confirms the statement that I have received a spirit of adoption, whereby I cry, "Abba, Father", and that cry whilst it is the cry of a son is also a feature of priesthood, acquired by the produce of holiness.

Now in chapter 12 I have something to offer.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God". I do not know of any other language, other than typical language, that expresses priesthood more simply. I can present what no one can take from me, what is my own — my body. It belongs to me; God accredits it to me. So that every believer, the very youngest one, can take up priestly service, can present his body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. There is nothing more simple. In the secret of your closet you may present to God all that you are; you can present your body, "which is your intelligent service".

Well, that is Romans, where we get, as we have seen, the soul history in faith and by the Spirit which constitutes the basis of priesthood, but now in Deuteronomy we see how the priesthood, thus understood, is to be sustained. You will have observed that Moses here speaks to "the priests, the Levites"; the whole tribe of Levi is now in view, and so we have food provided that the young particularly should take notice of. I speak thus because one often hears expressions of dissatisfaction from the young, that they do not understand and they assume that priesthood is beyond them, and that it refers to others.

There is no doubt that in a certain connection it does refer to those who are spiritual, not only those who have the Spirit, but to those who are spiritual. And priesthood, I believe, under the hand of Aaron and his sons has this largely in view; but in Deuteronomy all saints are in view; it includes the whole tribe of Levi; and so the food involves what is initial. As Peter says, leading up to the same subject, "Desire earnestly the pure mental milk of the word, that by it ye may grow up to salvation". He has in view that the system, the constitution, should be built up by the word of God. That is the greatest thing a young believer can start with — the sense that he must be nourished by the word of God. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge", Malachi 2: 7. There is a great obligation resting on the priesthood as seen in the types, for the priest is to be in the mind of God; and for this his mind must be cleared of all darkening influences. The reading of novels, of magazines, and of papers that convey men's thoughts, only darken and corrupt the mind, so we are reminded to be as newborn babes, desiring the pure mental milk of the word; that is to say, the word of God is great enough to minister to the mind. We are to be governed and to have our minds saturated with the word of God.

John in Revelation 10 was told to take the little book from the angel and to eat it up. Ezekiel, too, had to eat the roll. As eating that which conveyed the mind of God, they would each have in his entire being the very mind of God; his moral being would be formed by that. He would be in correspondence with the Lord, for He said, when asked as to Himself, "Altogether that which I also say to you". It is not simply that I have taken the thing into my head, but the word of God has been assimilated into my being, so that I *am* it, in that sense; that is the principle. So in our measure we are to correspond with the Lord; what we *say*, we *are*, and the young believer has to begin with that thought.

So the priesthood in Deuteronomy (chapter 18: 3) was furnished first with the shoulder, then the jawbones, and then the maw or stomach. These things are remarkable; they were the priest's due from those who brought a sacrifice; but I think in view of all Christians being contemplated, we can understand the bearing of them. First, we all need strength; we would all admit how weak we are, even when we started our Christian career. But when any trouble arises in any locality what is needed is the shoulder.

Saints are often governed by personal feelings; or they live on a wretched controversy; these are not priestly features at all, and what is needed is something to strengthen them. The shoulder suggests ministry that strengthens. Then the jawbones suggest the power of mastication. We have to learn how to take in the thing, and prepare it for absorption in the system; we must not compel the stomach to do what the teeth should do, so to speak; we

have to learn to use our organs. Then there is the maw, reminding us that things have to be taken in. When John ate the little book, it was sweet in his mouth, but became bitter within him. The word of God is that to a believer, it is sweet to the taste, but as you assimilate it you see the full bearing of it, the consequences in a judicial way, and it is bitter. I speak of it thus because what is in your *mouth* may not convey just what it is. It *is* sweet there surely, but as you apprehend it fully you grasp the import of it, you see much greater consequences, and it may be more serious ones than you saw at the beginning. The word of God searches out, and discovers in us what has to be absolutely refused and judged.

But not only these things. The young believer is to have corn, as it says here, "The first-fruits of thy corn, of thy new wine, and of thine oil, and the first-fruits of the shearing of thy sheep, shalt thou give him". Corn refers to Christ as Man. It is, as we may say, the staff of life, and we need it every day. The wine comes next, which I apprehend is stimulation. The young need that, for they often become drooping and are readily discouraged. Paul speaks often of encouragement, and the young need to be encouraged, and it comes in by one who himself has been encouraged of God. The young need careful food, ministry that will build up a good constitution according to Christ; but they *do* need encouragement; one knows it. One who is advanced in years has an advantage; he can say, "I have been young, and now am old". The young cannot say that. The elder has something in correspondence with the young. Every one advanced in years knows how easily he was discouraged when he was young. So the young do need encouragement, and so the first-fruits of the new wine is for the priests.

Then there is the oil, and oil distinguishes us. Young people like to be distinguished, and oftentimes there is a desire for ability to preach, but the distinction that is from God is got from the oil, not now the Spirit working *in* you, but characterising you externally. You take it on by walking in the Spirit, and therefore you have the first-fruits of the oil. And then also the first-fruits of the shearing of thy sheep. Why should the priests need wool, when enjoined not to use it in the sanctuary? Linen was to be worn. What is to be used next to the skin of the priest in the sanctuary is linen, that is to say, young ones need to be kept sober. Linen is sobering, it does not excite the flesh; it keeps us from attempting to use eloquence in the presence of God, or using fine language obtained from others. Linen holds you to what you know, and to your own impressions, and to what you can bring yourself. "Five words" if uttered humbly and soberly in the presence of God are acceptable to Him; it is indeed delightful to God. Then why should they need wool? The answer is very simple. Young Christians need warmth, and they get it in the circle of the

saints, when there are offerings of that kind. Where saints are together in the energy of affection there is warmth; you feel, as it says in the book of Job, your garments becoming warm. This is a great matter for young people, for it induces priestly state as viewed in a right way. True warmth is found in the circle of the saints, by the love of the saints, and that is a matter of great importance. So the first-fruits of the shearing of the sheep were to be for the priests, the sons of Levi.

I hope what I have said will be understood as showing how priesthood is developed in the epistle to the Romans, and that the young may take it to themselves and begin simply and humbly to present their bodies to God, and then see to it that they get right food — suitable food — that which God provides, that it may give them character, so that priesthood may be maintained.

Deuteronomy 19

- DEUTERONOMY 19 (CAC 5)
- THE CITIES OF REFUGE (JR 1)
- THE CITIES OF REFUGE (JT 32)
- THE WAY TO THE CITY (JT 60)
- THE MAINTENANCE OF GRACE (JT 83)
- THE MAINTENANCE OF GRACE (JT 83)

DEUTERONOMY 19 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 19

God gave great prominence in the land to the cities of refuge. They had a great place in His heart as a provision of mercy for "every slayer" who should "unwittingly" smite his neighbour. There is no doubt that in this the Spirit of God had in view the slaying of Christ. The Prophet of chapter 18 would become the slain Neighbour of chapter 19. And the issue of this would depend on how the slayer could be regarded by God. If the act was done "unwittingly" cities of refuge were available for the slayer; if done out of deliberate hatred there was no escape from the avenger of blood. The Spirit's testimony to a risen and exalted Christ would manifest in every case whether the slayer was of the one class or the other. On God's part He answered the intercession of Christ on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", by taking account of the deed as done in ignorance, and by His Spirit in Peter He said, "I know that ye did it in ignorance, as also your rulers" (Acts 3: 17). Peter addressed the Jews in Acts 2 and 3 as slayers of Christ, and offered them mercy in His Name, but when the Spirit's testimony to Christ was rejected Stephen addressed the whole council of the Jews in Acts 7 as the murderers of the Just One. Standing deliberately to their act and deed, in presence of the testimony of the Holy Spirit to Jesus glorified, they became wilful murderers for whom no city of refuge was available. Saul of Tarsus persecuted Jesus in His saints, but he says that mercy was shewn him because he did it ignorantly in unbelief.

The actual result of the coming in of Christ was that Israel was found in the position of the manslayer, and as such forfeited all right to live in the inheritance. So that none of those who came into blessing at Pentecost and the following days could boast of their pedigree, or assert any claim to their assigned inheritance; they could only live as refugees from the avenger of blood. The cities of refuge suggest a character of dwelling in the land which greatly magnifies the sovereign love and mercy of God. The "heirs of promise" got the good of the unchangeableness of God's purpose, and the unchangeable character of His promise and oath, but on their part they came into it purely as refugees, for they had been verily guilty of crucifying and slaying Jesus. All the blessedness of God's purpose was there to be known and enjoyed — all that He had promised to the fathers — but on their part they were simply refugees from the avenger of blood.

The cities of refuge are a special divine provision for cases when the normal enjoyment of the land is no longer possible. They contemplate an end

governmentally of normal conditions. They represent what God had in reserve, in the supremacy of His mercy, when the promises had been forfeited as a result of the slaying of Christ. In making this provision God had in view the true Israel, the children of the promise (Romans 9), in regard to whom He could and did account that they slew Christ "unwittingly". But even for such the inheritance as on earth was forfeited; there was no reinstatement in it, no restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Another place of blessing became available of which the cities of refuge were typical. No place of earthly blessing remained even for Israel; they must either live in the cities of refuge or be destroyed under the judgment of God. God opened up to them what was holy and heavenly as a refuge when everything on earth failed. It is this which the Spirit of God refers to in Hebrews 6: when He speaks of the "strong encouragement" which those have "Who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us; 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". This was what the believing remnant of Israel did; Judaism failed them, for as connected with it they were guilty as Man-slayers, but all that was unseen and heavenly, connected with a risen and heavenly Christ, was made available for them as a city of refuge.

Now if Israel, to whom earthly blessing pertained, have lost all title to it through the slaying of Christ, and have to flee for refuge to lay hold on a hope which is heavenly, it is beyond all question that we of the nations cannot look for inheritance here. The slaying of Christ has rendered that as impossible for us as for Israel. We have to take up the inheritance as enjoyed in the cities of refuge, or we shall not possess it at all. And this is of immense importance for every Christian to apprehend. The people of God at the present time must not look to live in any inheritance on earth. We must flee for refuge to those things which lie within the veil. To want place, popularity, power, or influence on earth at the present time is, in principle, apostasy. The finer the buildings, the more attractive and beautiful in an earthly way the services, the nearer do Christians come to those "earth-dwellers" who are so soon to fall under the long-announced judgment of God. We are in the midst of a Christian profession that has, more or less, taken up the position of having what is earthly as its object. But the end of those who mind earthly things is destruction (Philippians 3: 19). We only live as having fled to heavenly things, as having set our minds on the things above, where the Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. The things that are on the earth are not the sphere of our life. "For ye have died, and your life is hid with the Christ in God" (Colossians 3: 1 - 3). We are partakers of heavenly calling, and as Christ is the heavenly One those quickened by Him are heavenly ones. God has prepared the way for

us; He has made what is heavenly accessible. Let us see to it that we flee thither.

The public Christian profession is as great a failure as Judaism was; it has practically set aside the Holy Spirit, whose presence here is characteristic of the period during which Christ sits at the right hand of God. Not giving the Holy Spirit His place is the great outstanding sin of christendom, but when this is felt and owned the unseen and the heavenly are there for saints to flee to as a refuge. 2 Timothy is, in principle, on this line. The state of the Christian profession is such that enjoyment has been forfeited, but all that is spiritual and heavenly, and of God's purpose in Christ, remains as a refuge for those who have a sense of what has happened. It is there for those who are in the spirit of refugees.

God distinguishes between what is done in deliberate hatred and what is done unwittingly, even though in both cases the result may be fatal to what, has divine value. But He does not allow the seriousness of what is done "unwittingly" to pass without the fullest recognition. For the slayer it changed all the conditions on which he could live in the land. Much that has happened in the Christian profession has been done "unwittingly". The gravest errors have been introduced, or furthered, by men who truly loved the Lord Jesus. The whole episcopal and clerical system which is around us today developed under the influence of men who were personally devoted to Christ. Some, at least, of the sects were formed with true desire to be more consistent with the truth. But these things have proved *fatal* to much that is of God, and have had the effect of depriving the saints of the true privilege and gain connected with the assembly. So that now if saints would live in the divine inheritance they can only do so by withdrawing from iniquity, by purging themselves from vessels to dishonour, and by pursuing righteousness, faith, love, peace with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. This is the prepared way by which persons may flee for refuge today.

It is a mercy that God takes account of a great deal as being done "unwittingly". Many offences against Christ and against His people are committed through ignorance or inadvertence. In the midst of energetic service there may not always be sufficient care to provide against injuring or destroying something that is of Christ. The man with his axe in verse 5 might illustrate this. He is intent on his work, and zealous in it, but he kills his neighbour. Much labour of earnest men has had the effect of destroying life in the land rather than ministering to it. Not that this has been deliberately intended, but it has actually been done.

We learn from Joshua 20 that the three cities of refuge in the land were "hallowed". They were priestly and levitical cities (Numbers 35), and they were all "in the hill-country" (Joshua 20). When the conviction is brought home to us that we are exposed to the consequences of serious departure from what is of God, even though it may have been "unwittingly" so far as we are concerned, it is very blessed to know that what is set forth in these cities has such a great place in the ways and ordering of God. It is on this principle that God has placed amongst His people in these last days a spiritual ministry of the truth, and has called attention to the hallowed conditions in which alone He can be served in a priestly way. The "hill-country" has its counterpart in the heavenly elevation of much that the Lord has given to attract the hearts of His saints and to form them in their affections. The best and the richest and highest that God has to give is available as a city of refuge today. There is a prepared way for any who have desire to flee from what they find in themselves, and from what is of man in the Christian profession. They may find what is holy and elevated and satisfying, so that, notwithstanding all that has come in, they may *live* in the very best of the wealth of the inheritance. One comes as a refugee, indeed, and with no other title, but through infinite mercy and grace one is permitted to have place and part in what is holy and heavenly and spiritual, and to be the associate of those who are conversant with holy and heavenly and spiritual things. The priests and Levites held the three cities for the benefit of such, and whatever the man-slayer enjoyed there he enjoyed in the spirit of a refugee. This makes the inheritance available in a peculiar way under abnormal conditions. One may live on the best of its wealth even when the normal enjoyment of it is no longer possible. For the refugee must have lived on tithes, first-fruits, etc. with the priests and Levites amongst whom he dwelt.

The cities of refuge do not strictly represent a divine provision for perishing sinners, but a provision for people of God who have realised that there has been terrible departure from the normal conditions in which the land was originally held. It is such a provision as is indicated to us in 2 Timothy — a provision for conditions which are wholly abnormal, but which enables life in Christ Jesus to be known and enjoyed by those who avail themselves of the prepared way of escape. It is a special instruction for those who are conscious that privileges have been forfeited. God is not less gracious to saints of the assembly than He was to Israel. The whole spiritual order of things connected with God's purpose and grace is available as a refuge. He had in view from the beginning all that would occur that would be fatal to life in the land, and He has ever distinguished between what was done deliberately and what was done "unwittingly". There have been those in the Christian profession who

have been deliberately adverse to what was of Christ and of the Spirit, but many blows have been struck against the truth and against the brethren "unwittingly". When conviction of this is brought home to the conscience the city of refuge is ever available.

The thought of "three cities more" being added when the border was enlarged would shew that spiritual enlargement would ever be accompanied by increased provision for refugees. The more we are enlarged spiritually the more shall we be capable of holding what is spiritual and heavenly as a refuge for all those who are conscious that they can only live in the land as refugees. As regards the public position things have been forfeited, but the inheritance can be enjoyed still in this peculiar way. Everything that is hallowed, all the wealth of spiritual ministry, and holy associations that are suitable to God, are available now on the principle of refuge. How many are feeling the deplorable state of things in the Christian profession! Groaning over the fatal blows that are being struck against what is vital, and feeling that they are implicated by their associations in the consequences of many things which they truly deplore in their hearts! Oh, that such might know that there is a prepared way of escape for them! All that is of God and for God, all that is holy and heavenly, can be enjoyed in the "hill-country" in the appointed place. It is there for all in Israel who feel the need of it, and whose hearts value it.

"Thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have fixed in thine inheritance" (verse 14) shews that there is a divine apportionment which is not to be interfered with. The inheritance is common to all; all are sons, children, brethren, and have a common portion in Christ and in the Spirit,. But in detail each has an assigned portion, and it is to be our care, according to Deuteronomy, that our neighbour has his full portion. This is in keeping with the spirit of grace and consideration for the good of others which marks the book. We have no daughters of Zelophehad here desiring inheritance for themselves; our care here is that *our neighbour's* inheritance shall not be infringed upon. The inheritance is enjoyed in a neighbourly way; I can only enjoy your bit of it as you enjoy it, and therefore if I remove your landmark I really defraud myself! It is our interest to see that our neighbours enjoy their full assigned portion. In great part we enjoy the inheritance through our brethren; it is blessed to see them enjoying their portion; no one moving spiritually would wish to curtail it in the least degree. This stands in marked contrast with slaying our neighbour, even though such a thing should be done unwittingly. It emphasises the neighbourly character in which the inheritance is taken up. We get on together by fully recognising the portion assigned to each.

If any one's landmark is removed it is not only a wrong done to him, but it tends to impoverish all by interfering with the way in which God has given things. The clerical principle has greatly tended to remove landmarks, and has deprived the people of God of what divine favour would have made available in the brethren generally. The arrangements of men, and human order, are simply a removal of landmarks "which they of old time have fixed in thine inheritance". The commandments of the Lord (1 Corinthians 14: 37) are fixed landmarks, and are not to be disregarded; they would give to each one his true spiritual place amongst the brethren for the benefit of all. Many of our neighbours have had their landmarks removed, and we all suffer from it, but our care should be to give full place to what is assigned by God to each. The inheritance will only be truly and spiritually enjoyed as we are set together in affection, and each holds his portion in relation to the common joy. To be self-centred, or to move independently of one's brethren, is really to lose the good of what God has given to others for our benefit as joint-heirs with them.

Paul would not "overstretch" to boast in "other peoples' labours", or "in another's rule of things made ready to hand" (2 Corinthians 10: 13 - 16). He respected the divine allotment even in spheres of service. The apostles had their assigned portions; James and Cephas and John recognised that the glad tidings of the uncircumcision were confided to Paul (Galatians 2: 7 - 9). It is "as the Lord has given to each" (1 Corinthians 3: 5). There is a sovereign distribution, in keeping with "he gave them their land by lot" (Acts 13: 19), and this is to be regarded. "But to each one of us has been given grace according to the measure of the gift of the Christ" (Ephesians 4: 7). The grace given to our brethren is for our enjoyment and increase through them; so it is truly our interest to safe-guard our neighbour's portion, and not to encroach upon it. So we are exhorted not to regard "each his own qualities, but each those of others also" (Philippians 2: 4). We desire that all the brethren shall be possessed of what is assigned to them. It is narrowing to lose sight of the fact that it is largely through the brethren that we get the gain of the inheritance. On the other hand it is important to remember that whatever *we* hold is for common and neighbourly enjoyment with our brethren.

Another important principle in connection with our going on together in the land comes out in verses 15 - 21. Evil is to be dealt with on adequate testimony; one witness is not sufficient to establish any matter. The Lord's own words in Matthew 18: 16 and the apostle's words in 2 Corinthians 13: 1 and 1 Timothy 5: 19 shew how this principle is distinctly set up in relation to the assembly. Nothing is more serious, or more fatal to the enjoyment of the inheritance together, than to believe evil reports as to brethren without adequate testimony. There are often instances of strong personal feeling being

aroused by reports or suspicions for which there is really no foundation. The testimony of one unrighteous or mistaken witness has been listened to, and the matter regarded as proved when it has not been substantiated at all.

There are means available for testing the evidence of an unrighteous witness — one who is moved by the desire to damage his brother, a witness of violence, as it is literally. It is a solemn thing to "stand before Jehovah", and He is with "the priests and the judges". A merely human scrutiny might be baffled or evaded, but no man can lie to *God* with impunity, and God is in the assembly of His saints. See Acts 5: 1 - 6. The unerring government of God will ensure that an unrighteous witness will reap what he has sowed, and the priests and judges will act in accordance with that holy government, that "those that remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil in thy midst". No false pity is to lead any eye to "spare" what is definitely under judgment before God.

THE CITIES OF REFUGE (JR 1)

Numbers 35:9-15; Deuteronomy 19:1-3; Joshua 20:1-6

It is interesting to see how Jehovah made provision for the manslayer. It is provision made for a certain kind of sin that could result in the execution of judgment, yet Jehovah makes provision. There was no such provision in the wilderness. This provision relates to the land of Canaan. The land of Canaan as applied to us is not heaven literally. There will be no need for provision for any untoward circumstance because no such thing will arise when we are in heaven literally. But Canaan, the land of promise, suggests what is to be enjoyed down here. It is heaven known while we are down here. We need to understand that as believers we belong to heaven. We do not belong to earth and visit heaven; we belong to heaven and visit down here. That is the believer's true status. That is what dwelling in the land of Canaan means. The instruction therefore begins in Numbers, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then ye shall appoint for yourselves cities: cities of refuge shall they be for you". This provision relates to the land of Canaan. It relates to what is unfolded in the epistle to the Ephesians, for we have to go to that epistle to understand the fulness of Christianity.

Jehovah foresaw that provision for the manslayer would be needed in the land of Canaan and he makes provision for persons who are involved in this kind of sin. Jehovah does not suggest that they lower the level of things to suit the manslayer or that they should accommodate the manslayer on his own terms. Jehovah directs that there should be cities of refuge and we find in the book of Joshua that these were Levitical cities. As we know, the tribe of Levi did not inherit with the other tribes, they did not have their own territory in the land. Joseph had two tribes which makes up the number twelve; the twelve tribes inherited territory in Canaan, but the tribe of Levi did not inherit territory. They were given cities with suburbs and six of these were appointed to be cities of refuge. These Levitical cities were distributed, forty-eight of them, throughout the land on both sides of Jordan and they were meant to exercise a heavenly influence over the tribes. I have no doubt the idea of locality would enter into the twelve tribes having an inheritance. But the tribe of Levi had no inheritance; therefore it is more than simply a local matter although it would be worked out in localities. The Levitical outlook would be a universal outlook and we need to have this outlook today. There were forty-eight cities and they were meant to maintain what is typical of the heavenly level and to exercise heavenly influence over the tribes because there were Levitical cities in every tribe in Israel. Therefore God did not lower the level to accommodate the

manslayer. The manslayer would suggest in our day dishonour done to the Lord Jesus. We find that in the second chapter of the Acts. Peter, in his preaching, opens the gates of the city of refuge for the guilty Jews. They had crucified the Messiah yet Peter opens the gates of the city of refuge for every repentant person to flee into. God in His mercy and grace provided refuge for persons who were guilty of the crucifixion of Christ. In our day any dishonour to the name of Christ would involve guilt; but God's provision is the city of refuge. The heavenly level is to be maintained, not common ground made with persons who dishonour the Lord. We have to be jealous, dear brethren, for the Lord's rights and God's rights and maintain these rights, and at the same time have an outlook towards persons who dishonour the Lord's name; not by making common ground with them, nor by accommodating ourselves to them in their present state, but by maintaining what is right according to the heavenly level. That is the idea of the city of refuge. In Ephesians the evangelist is mentioned among the gifts but he is not mentioned among the gifts in 1 Corinthians. Also in chapter 6 of that epistle part of the armour mentioned is having "shod your feet with the preparation of the glad tidings of peace". These two ideas suggest the city of refuge. The level is to be maintained in its height and fulness and there is to be a readiness to be available to repentant persons. Paul himself no doubt found the city of refuge in Damascus. He tells us in 1 Timothy 1:13 what kind of man he was: "Who before was a blasphemer and persecutor, and an insolent overbearing man: but mercy was shown me because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief". That is, he found a city of refuge available as he was repentant. These cities maintained the level, therefore, of the rights of Christ and the rights of God and were in the enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance. The tribe of Levi, as I said, did not have territorial inheritance. Their inheritance was the "offerings by fire of Jehovah the God of Israel" and "Jehovah the God of Israel" Himself (Joshua 13:14, 33). They were taken instead of the firstborn in Israel; therefore they represented the best that God had in mind for His people down here, and these cities were to exercise this influence over every locality. We need therefore to come in our own locality under the influence of this Levitical outlook in the land of Canaan.

In the book of Deuteronomy you again find it linked with the inheritance: "When Jehovah thy God hath cut off the nations whose land Jehovah thy God giveth thee, and thou hast dispossessed them, and dwellest in their cities and in their houses". Not only did they come into the land of Canaan but they were to dispossess and they dwell. It is a question of dwelling in the land of Canaan; for us, dwelling in the wonderful privileges of our heavenly inheritance. We have only perhaps touched the fringe of the greatness of the

privileges of the inheritance we have. Then it says: "Thou shalt prepare thee the way". Not only were cities to be appointed throughout the land but they were to prepare the way. They were to be evangelical. They were to clear away every obstacle so that the way was clear for the manslayer to flee thither: "that every slayer may flee thither". This would be a practical matter as to removing every obstacle. We have put some obstacles in the way of persons. There would be a need now to remove every obstacle so that the way is prepared and marked. There was to be no doubt in persons' minds as to where the city of refuge was. The obligation to prepare the way had to be accepted to make it as easy as possible for persons to find the city of refuge. We know, only too well, how things are confused in our day and we are part of that confusion; we have contributed to it. Damage has been done to persons and we have added to the confusion. There is need, dear brethren, to prepare the way so that as far as possible we should not add further to the confusion but in some way make the city of refuge plain. No doubt we need to be Deuteronomic persons to do this. Moses in the last two months of the last year of his life is speaking in wisdom to God's people in the book of Deuteronomy that they were to prepare the way.

In the book of Joshua we find these cities appointed and it is in this book that we find that there are fortyÂeight Levitical cities, six of which are cities of refuge. We find here what the manslayer is to do. It contemplates that the way has been made as easy as possible for the manslayer to find the city of refuge. The territory is divided so that he knows where in his territory the city of refuge is, and he comes to it. "And he shall flee unto one of those cities and stand at the entrance of the city-gate, and shall declare his matter in the ears of the elders of that city". His matter is acceptable as he is repentant and he is invited into that city. It says, "they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them". We have all fled to the city of refuge, we have all been taken into the city unto them. There is a touch of affection in this, there is a touch of brotherly love in it: "and they shall take him into the city unto them". It reminds us of the book of Genesis when the dove returned to Noah. It says that Noah "put forth his hand, and took her and brought her to him into the ark", Genesis 7:9. Indeed, all the animals came *unto* Noah into the ark. It was not the ark exactly that was the attraction, Noah was the attraction. So persons become attractive here. This manslayer would be better off being in a Levitical city, having a place amongst the Levites in this heavenly level of things; he would have a part in exercising this heavenly influence. We have all been manslayers, we have all dishonoured the Lord Jesus, we have all failed as to maintaining His rights and the rights of God. Have we all come this way of declaring our matter? Have we found that

we have been taken into the city unto them and are given a place and dwell among them? There is a family idea in this; all the wealth of the family is enjoyed in this city.

Well, it is our privilege in this locality to maintain a city of refuge which depends on dwelling in heaven and being visitors down here, maintaining the rights of God and the rights of Christ and being evangelical in our outlook, preparing the way and ready to take "unto us" into the city and provide dwelling conditions. May the Lord help us in it!

THE CITIES OF REFUGE (JT 32)

Deuteronomy 19

Ques Would you say how you apprehend the cities of refuge?

JT The prominence given to them in the typical books shews how important the subject is, at least in regard to what they represent — that is, the provision made in grace for the Jew. The Lord on the cross, according to Luke, says: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". And Stephen, in agreement with this, says: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge". It is the element of grace introduced by the Lord Jesus on the cross, in keeping, indeed, with His whole ministry in Luke: that the greatest means might be available for the greatest sinner's to be sheltered; for the ground of the cities of refuge is that they were regarded as doing the thing ignorantly, in unbelief.

Ques It was God's provision for them in view of the murder of Christ?

JT Yes. That element of grace, introduced by the Lord on the cross and reflected in Stephen-and, indeed, in the earlier saints generally — was to reside in the assembly. Here you will observe: "When Jehovah thy God hath cut off the nations whose land Jehovah thy God giveth thee and thou hast dispossessed them, and dwellest in their cities and in their houses, thou shalt separate three cities ..." That would mean that God had given salvation to His people, deliverance from their enemies, so that they were in peace, settled in the land; the element of grace would be prominent, not an attitude of vengeance, there was no such attitude in Christ; in the Psalms there is reference to vengeance, but not in the Acts, nor in Luke. It is grace. The saints, the members of the assembly, reflected that, notwithstanding the murderous attitude of the Jews. They reflected that spirit of grace, so that their very enemies, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, found a residence of safety in the assembly. The great lesson for us, therefore, would be the maintenance of grace towards those who might oppose or persecute. In the sphere of the saints there is safety from the avenger of blood, there is protection from vengeance, even though the person might be deserving of it. "Thou shalt separate" — the saints, as delivered from the satanic power, were thus to provide for the sinner.

Ques I was thinking of Paul's ascription to Timothy of "grace, mercy and peace". Are those the qualities that are found in one who is set that way?

JT Yes; you see in Titus the thing is very prominent: "For the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men has appeared". All men. Its bearing is towards those who are guilty of murder, the murder of Christ was deliberate,

but it was not reckoned to the Jews in that way, not as if they knew "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do".

Ques Why is it that in this chapter you get three cities set apart provisionally? In Numbers it is six, but here it seems the last three of the six only come in additionally.

JT That is in view of extension.

Ques I was wondering whether these six include the three beyond Jordan, or as the result of increase in the spiritual apprehension of things?

JT It would mean increase in spiritual territory. I suppose it would refer to Paul's ministry. There was the ministry of the twelve which went to a point, and the primary thought is attached to their sphere, Judaea and Jerusalem; the ministry of the twelve extended to a point but not to the full extent of the purpose that God had in His mind. So that the second three would mean what went on amongst the nations by Paul's ministry, beginning with the Jews in every case, only there was an extension — it was an extended ministry among the nations. Paul was really sent to the nations, but "the sons of Israel" were also included, so that he always made a point of going to the Jew first. The death of Stephen had brought out what they were doing, but he only asks the Lord not to lay "*this* sin" to their charge — he does not make a general request. But the extension in Paul's ministry was provided for in the second three cities, showing the excess of grace; that what had happened at Jerusalem had really brought out that they knew what they were doing. Grace was presented to the Jews among the nations on the same principle as it had been presented at Jerusalem. What do you say?

FI I think that is right. I had in mind a little that this would stand especially in regard to the assembly in a Deuteronomy setting. I wondered whether, as there is increase in spiritual impressions of things, there is often amongst us a liability to fall short. There is the necessity for the enlargement of which you are speaking. We find ourselves up against these spiritual movements and often hinder one another; but if we are increasing on the spiritual side there should be that which should be for the preservation of others.

JT So you are adjusted according to that increase in regard to any opposition that there might be. Grace is always in evidence.

Ques Would the epistle to the Hebrews fit in with the first three, "mount Zion" and "the city of the living God"; we get salvation referred to, and the Spirit is "the Spirit of grace", and reference is made to any who should lack grace?

JT I think so. That epistle addresses those to whom the first three directly refer. They refer to the Jews in the land, they were guilty of the death of Christ. "The dispersion" could hardly be so regarded, for they had no actual voice in the matter; but still the grace was brought to them, as it is invariably in Paul's ministry. He had to separate the disciples from the synagogue; but the attitude primarily towards them was forgiveness. God was not charging them with the guilt of Christ's death. Paul said at Antioch of Pisidia: "Those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, not having known him, have fulfilled also the voices of the prophets … by judging him", (Acts 13:27).

Ques So that coming to mount Zion would be that, would it not?

JT I think so. In saying they had "fled for refuge", he directly alludes to the cities of refuge. The Jews had fled for refuge, and remaining on the ground of Judaism would expose them to judgment. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus was the man-slayer; the governmental action of God overcame them. Had they come to the city of refuge they would have escaped that.

Ques I was wondering how far the attitude of Stephen's soul and his prayer to God covered what those men were doing. It does not go any further than the *three* cities, do you think?

JT No; it was not a general prayer like the Lord's own. The Lord said: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". He meant what they were doing in crucifying Him. But Stephen says: "Lay not this sin to their charge". The answer to this would mean that the murder of Stephen did not hinder the continuance of grace to the Jews.

Ques Does he bring into practical effect the divine idea of these three cities?

JT I think he does.

Rem As far as he was concerned he did not desire anything in the way of vengeance.

JT No; and it does not appear that it was laid to their charge, although I suppose the general conduct of the Jews is shown as Paul puts it in writing to the Thessalonians, (1 Thessalonians 2:14 - 16). I think that is an allusion to their exposure to the avenger of blood. Instead of submitting to the gospel and taking advantage of the city of refuge opened up in it, they kept on resisting, and wrath came upon them.

Ques Would the act of Stephen in his intercession bring in in a priestly way salvation on that occasion? Were they covered in that way by his prayer?

JT No doubt; it must have been very delightful to God that in such dreadful circumstances he was able to maintain the character of the dispensation, which is an immense thing with Him. Like Abigail, who diverted David from shedding blood; it is the spirit of the church. "Vengeance is mine", God says, and "Avenge not yourselves". That is the great lesson for us, the spirit of grace, of forgiveness; we leave all else with God.

Ques Did not Stephen's prayer in that way open the door for the extension of the activities of grace?

JT Well, Scripture says those that were scattered at his persecution went abroad preaching; it is a very fine result; and God honours that attitude in every one of us. Instead of vengeance here you have a widespread proclamation in Philip and in others.

Ques Was not the spirit of that carried on in Paul himself? He says: "... all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge". That should mark us as together, as well as in our thoughts towards the world.

JT "... If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink". The assembly has become the residence of grace. The Holy Spirit has come in. God dwells here. The saints are formed in grace — taught by it and thus fitted to exemplify the dispensation.

Ques Grace should be the dominant feature amongst the saints?

JT That is conveyed in the city of refuge; the man-slayer comes in and finds that element, it is a home for him, he feels things are in his favour there.

Ques What about Joshua, where the dries of refuge are in the hands of the levites?

JT That is an added thought which is very important. You might expect that in Joshua, because that book presents the heavenly side of things. Some of us were speaking about the five hundred to whom the Lord appeared, a number large enough to be influential generally. The impress of Christ risen and appearing to them would affect them, and this would enter into their influence. The levites were a goodly number, according to Numbers there were twenty-two thousand levites and eight thousand of them in actual service; so that they represent the amount of heavenly influence exerted in the book of Joshua. The priestly family in Numbers is small, but they had to do directly with God, and so their power was great; power with God in one man has universal influence. That is the idea of priesthood Godward. It is not a question so much of the number of priests, as the power of the thing, of that element. Moses and Aaron are among God's priests. They called upon the Lord

and He answered them. Psalm 99; it is not so much the number of persons as the effectiveness of the thing, whether it be in Christ personally or in one like Elijah or Moses. But one idea of the levitical family is numbers: "The assembly of the firstborn ones". The idea is that their influence is to become general, and that is what Joshua has in mind; and included in their cities (they had forty-eight, a universal number, four times twelve) were the six cities of refuge. In the hands of the levites, the heavenly saints, these were generally situated in elevated parts of the country — "hill country". The idea is moral elevation, and the influence flowing from that. That is important in regard to these cities. The Jew would not find any spirit of vengeance in the assembly viewed in that light. The saints would be like Christ. Saul, in his opposition to them, met *Jesus*; the same kind of Man that was seen in the gospels — "led as a lamb to the slaughter". That was what Saul met. He met that same spirit in the persecuted ones. As James said: "Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you". And so the eunuch was reading the prophet Isaiah, chapter 53, and he says: 'What does this mean?' And Philip opens his mouth and preaches unto him Jesus. That kind of man, that kind of spirit that Saul met with in his persecuting career. In the epistle to the Romans we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter, not yet slaughtered, but held there for the slaughterer to come; that is the spirit which is to mark the saints.

Ques So that Stephen would be an example of that? He met his death in that spirit?

JT Yes, just as the Lord did; and then Philip preaches that Man, so that His Spirit goes abroad to the gentiles. Paul comes to Europe, and that means that you have the spirit of Jesus in the west-There is another thing here: "Thou shalt prepare thee the way, and divide the territory of thy land ..." They were to consider the distance to be covered by the man-slayer. It is very beautiful the consideration there is for the man-slayer; the distance is to be reckoned that he might have to take; there was to be a way, so that it would be possible for him to get to the city of refuge; there would be no barriers.

Ques You would like to so present Christ that it might not be difficult for the soul to bow?

JT If you take Peter's first address, the way is made easy for the Jews, Acts 2. In chapter 3 he tells them that they slew Christ in ignorance — thus the city of refuge was open to them.

Rem There is no toleration of unjudged evil; the act was one of ignorance, and so extraordinary grace was shown.

JT Hence the three thousand were added at Pentecost. There is forgiveness with God, and a way is prepared for the man-slayer to return. The addition of so many at once shows what grace was there.

Rem And that principle should be just as active amongst us as brethren together now. Here it is two working together, and how one who inadvertently slays the other finds grace; with us the way should be made easy for his restoration when one is convicted of sin and judges himself.

JT Quite.

Rem I was thinking we need that as much amongst selves as we do in regard to the presentation of things to the world.

JT So that taking due account of the dispensational side of the teaching, you can use this type in the principle of it, as to anything happening amongst us.

Rem If one has moved and inadvertently damaged another, how often you are held back because you are not sure of the conditions you are going to meet on the way back. There should be an increase in the administration of grace, so that such can find their way back easily.

JT I think that is very important; the person is thus encouraged to seek forgiveness and reconciliation.

Ques Is not that the force of the word in the end of Ephesians 4: "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another"?

JT And it is put there on its highest plane — "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you".

Ques You mean the spirit of forgiveness is always there?

JT Yes, there is forgiveness with God; there ought to be that with us; it is very beautiful in Stephen. So that if one has to deal with you about something, he is not hindered by any thought that you are a hard man, he knows you to be forgiving.

Ques You alluded to 1 Thessalonians. The apostle carries it on to the end of the second epistle: "Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother". Is that the thought?

Ques How about the instrument of service getting out of hand?

JT Well, in that there is something of remissness there is no evil or murderous intent, but want of care in the instrument leads to its being in a bad condition.

Ques Do you think it might touch the thought of how you serve? There must be no carelessness lest you slay your brother.

JT The instrument of service is yourself, it is what you are. So that personality underlies service. The levite is a great person, a first-born, and should not descend to petty things; he must not allow fleshly motives, otherwise his instrument is sure to do damage.

Rem In connection with what has been remarked: often the instrument does get out of hand.

JT "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour", (1 Thessalonians 4:4). The vessel is that which God would use. I believe Romans lays the basis for everything, so that in regard of the vessel or the instrument, even our members are to be "instruments of righteousness". There must be no axe with the head flying off; it would be an instrument of murder even though the intent might not be there. It I would be most culpable thing for a carpenter to work with an axe with its head loosely on.

Ques That brings in the thought of subjection in all one's movements and service?

JT I think so. You see that your members are; instruments of righteousness, and such instruments would not damage anybody.

Rem So that, as subject to the Lord, you would be very considerate to the brethren and others; you would not give offence in any way.

JT Romans is the great grounding epistle; young believers should begin there as in school. For the early impressions are the impressions that last, they are fundamental impressions; college education after does not I make up for them. One has got older and the impressions do not take on so well. And then to present the whole body a living sacrifice; it is on the principle of sacrifice, for you are now definitely on the line of Christ; so that the instrument or vessel is in God's hands.

Rem Self-consideration would not come in, but you would act like God.

JT The element of sacrifice in it would imply that you are on the same line as Christ. Sacrifice implies unselfishness. A man gives up his body. No amount of means can compare with a man's body. You present your body a living sacrifice. Such an instrument is not likely ever to damage anybody.

Ques Would you say that the Spirit of Christ would shine out in one who is grounded in the epistle to the Romans?

JT I believe Romans is the basis of everything, as I said.

Ques It develops the features that are to mark you towards your enemy, and in consideration for your brethren, which is your intelligent service.

JT Consideration for your brethren, and, after that, in chapter 13, the recognition of the powers that be. We may do damage in that field, if one does not understand the government of God. The powers that be are ordained of God, and if one acts in a legal manner, one may do much damage without meaning to do it. The fact that we do not mean to kill a man does not take away the great loss that may be incurred in his death.

Rem When Abner killed Asahel with the hinder end of his spear he had to meet the consequences.

JT In Romans 14 we have the 'weak brother'; you may destroy him by your knowledge. It would be the same sort of thing — not understanding the principle of grace.

Ques You might do a right thing in a spirit that would do damage?

JT Quite. Damage is done by disregarding the conscience of a weak brother.

Ques So that in Ephesians we are to walk 'carefully', chapter 5:15?

JT Then in Romans 15 we are to receive one another as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Romans provides for having on the armour of light; we have not yet taken possession of the land, but as in the midst of darkness the armour of light means that you have light as to everything; whether it be trade unions or the Government, public things, relations in business, all these things are met by "the armour of light". The armour of God is Ephesians; it is for the land of promise. We do not want to alter things here. The land is a spiritual realm, but Romans contemplates our being in the wilderness, and going through it according to God.

Rem So that Paul says: "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men".

JT Abimelech made a covenant with Abraham not to interfere with him or his son or grandson. Genesis 21. As expressed in the "seven ewe lambs", Abraham would not do anybody any harm.

Ques "Let your yieldingness be known" — this would help us to live in our responsible spheres unperturbed and free from distress. Could we have a word about one who does the thing deliberately?

JT Well, it might apply to us in the spirit of it. *God* will deal with that. Alexander the coppersmith is an example. Primarily the reference is to the Jew; it became apparent that he did it intentionally, he really meant to put Christ to death. Paul said to them at Rome: "This salvation of God has been

sent to the nations; *they* also will hear it", (Acts 28:28). That would be an end of the six cities. The Jews went off wrangling among themselves. Their day is over for the tune. They had definitely committed themselves to their act, and the gospel is now no longer "to the Jew first"; therefore, in returning to the land, as they are today, they are exposing themselves to the avenger of blood — the judgment of God will overtake them there. Paul says: "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works". He did not say: "I will reward him", but "the lord reward him". You do not ignore the thing. I suppose the present apostasy is like it. There is no city of refuge for Christian apostates at all, but a 'strong delusion', so that they may become worse; there is no hope for them at all.

Ques I was going to ask: Why limit it to six cities?

JT I suppose the number would be abundant testimony to grace. Two is enough, three is full, and six is superabundant — here the superabundance of grace.

Rem There are three steps here: he lies in wait, rises against him, and smites him mortally, verse 11.

JT Lying in wait is the first step; a very solemn thing as showing how deliberate the murderer's attitude was. God is infinitely fair with man; in the broken state of things among the few they were not all committed to the death of Christ; some hesitated. I suppose in Joseph's case, who is a type (the Old Testament furnishes us with details), it would be known that both Reuben and Judah were not really personally murderers. Reuben sought to deliver him out of their hands; he counselled them to put him in the pit, but there was no water there. Judah counselled them to sell him; all that is taken account of by God; but Judah and Reuben were both guilty in that they concealed the matter and were thus partners to it. Had they recoiled from the thing and taken an open stand against the murderous attitude of the others, they might have saved Joseph, but they did not. A remnant were saved, but on the principle of grace; they accepted responsibility for the guilt, and "fled for refuge". "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain"; every repentant one would admit that. That was the only way out, and in repenting they would come into the city of refuge and save themselves from the man-slayer.

Ques Would you say that God had sealed it upon the Jews as a nation — "His blood be upon us, and upon our children"?

JT He finally bound that on them. I suppose the apostles really determined that: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven". That

came about. Their sin was bound on them. Authority to do this was given to Peter, Matthew 16:19, and also to the church, Matthew 18:18.

Ques You mean it was bound upon them in the governmental ways of God?

JT In Matthew 18 the Lord puts binding before loosing, whereas in John He reverses it. John has in mind recovery in the last days. That is the attitude we take now. If a brother has been in the Roman Catholic church, he is guilty there; but if he is exercised, you release him and set his face in the right direction. You hold him out the hand of encouragement. All this would help in our relations among ourselves, that there might be the spirit of grace, and we might enjoy the inheritance together. If you compare Matthew and John, Matthew is the church gospel, when the church was in its pristine state. Peter personally had authority to bind and to loose, which was remarkable. The Lord placed confidence in them. John puts remission first, giving us, so to speak, *carte blanche* — what we remit He remits.

Ques You have in mind where brethren are found under all sorts of circumstances?

JT You would want to clear the way for them, you would not hold anything against them. We have the spirit of remission amongst us. You can well afford to do that if one is coming out, but if he is staying where Christ's authority is not owned or His name dishonoured, you put the thing on his conscience. When there is movement there is provision already there: "When the Lord thy God hath cut off the nations",

and so on. You are well set up, you are able to be gracious.

Ques In verse 14 it says: "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark". Would that have reference to a weak brother, or has it a general bearing?

JT I think both, especially the determining of local responsibility. The principle of local responsibility is: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour thyself". There is a certain boundary between you and your neighbour and you do not transgress that; and that should be extended to a local company.

Ques What do you understand by "landmark"?

JT A boundary. You get an illustration in Jephthah's time, when the Ammonites sought to take the land which the Israelites had had for three hundred years: he showed that God had given it to them. He outlined the territory and pointed out that God had given it to them, and so the Ammonites must not take it away. The latter part of the verse speaks of the inheritance, it is therefore a question of what God has set you in.

Ques You do not try to oust a brother from his position? A young one may have more light than an older one, and would wish the older one displaced. That would be removing his neighbour's landmark?

JT God has "set certain in the assembly". God has set a certain person in a certain position — we cannot alter that.

Ques Will you say a little about continuing until the death of the high priest?

JT The high priest denotes Christ, "having a great priest over the house of God". It would be this dispensation; until the end of it this rule continues. The death of the high priest points to a change of dispensation.

Ques In verse 17 you get priests and judges. How would you connect that up? It says at the end: "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth", verse 21. Has that any bearing on the present time?

JT "If an unrighteous witness rise up" — that is the first thing. Then the men shall stand before Jehovah, before the priests and the judges which shall be in those days, "and the judges shall make thorough inquiry". I suppose Deuteronomy is the spirit of heaven governing us now; typically, it is heavenly things before we actually enter heaven. Moses, although he never entered the land as in the flesh, was wonderfully imbued with the spirit of it. In the light of it he writes this book. It begins: "These be the words which Moses spoke". They have reference to the land; that is, it governs the whole dispensation. Jehovah is the same Jehovah, but the priests and the judges were not the same; but whoever they were they were to be recognised. So that we are not to say "the former days were better than these"; the same principles govern them.

Ques Does the principle of the judges exist today?

JT Surely. For us the spiritual application would be that the priests are the judges; they come first. Later, the judgment is to come from the priests; so that the question is whether we are among the priests? If we are, we will give a right judgment.

Rem In Matthew's gospel this eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth is, so to speak, put into your own hands.

JT It would mean for us that there is to be rectitude, accuracy in judgment, fairness. If there be a matter between two brothers they are not to go before the unbelievers. To whom are they to go? To the most spiritual man in the meeting? No, but "the least esteemed in the assembly"; meaning that all in the assembly are priests. The least of them has more judgment than the Lord

Chief Justice of England, because he has the Spirit of God, and the Chief Justice may not have — he may be a Jew or an infidel.

In matters relevant to temporal things it is the least in the church; but if it is a question of restoration it is not the least in the church, but "ye which are *spiritual*, restore such an one". This is a harder matter.

THE WAY TO THE CITY (JT 60)

Ecclesiastes 10:15; Jeremiah 50:4,5; Deuteronomy 19:2 - 7

The verse in Ecclesiastes is the basis of what is to be said, applying as it does to many at the present time. It says, "they know not how to go to the city", (Ecclesiastes 10:15) and their labour "wearieth them". The idea of the city is well known in Scripture and is applicable to what is in mind now, because it denotes what is systematic and orderly, and what is available to men; available in the sense of protection suitable and usable for human needs and services. Hence the application of it to the assembly.

The assembly is "the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem", (Hebrews 12:22) and all other cities according to what there is for God in them must be regarded in the light of it, for it says indeed, "Jerusalem above…is our mother", Galatians 4:26. She is the great metropolis in a moral way of all, and so we can understand how the Spirit of God says, "Ye have come…to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem"; (Hebrews 12:22) a very great fact, and one that should be searched out by each of us, so that we may know how to get to it and how to have part in it, have a share in it, and how to thus be systematic, spiritually at least. She is called, as I said, "the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem", (Hebrews 12:22) so that her identity is very noticeable, and the wonderful fact is to be added that she comes down from God out of heaven, "having the glory of God", (Revelation 21:11) and that she comes down both as the new Jerusalem, and as the city of the living God.

In Revelation 21:2 and 3 there is very little said as to the heavenly city, but in the second part, that is to say, from verse 9, that part which refers to the millennium, we have much about administration, more indeed than we have anywhere else, and so it is helpful and in accord with the moment to consider this, not that it was in mind primarily. We see there what is now imminent, that is, the introduction of the millennial world, that in which we shall all have part; what is called "the world to come". It has not come yet, save in the sense in which it is understood in the assembly; we have come to it there, but if we have not, then the question is whether we have found the way to it, or whether we are wearying ourselves, and failing to enter. The Spirit of God says "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and that they should go in by the gates into the city"; Revelation 22:14. Those of us who understand can say, We have come to "the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem", Hebrews 12:22. Many do not understand that, and they do not find their way into the city, and the Spirit of God tells us, in the passage I have read, "The labour of fools wearieth them, because they know

not how to go to the city", Ecclesiastes 10:15. Others know! We have our Bible readings, ministry meetings, and addresses, and our private readings, morning readings, studies, meditations, all to the end that we should know how to go into the city, and to have part in it. It is the divine thought that every one of us should have part in it. In the second part of Revelation 21, there are many references to the number twelve, in which is wrapped up the administration of love, and hence skill in administration, because wisdom is the handmaid of love, and wisdom implies skill, so that no one need weary himself fruitlessly in endeavouring to get to the city; the way is manifest.

Now Jeremiah 50 in this sense is an awakening. "In those days, and at that time, saith Jehovah, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping as they go, and shall seek Jehovah their God. They shall inquire concerning Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to Jehovah in an everlasting covenant that shall not be forgotten"; Jeremiah 50:4. Now at such moments as these we usually say we want to speak to the young. I am not always moved in that direction. The middle-aged are more in mind, as far as I am concerned, usually; the sheep, those that have arrived at the sheep stage, not the lambs, but the sheep. They are the ones that need shepherding. The youth need feeding. As a rule they go where the food is, and so the Lord says to Peter, "Feed my lambs"; "Feed my sheep", too, He said, but "Shepherd my sheep", John 21:15-17. There is great need of shepherding; there is plenty of food, I might say, in one sense, thank God, but very little shepherding; hence the value of the remarkable gift spoken of in Ephesians 4; "shepherds and teachers". That is, one person having both gifts; that is to say, able to shepherd and able to feed. It is most exhilarating to look into the faces of as many as are here today. Heaven looks into our faces, and is looking into our faces now. We must not think that heaven is any less active than we are, because what is in us, normally, in those who minister, reflects what is in heaven. And so the looking into the faces, old and young, is most exhilarating to the minister, but it is really in a sense more so to heaven itself. What is going on in heaven, is one of the greatest inquiries one can make. What is going on in heaven now? What will go on we may work out from prophecy, but for what is going on now we may look into ministry and see how heaven is reflected, and how heaven regards the saints of all ages, in all the variety of ages that are amongst us.

In speaking of those of the middle-aged I have in mind that they are the ones that normally carry responsibility and are able to; they have energy, as we may say; that is, the forties or fifties or sixties. These are the ages that need attention, and heaven is attentive to them. Things rest on them, although the

hope ultimately will be in the youth, for "One generation passeth away and another generation cometh", Ecclesiastes 1:4. Thank God for that other. Will you take account of it, and see what will develop in it, because the youth have to be watched over? Well now, this matter that I am speaking of is of vast importance to them, old and young and middle-aged. I do not speak of the very old, because one would assume that they are all fixed, as it were, as John the apostle says, "I write to you, fathers", 1 John 2:13. He has nothing more to say than that they have "known him that is from the beginning", (1 John 2:13) so that these very old brethren, including myself, may be left, as it were; not that one would assume that one is perfect, far otherwise. The apostle says he laboured to "present every man perfect in Christ", Colossians 1:28; every man, old and young, because God has no less a thought before Him than that. Then let us make up our mind, dear brethren, for this, that God has His mind about this, and that mind is to be perfect to "present every man perfect in Christ", Colossians 1:28.

Well now, the matter that I have mentioned is of prime importance to all, that we should be sure about the city, and not be wearying ourselves; "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth", 2 Timothy 3:7. There should be the knowledge of the truth amongst us, and if the Spirit of God is amongst us there will be that. We are not to be ever learning and never coming, but ever learning and learning, because there is constant need of learning and enjoyment goes with the learning. It would be a poor thing if christianity had no enjoyment: and hence the apostle says, "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice", Philippians 4:4. I have been thinking of that for one is not to be doleful, but buoyant, and cheerful, and lighting up the countenances of the brethren, if possible, because they need it. We have been through a terrible time. Some of us have not been literally through it, but have been through it in spirit, so that we are all in it, and we all need to be brightened. Whatever there be in the way of buoyancy, it should be available and it should shine in each of us, but it will not shine in a person who is spending his time in seeking to find the city and not finding it. What is said here in Ecclesiastes is that "the labour of fools wearieth them, because they know not how to go to the city", Ecclesiastes 10:15. The way is knowable, as I have shown from the last chapter of the Bible, for those that wash their robes have a right to go in, they have a right to enter into the city, and to partake of the tree of life; the precious fruits of the tree of life are available to all celestials, and true christians are heavenly, we all belong to heaven. We are not there yet, but we have come to the thought, we have come to the heavenly city, and as having come to it, it ought to be known by us. The gates ought to be known, and who are the guards, the caretakers, so to speak.

Angels are said to be at the gates, on which are written the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

Now the way is open to us, but the question is, as to knowing what it is that hinders us; what it is that keeps us out. It is manifest that we are not in if we are wearying ourselves in endeavouring to find the way, and never coming "to the knowledge of the truth"; (2 Timothy 3:7) attending the meetings, reading the ministry, so to speak, reading the Bible and never arriving at a full, clear knowledge of the truth. These things ought not to be, dear brethren, but they are, not that I am accusing anybody (I hardly know anybody here), only that I do know that in a company such as are here, I am likely to be speaking to someone who is affected, and I would urge you to get to know the way to the city. I would urge as a further thought that the epistles to the Corinthians afford us the way in. The apostle, speaking there of the Holy Spirit who is here to guide us into the truth, and of His activities, says further of the saints, "so also is the Christ", 1 Corinthians 12:12. The Christ there is inclusive of the saints, and they afford through the Spirit's presence, the means of guidance. The Spirit of God chooses the saints as the means of our arriving at divine things, the means of understanding, the means of checking up our growth and learning, and of being serviceable. Hence it is, that the first epistle to the Corinthians has a great abstract view of love; not a concrete view, because the concrete idea will not be there, when we have not reached it. If we only rely on terms or words, then we have not reached the truth, we have not reached the concrete thing, and the great concrete thing to keep in mind is love. "Love never fails", and it will not fail us if we want to get into the city. The great thing is to get there, and we shall enjoy the city when we get there, and we shall have part in its administration.

Referring to the verses read in Jeremiah 50, it says, "In those days, and at that time, saith Jehovah, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping as they go, and shall seek Jehovah their God. They shall inquire concerning Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to Jehovah in an everlasting covenant that shall not be forgotten", Jeremiah 50:4,5. The passage mentions the word covenant, but I am not going to tell you that this refers to the Lord's supper, because it does not. The Old Testament is full of the idea of covenant. It was the child's time, the children's part, but when the time of full age comes, then we emerge from that and graduate into the higher classes, for this is the time of sonship. "Faith having come" (Galatians 3:25), the full thought of manhood is come. That means that we understand, we know love, for we are sons, we are no longer children. "When I was a child,…I reasoned as a child", but "when I became a man, I had done with

what belonged to the child". 1 Corinthians 13:11. Manhood is seen in those who love. In the first epistle to the Corinthians it is, as it were, the picture on the wall, a beautiful picture, but it is only a picture, it is not a person. Love is not explained in a person in that chapter; it is explained, of course, but it is the abstract idea, the persons are not brought in. If love is present in persons, then we shall see those persons walking and talking and speaking to one another, as it says in that verse we often quote:

'Nor what is next Thy heart can we forget;
Thy saints, O Lord, with Thee in glory met'. (160:8)

When we meet each other there in glory, it will no longer be the abstract idea, we shall have the positive thing, love will be there. And that is what I am seeking to bring out now, to give these thoughts to the brethren, so that love is seen. It is the power for manhood. "The fulness of the time", (Galatians 4:4) the time for manhood is when the children are taken out of the nursery; that is the thought in Galatians, "the period fixed by the father", Galatians 4:2. It is then that they come into the full liberty of the house; their place in the drawing-room, so to say, in the best part of the house. I am speaking figuratively. We belong to the house of God, we belong to heaven, to the heavenly Jerusalem, which comes down from God out of heaven. There is no idea of youth there, or children, or any lack, because of youthfulness, but sonship is the idea — manhood. And so it is; "ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus", Galatians 3:26. It is a faith matter.

And so, dear brethren, the inquiry in Jeremiah 50, about the city is by men, they are on the way to it; their faces are thitherward; that is to say, they want to be where the brethren are, not just congregating with young people, making their companions among the young, but with the elder ones, where the men are. The Lord says to His Father, "The men whom thou hast given me". That is the position, dear brethren, and I speak of it so that the youth here might have it before them to belong to the men class, so to speak, those who are men, those who are mature, those who know

love, in other words. And so it says in Galatians 4, "because ye are sons", (Galatians 4:6) that is the abstract idea, "because ye are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father", Galatians 4:6. That is to say, the practical or concrete thing is there. In the mind of God it is there, but, even when the child's time existed, in the mind of God the idea of sonship was there, because we have in Psalm 2:7, "Thou art my Son; I this day have begotten thee", It means that the idea of sonship was in the mind of God in the time of children, in the time covered by the Old Testament, in the time of covenant, when they needed covenant, but it is not in Ephesians, not in Colossians, nor in any of the epistles applicable to us, who live by the Spirit of God. We do not need it, dear brethren, we know God, and so, we may say, we do not want God to take an oath to us, to make a covenant with us. We live of Him, "because ye are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father", Galatians 4:6. That is manhood; manhood in principle. The Spirit in the heart makes you a real man, with power to love, power to act in love, and power to serve; this is most needed, for there is much to be done, and things are to be done on the level of sonship. In the world needed things are not being done, it is marked by idleness. It should not be so with us. God is intending to show that what He has is not what the world has. What He has is sonship, and sons will do what is to be done, they know how to get into the city.

Jeremiah 50:4 says, "In those days, and in that time, saith Jehovah, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah", notice that love is active among them, they are "together, going and weeping as they go, and shall seek Jehovah their God. They shall inquire concerning Zion". They are not wearying themselves to get there, they are asking the way. There is a way to it, and they are just asking. That is the point. We often say, "how much rather shall the Father who is of heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask

him”? Luke 11:13. Why should anyone be without the Holy Spirit; none will get to the city without the Spirit. The Spirit enables you to get into the city; that is, to get into the assembly, into all its blessings and privileges. Why should we be outside? That is a very fair question. The persons contemplated in Jeremiah are asking the way to Zion, “with their faces thitherward”, Jeremiah 50:5. You can see how they move. They are looking towards Zion. Now you will remember how in the Lord’s own history here, in Luke, certain Samaritans did not receive Him, because His face was towards Jerusalem. Why was it towards Jerusalem? Not that He did not know the city; He was going to die there, and that is the basis of all I am saying, dear brethren, for His going there was love. “Hereby we have known love, because *he* has laid down his life for us”, 1 John 3:16. His face was in that direction; it was the face of love. He went down from the mount of transfiguration to Jerusalem, and I believe we might say that in the way down He went to Jerusalem, we see the dying of Jesus. He was going to die. He was laying down His life; in principle that is what He was doing. It was only a question of miles, or yards, until He got to Jerusalem, and then He would die. “It must not be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem”, he said in Luke 13:33. Jerusalem was so bad that a prophet should not die elsewhere, but there, so that He must die there. So that we are in a love system, the love realm, and if it be the love of Christ, it is the love that was manifest in His dying, the dying of Jesus, because He died in love. Wonderful to think of!

We are told in Mark 9:8, that as Moses and Elias departed from the mount, and the vision disappeared, the three disciples saw no one, but “Jesus alone with themselves”. All the glory attaching to Moses and the transfiguration had disappeared, not that it could not come back, it will, but it was “Jesus alone with themselves”, (Mark 9:8) and so it is. It was a journey of love. He went down with them from the mount and died in Jerusalem. A prophet should not suffer

outside of Jerusalem. He died there. And so it is that the Lord's supper is celebrated there, not on the mount of Olives; they went to the mount of Olives after the Supper was instituted. It is the place of spiritual power, but Jerusalem is the place of love, the place where the Lord died in love. "This is my body", He says, "which is for you", 1 Corinthians 11:24. It is our portion. Those of us who have to do with the Lord's supper, have that portion; we understand the love of Christ. It passeth knowledge, but we understand it. It is understandable to love, dear brethren. And the disciples went down with Him, and He went with them, and He died at Jerusalem. The city was there, but the Lord did not need to search it out.

As I was saying, John the evangelist says, "I write to you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning", 1 John 2:13. Those of us who have known Him that is from the beginning, we know love and we know how He died, dear brethren, and how His love enters into the Lord's supper, and that is for us. We know that it is our portion; it is not for anybody else, but for ourselves. "This is my body, which is for you", 1 Corinthians 11:24. He says. I want the dear brethren to have it in their hearts to understand the Lord's supper. The fathers do not ask for a covenant; they understand love; they know Him that is from the beginning. They know all about the Lord in that sense; not all, of course, because He is inscrutable, but still there is that which is knowable, that is, "him that is from the beginning", 1 John 2:13. I would say again that the Lord's supper is only intelligible fully, to those who love, to those who know Him that is from the beginning. Love is there from the very beginning, the beginning of Christ; a phrase that will be understood. The Lord's supper is for us; "this is my body, which is for you", 1 Corinthians 11:24. He says, so that we understand, that we are having to do with Him who loves. In Ephesians it is that ye may "know the love of the Christ, which surpasses knowledge", Ephesians 3:19. There are many

other things we are to know, according to that chapter, but there is this one thing that is beyond us, beyond all creatures, and yet it is available to us; we have part in it; that is, the love of Christ. We have part in it in the sense in which it is intelligible to us in the Lord's supper; it is for us. The Lord would say that. It is for *you*.

These persons in Jeremiah have their faces towards Zion. "They shall inquire concerning Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to Jehovah in an everlasting covenant that shall not be forgotten", Jeremiah 50:5. I would turn aside here to explain a little as to the word *covenant*, and I do not need to repeat what I said, but there is the idea of assurance that enters into christianity. It is a question of the knowledge of God, dear brethren. The knowledge of God gives assurance; nothing can give greater assurance. He does not need to make a covenant; the knowledge of Himself gives assurance. And so it is, that as one thinks of those on their way to the city, the young people come up in one's mind. Many do not know the city, they do not know how to get into it; maybe they are half-hearted; maybe there is something in their minds that must happen before they come into the idea, and take on definitely. The Lord is not pleased with that, it is a half-hearted matter. This passage says, "they shall inquire concerning Zion with their faces thitherward", Jeremiah 50:5 They are not looking in another direction. They are moving in *that* direction, and it is most encouraging to all of us, especially to those who serve in the Lord's work, to see persons who are looking in the right direction, and who are definite in it, and want to get into the city. They are not going to be turned aside. They are thankful to get every bit of light there is, and every bit of food too, to strengthen them in the position, because they will need it in the city. This city affords all the pleasures that God can give us; which He can give by His Spirit in the "heavenly Jerusalem". It is a remarkable expression.

As I said before, Revelation 21 should be studied carefully. There is the first coming down of the persons as "the holy city, new Jerusalem", and it is "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband", Revelation 21:2 She is ready for Christ; the most interesting of all to the Lord Jesus is the bride, the "bride adorned for her husband", Revelation 21:2. She thinks of Him; she thinks of the adornment that is suitable for her, and so there is nothing about administration. I mean to say there is nothing said about the number twelve; you get much of that in the next section, commencing at verse 9, but in the earlier section it is a question of the tabernacle of God, and the city coming down from God out of heaven, and all that she is as adorned, as a bride for her husband. I cannot think of anything more interesting for our souls, or, I might say, more interesting to the Lord Jesus, nothing can be in a way more interesting than the bride adorned for Him, adorned for her husband. Reverting to the word in Jeremiah are our faces in that direction, the right direction?

Now I will just refer to Deuteronomy 19, in order to confirm this matter of cities. These cities are to be in threes; three more to be added if necessary. They are to be available, not now to persons who have been specially interested in cities, but who are specially interested in finding a refuge; there is something they need refuge from. There are many like that. Something has happened and a man is in a plight; things have happened that will cause a shade on the person, and some of the brethren are very concerned about him. They are not throwing stones at him, but would make a way, make it as short as possible, take away all the impediments, all that might hinder him, so that he might be recovered, as quickly as possible. And so the Israelites, or the brethren, if I may use that figure, are ready to help you, if there be anything in the way of shadow on you. Transparency is what marks the assembly, and what marks the brethren generally; not any shades there. There may be cause for the shadow, and the brethren know and are ready to serve you, they are ready to

help, but the way may be long, there are further difficulties that have to be avoided,

and so many things may happen. These things that I am now speaking of refer to persons with whom there is a shade, in spite of themselves, they are in circumstances of question.

The word is, in Deuteronomy 19:2 - 3, "Thou shalt separate three cities for thyself in the midst of thy land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee to possess. Thou shalt prepare thee the way", that is, the believer, the saints, let us look out that we prepare this way. Let us see that there are no barriers raised up that might interfere, or cause a person to be inconvenienced by something that he has no control over. The government of God, of course, goes on, and no one who loves God would want to interfere with that, and yet love has its way among the saints. So it is, "Thou shalt prepare thee the way, and divide the territory of thy land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, so that every slayer may flee thither. And this is the case of the slayer, who shall flee thither, that he may live". Deuteronomy 19:3,4. That is the question, dear brethren, of the person being alive, or living. The shade may so discourage him as to wear him out, the thing may do damage to him, and yet he may be relieved, and if he is to be relieved, if he is to get into the city of refuge, then we must not put barriers in the way. "Prepare thee the way", (Deuteronomy 19:3) so that the path is made easy for the man-slayer, so that he may live and not die, dear brethren. We want to live ourselves, but we want others to live. One asked the Lord, "Lord, teach us to pray", Luke 11:1. He did not say, 'Teach me to pray'. If he wished to get on better in the truth, or in the ministry than any others, he might have said, 'Teach me to pray', but he said, "Teach us to pray", Luke 11:1. It was a love matter in this man's mind, and he wanted all the brethren to pray. So if there be anything good, let it be for us all. If anything is good for me, it is good for all the saints. Let us look that way, think that way, so that

we become a circle of love, because that is the idea of christianity, a circle. The Lord looked "around in a circuit at those who were sitting around him"; (Mark 3:34) that is the principle. There is the idea of a square, of course, four square, and of a cube, but the idea generally in God's realm is of a circle. We may know that from the heavens, and the earth too, most things are on the principle of a circle, as far as I can see. We have to take notice of that, for we have to begin there.

And so it is, that if there be any persons under a cloud and who may suffer damage by it, let them get to the city of refuge; let them get released as soon as possible. We know how many are seeking release from the Army now; we are all praying for them. It is their matter, but it is our matter too. We want our brethren with us, we want them where love is; it is not in the Army, it is where the saints are. And so the word is, "Prepare thee a way", Deuteronomy 19:3. How much can I do for the brethren, to get them out of the difficulties and into the circle where love is? It is the way to heaven, because the city is, you might say, the counterpart of heaven, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the way is there. So that those that wash their robes have a right to enter by the gates, not clandestinely, but by the gates. There is liberty in doing it. They enter by the gates into the city, and have part in the tree of life, the celestial tree which belongs to heaven. It bears fruit monthly, and the leaves are "for healing of the nations"; (Revelation 22:2) but its fruit belongs to us, and we do not want to keep any brother, in any sense out of that, we want to make a way for him. And so it goes on, "This is the case of the slayer, who shall flee thither, that he may live: he that smiteth his neighbour unwittingly", (now this is the thing that causes the shade on the person) "whom he hated not previously; as when he goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the iron slippeth from the handle, and lighteth upon his neighbour,

that he die; such an one shall flee unto one of these cities, and live", Deuteronomy 19:4,5. You see his life is bound up with the cities whatever one it is, whatever one of those three. Then, "if Jehovah thy God enlarge thy border…then shalt thou add three cities more", Deuteronomy 19:8,9. That is the appointment; increase the life position, and it is a question of increasing the love position. "By this shall all know that ye are disciples of mine, if ye have love amongst yourselves"; (John 13:35) said the Lord. That love will make the way to the city of refuge where the person fleeing is set at full liberty; the liberty of sonship seen there in persons who love. The word goes on to say, "lest the avenger of blood pursue the manslayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long", Deuteronomy 19:6. We do not want to make the way long; make it as short as possible; love will do that, and remove hindrances in doing so, because if the way is long, the avenger may slay him. He is in great danger; and so the utmost care is to be taken so that there is no barrier in the way, for "he was not worthy of death, since he hated him not previously", Deuteronomy 19:6. Well, that is what I had to say, dear brethren, and I think it will be intelligible to us all. Let us see that love may have free course and be glorified.

THE MAINTENANCE OF GRACE (JT 83)

Luke 23:34; Ephesians 4:32; Deuteronomy 19:1 - 4; Deuteronomy 19:8 - 10

These scriptures treat of grace. Grace is intended to characterise the whole period between the coming of the Holy Spirit from heaven, and the coming of the Lord for His people. It will be a great triumph (and I believe we may expect this), if it ends up with the maintenance of grace. If it is to end thus, the assembly, at least in principle, must be in evidence. And so in the book of Samuel, which is typical of what I am speaking, we find that feature of the assembly in type in Abigail. She is introduced after the death of Samuel as one "of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance", 1 Samuel 25:3 and who in a crisis maintained the position in the prevention of punitive judgment. The time of vengeance is not yet, though it soon will be. And so Abigail stands in the way of that; she prevents in grace, tactfully and with humility, the act of vengeance which was in David's mind; she prevents blood-shedding.

Now that position in 1 Samuel 25 indicates how matters stood at the outset. The assembly is seen as understanding the dispensation and as possessing, by the Spirit come down from heaven, the means of meeting anything that would mar the dispensation. That is what I have in view. The epistle to the Ephesians is that which treats of the assembly position in this respect, as in other respects also. It is here you specially get the feature of superlatives employed by the Spirit, as depicting the dispensation or the endowment, or furnishing, of the assembly. So that we get such an expression as "the glory of his grace". Ephesians 1:6 Think of the *glory* of it! David's intention of smiting Nabal would not be the glory of divine grace!

And then we have the expression, "The riches of his grace". Ephesians 1:7. Ephesians gives things in their fulness; it rises to the altitude of the gospels, and nothing can exceed that. But the design is that the work of God should culminate in what is equal to that; of course Christ must ever be supreme: He must "have the first place in all things", Colossians 1:18 but what is in view is "the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ". Ephesians 4:13 That great result is designed for the assembly; so we have rich superlatives as describing grace, or love, or counsel as applying to her. Ephesians gives you fulness; so that, as I said, we have such expressions as "the praise of the glory of his grace" Ephesians 1:6, and "the exceeding riches of his grace" Ephesians 1:7 — marvellous thoughts! That is what is to be displayed. As we shall be "in the heavenlies", Ephesians 1:3 we shall be to the praise of the glory of God's grace, and the exhibition of the exceeding riches of His grace.

So you see what is in the mind of God, and what He would have maintained correspondingly in us now.

I therefore read Ephesians 4:32, which refers to the *kind* of forgiveness with which we have been forgiven, not by, but "in Christ", that is, on that level. It is a great thing, dear brethren, to study and experience spiritual altitude. It takes a strong heart, as in natural things; but what strength of heart is obtainable, as we find in this same epistle. We are to be "strengthened with power by his Spirit in the inner man; that the Christ may dwell, through faith, in your hearts". Ephesians 3:16,17. It is to be obtained on the principle of bowing the knees. "For this cause I bow my knees", Ephesians 3:14 says the apostle; the thing is so great and blessed that we must not come short of it. If the Ephesians were not bowing their knees, the apostle was. That is how it is obtained; and then it adds, "To him that is able to do far exceedingly above all which we ask or think, according to the power which works in us" Ephesians 3:20.

— it is something that is here, "the power which works in us". Ephesians 3:20. It is in regard of such the prayer is. It is that we might have strength of heart for the great position this epistle contemplates; that we should not be on the level of religious man, but on the moral elevation indicated here.

The forgiveness and feelings that mark the saints are to be like those that are in God, that is, God in Christ. "God also in Christ has forgiven you"; which is the level, as indicated in the gospels. And so I chose what I apprehend is the supreme expression of grace. No one who loves Jesus can read Luke 23:34 without being touched by it. It is the supreme expression of grace in the presence of all the power that Satan could marshal against Him. The opposition of the world under Satan was there in all its force, not in any detached or promiscuous way, but in an ordered way, for the prince of this world had come; the position was a military one. Satan had come with his forces and was acting against Christ, and then the supremacy of grace shines forth, as He says, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". The more you look into it, the more it affects you; it is the moral greatness of Christ in the presence of wave after wave of bitter opposition and hatred. He rises above all and prays for His persecutors: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". He is preparing the way for the cities of refuge, establishing the principle of them.

If we compare Ephesians with the early chapters of the Acts, it enables us to understand how the assembly, as formed by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, became the residence of that grace. It was not to go back to heaven with Him who brought it. The idea of Christ coming in, in that sense, is to

leave here His fulness. The assembly is the fulness of Christ. The assembly was to be the residence of that which He set out in those few words, charged with such deep meaning, "Father, forgive them". It was supreme grace. It is not simply in one person now; grace shone in Christ in *all* its fulness, "We have contemplated his glory", says one who loved and revered Him, "full of grace and truth", John 1:14. He was full of it! Grace first, and then truth. What a wonderful combination! It is said of Him, "In him all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell" Colossians 1:19 — who can take in such a thought? It is an expression conveying the greatness of His Person. It is that Person who is described as "full of grace and truth". John 1:14 And then the same writer says, "Of his fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace" John 1:16 — that is one wave after another. James says, "He giveth more grace". James 4:6. It flows from that reservoir, but with us it is a question of capacity, and the word comes to us as in Hebrews, "Lest any man fail of the grace of God". Hebrews 12:15.

Hagar is a type of one that failed of it. It is in connection with her that the idea of a well, representing the system of grace, is first seen in the Scriptures; it rises above man's will. It says the angel found her by the well; he *found* her there, and she saw God there. In Genesis 21 she has a son, they were both outcasts, but grace followed them. There came a voice from heaven, "Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is". Genesis 21:17. And what a lad he was! Typically, he was a persecutor of Christ, and yet the grace of God was by them. Hagar's eyes were opened and she saw a well of water and gave the lad drink; she partook of the grace, but she failed of it. She went to Egypt to get him a wife; she went to the world.

That is how the matter stands; they failed of the grace of God. To say the least, going to the world places your position in doubt; for how can any one speak of you as an example of grace if you are going to the world for a wife for yourself or for your son — or are seeking to provide for your children on that line? Ishmael had an Egyptian wife, and it was some of his posterity that purchased Joseph as a slave. He became an archer; which implies long-distance fighting, conflict which has little sympathy or heart. The archers, it says, shot at Joseph. Thus as a sure result of failing of the grace of God we become persecutors of Christ.

I wish now to show from the type in Deuteronomy how all this works out. We see it in the manner in which the subject of the cities of refuge is introduced here. The thought is mentioned elsewhere, but the presentation of it in Deuteronomy serves me in what I am seeking to bring before you; that is, our qualification to be the residence of this grace, so that we may answer to the

dispensation, and not be below the position set out in Ephesians. In Deuteronomy 19:1 we see the circumstances under which these cities should be selected: "When the Lord thy God hath cut off the nations ... and thou succeedest them, and dwellest", then "thou shalt separate three cities for thee". The explanation of the unforgiving spirit that is so often apparent with us, is the want of understanding and enjoying the position that God has given us. That is to say, there is hardness of spirit and unforgiveness, because of spiritual poverty. We are not, in that sense, great enough to forgive.

The principle of grace is that it rises above whatever there is in man. It takes us up whether good or bad, whether we are big or little sinners. The exceeding riches of grace rises above the worst kind of man or woman, rising above their guilt and subduing them, making them exponents of it, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus. As I have shown, the Lord was superior to the whole tide of evil in the expression of grace as He says, "Father, forgive them". There was one man by His side, a thief, who was touched; the light of grace shone into his soul, and he said, "Remember me, Lord, when thou comest in thy kingdom". Luke 23:42. He was alongside the flow of grace; it was there, and it flowed into his soul and subdued him. Though he was persecuting before, for it says he "cast the same in his teeth", Matthew 27:44 grace overwhelmed him, and the Lord answers his desire: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise"! Luke 23:43. The man was lifted into the supreme place of blessing with Jesus — He says, "with me". Who can express the depth of feeling in the Lord when He said, "with me in paradise"? It is the triumph of grace!

What maintains us in this richness of grace? "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich". 2 Corinthians 8:9. It is rich people, in that sense, who become collectively the residence of this grace. And thus the dispensation is maintained at its proper level, the level of that wonderful passage in Luke 23.

So in Deuteronomy, in the type, Moses is instructing the people who are going into the land; it is his exercise that they might be in it like God, for they were the "sons of Jehovah". He was himself a very old man, and in this book he speaks of that land in which he himself fain would be — how he would grace it! Indeed, he was in it later, on the mount of transfiguration, and he was talking with Jesus. It was Moses speaking to the Lord, "with him", as if to call our attention to the fact that he was great enough to do such a thing. Think of the glory of that Person as He was transfigured before them! (Luke 9:32). The fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment white and glistering! And Moses and Elias were speaking with Him. Moses saw that goodly land,

and Lebanon. He could not go in then, but he entered in now in this glorious fashion.

Here he says, "When the Lord thy God hath cut off the nations ...". Israel have the cities and the houses; they are set up in wealth in the land. We understand the land, typically; it is God's *best* for us. God waters it with rain from heaven; it is a land of water brooks; the beauty of all lands. God expatiates on the richness of that land, and they were now in it. Their enemies are contemplated as being cut off, and they are set up, as we may say, in heaven; not literally, of course, but heaven as it is realised now, which is what the type sets forth. They are set up in it in dignity, for they were sons of Jehovah.

These things must be understood spiritually; the saints are thus contemplated as in possession of God's best. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him". 1 Corinthians 2:9. It is on that level, and refers to the most blessed things, all brought in for us by the Spirit, who is "the earnest of our inheritance". Ephesians 1:14. We are supposed in this type to be in this position and status of wealth. The assembly is to be the residence of grace.

The subject of the cities of refuge is not presented here as elsewhere, but in keeping with this book, so that we may understand that this principle of grace is to be present; there is to be the existence of it in "three cities". He mentions three first, which is peculiar to Deuteronomy. It says, "Thou shalt separate three cities ... thou shalt prepare thee a way". We have the cities in the land in all this richness; now he says, "Prepare thee a way". There is the possibility of a man slaying another unintentionally. As the Lord Jesus said, "For they know not what they do" — it is not regarded as deliberate. The land is to be divided up so that these cities may be within running distance of the manslayer. In other words we are to consider them. Due care in this respect is to characterise christians as forming the assembly.

It is worthy of note that the death of the high priest is not mentioned in Deuteronomy; you are not to put *anything* in the way of the manslayer reaching the city of refuge. You must put the city so that he can run into it, even if it is a long way to go. In the antitype it is not literal, but how many have been turned aside by accident. The axe-head flies off; it is the defective instrument used. The epistle to the Romans is intended to make us good instruments; we are to be "instruments of righteousness". Romans 6:13. None such will have a head, so to speak, that will fly off and kill a man. If we take care of our instruments, no one will suffer.

The chapter is dealing with grace, and while the killing is not intentional it is most solemn, for the man is killed; his wife and children have to be taken account of. Still grace prevails, for every facility is afforded the manslayer to reach the city of refuge. The Holy Spirit says, "Thou shalt prepare thee a way" — a way so that he can easily get there before the avenger of blood overtakes him. You can see how this enters into our relations in the assembly. We are to move on the level of Ephesians: "Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you". There must be no obstacle. The same applies to the sinner; God has made a way, as it is said, "There is forgiveness with thee". Psalm 130:4.

Then there are the additional three cities; they contemplate expansion. "If the Lord thy God enlarge thy coast ... thou shalt add three cities more" (verses 8,9). I have no doubt in the dispensational sense that refers to the extension of the testimony in Paul. The first three would be what existed at Jerusalem, "The Lord added to the assembly daily those that were to be saved". Acts 2:47. That would refer to the cities of refuge; they were there; grace was residing there according to the early chapters of the Acts. Then later the apostle Paul always went to the Jews *first*; this would be in keeping with the other three cities; full room was made for the Jews even in Rome. They went away and missed their opportunity, but there it was. Thus, dear brethren, if there is to be expansion, if there is to be increase, we must not let this principle be wanting, the principle of grace. We must keep pace with the work of God. Three is abundant evidence of anything; twice three in the case before us is the superabounding grace of God. The more we are brought into the inheritance, the more the grace, and thus the dispensation is carried on at its proper level until the end.

Deuteronomy 20

- DEUTERONOMY 20 (CAC 5)

DEUTERONOMY 20 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 20

This chapter would teach us that the inheritance can not be held without conflict. There are enemies great in resources and numbers but they are not to be feared, "for Jehovah thy God is with thee". We can only avoid conflict by giving up what is of God, but all spiritual war is approached with priestly encouragement. God gives His people the assurance that He is with them in the battle. In all times of conflict we should listen to the voice of the priest; he represents that element among the people of God that has clearness of spiritual vision, and that considers for God. Any conflict that has not the support of the priestly element will not be "the battles of Jehovah", but some battle of our own.

Then "the officers" lay down certain conditions that must be fulfilled before one goes to battle (verses 5 - 8). The builder of a new house must have dedicated it; the planter of a vineyard must have eaten of it; and one who has betrothed a wife must have taken her. These things seem to imply making good one's place in the inheritance. If the conditions suggested here have not been secured we had better leave fighting to other people.

Until a man has dedicated his new house he has not, reached the end in view in building it. To dedicate a new house would suggest taking up one's place definitely in the inheritance, and holding it in a spirit of dedication to God for His pleasure. I think the Ephesians were regarded as having built and dedicated their houses. They could be addressed as "fellow-citizens of the saints;" they had definitely taken up the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. They were settled in, so to speak, in house conditions amongst the saints. This is a necessary requisite if we are to fight the Lord's battles as in Ephesians 6. We must first secure a definite place which we can hold as from and for God.

Then the vineyard in verse 6 would speak of the joy yielded in the inheritance. A certain time was reserved for cultivation of the land, and for securing the joy of it, before one was called upon to render military service. If Leviticus 19: 23 - 25 would apply to a vineyard there would be five years, occupation of the land before going out to battle. It suggests that one has been long enough in the land not only to get its fruit, but to distinguish between what is uncircumcised and what is holy. The joy of the inheritance has been tasted without any admixture of unspiritual elements; it has had to be regarded as "holy for praise to Jehovah" before it could be eaten as yielding a pure and holy joy. There would be a certain immaturity about a man who had not eaten

of his vineyard; he had not tasted the joy of the inheritance as a fruit of his own cultivation of it. I am afraid we often contend for things which we do not enjoy, or which are yet — to use the language of the type — uncircumcised in our souls. But the mind of God is clearly that we should enjoy things before we fight for them, and that we should enjoy them in a holy and spiritual way. The two and a half tribes were prepared to *fight* for Canaan, but they did not want to *live* there.

Then the betrothed wife would, in this connection, suggest the bringing forth of a generation to occupy and enjoy the land. That she should be taken would be the way of Israel's increase. We are to be, first of all, concerned to make good what is for internal prosperity before going to battle. There is divine order and instruction in this; we must not think of it merely as consideration for natural feelings. These are conditions which in God's ordering precede conflict; if we have not qualified in the way which is here intimated grave danger will be attached to our going out to battle. It would perhaps be wise and advantageous for us to leave the fighting to others!

Then the "timid and faint-hearted" are bidden to return from conflict (verse 8). They will only make others as weak as they are themselves. What a sad thing to be disheartening to others in a time of conflict! How often this has been the case! If I am timid and faint-hearted I must listen to the priest. When Paul exhorted Timothy to "rekindle the gift of God which is in thee ... For God has not given us a spirit, of cowardice, but of power, and of love, and of wise discretion" (2 Timothy 1: 6, 7), he was giving him priestly encouragement, and emboldening him to go on with the battle. In large measure we get support and encouragement through the brethren, but the Lord's personal succour is ever a great reality; He will stand by His faithful servants in conflict even if every one else fails them. See 2 Timothy 4:16,17. Paul with Timothy was filling the place of the "priest" in Deuteronomy 20, but in relation to Mark (Acts 15: 38) he was acting as an "officer". He perceived that Mark was not fit at that time to go to the battle, and he would not take him. There would have been an element of danger to himself and to others if he had gone.

There are some enemies to whom peace is to be proclaimed; they may make an "answer of peace", and become tributaries, and serve the people of God. There is an evangelical touch about this. It would seem that service generally is regarded as a warfare. Levitical service is spoken of as a warfare (Numbers 4: 3 margin), and Paul speaks as a soldier when he says "I have combated the good combat" (2 Timothy 4: 7). If a city very far off will not make peace the males are to be destroyed, and the rest become a spoil; there is booty and food as the result of the conflict. Cities afar off would seem to represent what

is opposed to God and to His people, but not viewed as in hopeless evil and needing to be exterminated like the old inhabitants of Canaan. It is that which *may* become tributary, or when the males are smitten — that is, when the energy of opposition is destroyed — may become a useful spoil, and add to the wealth of God's people. It is a kind of warfare which has in view the addition of something of value, so that it would represent gospel activities, or the subduing to God of those in whom there has been opposition, but who may in result have a place amongst His people.

But the nations of Canaan represent that which is abominable, and under judgment with God, and which has to be utterly devoted to destruction without mercy. It is really diabolical in character, and hopelessly evil.

Trees which bear fruit were not to be cut down even in war. They could be eaten of. In conflict we have not to be indiscriminate; there may be something which is of God even amongst adversaries and we must be careful not to cut that down; it has abiding value.

Deuteronomy 21

- THE CITY NEAREST TO THE SLAIN MAN (AJG 11)
- DEUTERONOMY 21 (CAC 5)
- CHRIST LIFTED UP AND BURIED (CAC 17)
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THE CITY NEAREST TO THE SLAIN MAN (AJG 11)

Deuteronomy 21: 1 - 9

The above passage has clearly a dispensational significance, "the slain man" referring to Christ as slain near Jerusalem, although the city is not charged with the guilt of His death, but rather in grace given an opportunity to clear itself. The remaining subjects in the chapter follow on the death of our Lord in regular order, bearing on the assembly and Israel as seen in the Acts. The "stubborn and rebellious son" is a type of the Jews as utterly disregardful of divine grace and authority in Christ presented to them in the gospel. He would "not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother". Being brought to "the elders of his city" he is stoned to death by "all the men" of it. But verses 1 to 9 contain most important principles in relation to local ruptures, or other causes of uncertainty involving fellowship among the saints of the assembly.

First, as to *general* responsibility. "Thine elders and thy judges shall go forth". This refers to the saints universally viewed in their responsibility as to any sin or division, the cause of which is unknown, but which must be investigated so that judgment according to God may be rendered. The next direction deals with *proximity* to the scene of the sin. The nearest city is determined by the measurement of those *generally* responsible, and this matter of proximity is in view throughout the instruction. The fact that the nearest city to the slain man has to clear itself rather than determine the murderer or murderers, does not set aside the importance of proximity as a principle. A divine principle is always valid. Scripture may confirm itself, but does not necessarily repeat. One scripture is enough to establish any point, as John 10: 35 shows. Some would make the Old Testament secondary, or a matter of detail, but the New Testament constantly insists on the equality of the Old Testament with itself. Throughout these verses 1 - 9, the mind is focussed on "the city that is nearest unto him that is slain", "the elders of that city", and "all the elders" of it being mentioned.

Then *priesthood*. "The priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them Jehovah thy God hath chosen to do service unto him, and to bless in the name of Jehovah; and according to their word shall be every controversy and every stroke". They represent the spiritual elements; those who are spiritual, and so can "discern all things". Note, they are not regarded as local, nor as belonging to the people: not "thy priests". They are on God's side, chosen of Him. But observe a very important fact, that as the sons of Levi are mentioned, the elders of the city nearest the slain man are again introduced and the priests are not mentioned again, while the elders of the nearest city *speak to*

Jehovah. The onus of slaying the heifer was on them, and they wash their hands over her. Then they say, "Forgive thy people Israel ... and lay not innocent blood to the charge of thy people Israel". They act *as priests*, and not simply for themselves but for all Israel. This as applied today, would mean that the meeting or meetings nearest to a locality in which division and consequent uncertainty as to the sin involved exist, as judging the matter in the light of the death of Christ and depending upon the Spirit, for the heifer had her neck broken in a "water-course", show themselves to be spiritual, and so capable of discerning and judging according to God. A decision reached under these circumstances will be accepted by "Israel", and morally binding.

Christian fellowship is general as well as local, and so if its practical expression in a locality ceases through division among the saints there, the general aspect is involved; in principle responsibility as to it belongs to all the gatherings. This is recognised in verse 2, "thy elders and thy judges", but afterwards *all rests with the nearest city and the priesthood*, the elders of the former merging into the latter. Thus a local sorrow, such as we are contemplating, after general responsibility is accepted, resolves itself into proximity and priesthood. These must go together, and as they do, the nearest meeting will not act arbitrarily, or officially, but on moral grounds, recognising that what they have on hand is not in their own midst and for which they are responsible to the Lord only, but in another locality, and so coming within the range of all; but that wisdom and confidence in others would leave the service of adjustment with them as the nearest to the scene of sorrow.

While the unmanageable and rebellious son alludes to the Jews, as already said, verses 18 to 21 afford important instruction relative to the subject under consideration. He was to be brought "unto the elders of *his* city and unto the gates of *his* place". This links with 1 Corinthians, and shows that when actual sin is in question, and determined, judgment of it must be where the guilty person resides. "All the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die". This is done on adequate testimony, for his father and mother accuse him before the elders. In the light of this, as connected with the letters to Corinth, matters belonging to a given locality cannot be scripturally adjudicated upon in another locality.

Thus while responsibility as to the slain man is determined by measurement, his position is not presented exactly as a locality; the measurement is from *him*, not the field. Nor is the heifer slain there, but in the valley or watercourse, and expiation thereby made for Israel, although in professed innocence of the death of the man. But when sin is active, innocency no longer contemplated, the guilty person is regarded as of a city and his

judgment is there. In truth as evil has to be met the two cities merge into one, for the principle established is that sin occurring in a local assembly must be dealt with *there*, although a nearby assembly may have responsibility as to it, because of division or inability otherwise in the former to deal with it. Leviticus 14: 33 - 53 governs this.

But the extension of fellowship by a nearby meeting to saints in a place where division has existed is not exactly the same as dealing with sin in it, although it may involve the judgment of some who cannot be recognised because of their conduct; it is a question of owning "the approved". This action is as of one assembly to another, and so is done, so to speak, by the neighbour assembly in its own locality, after godly deliberation, based on full inquiry.

Referring again to verse 2 of our chapter, it is a grave mistake to assume that what is said of "thine elders and thy judges" warrants brethren from many gatherings, whether of a district or generally, coming together to judge of matters belonging to another locality. There is no scriptural warrant for such a procedure; indeed it would set aside the truth governing the local assembly taught in 1 and 2 Corinthians, which is that, as having the Holy Spirit, it has the character of the temple of God and the body of Christ, and so furnished with what is needed for its guidance and maintenance; gifts, as for the whole assembly, being also available.

The truth governing the assembly, as seen in local companies, taught especially as we have seen in 1 and 2 Corinthians and Deuteronomy 21, the disregard of which has caused widespread sorrow, needs to be constantly pressed, particularly in places where this sorrow was lightly experienced, where many of Israel have not known "*all* the wars of Canaan".

DEUTERONOMY 21 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 21

There is a wide scope of spiritual instruction in the chapter now before us. The one "found slain in the land" has, no doubt, reference to Christ. His death could not be attributed to any particular person; it was something which had to become the occasion of deep exercise for all the people as represented by their elders and judges. "Thy people Israel" were all involved, and had to clear themselves of blood-guiltiness in a righteous way.

The heifer that had not been wrought with, and that had not drawn in the yoke, was a type of Christ in the character in which He needs to be apprehended in order to the expiation of the guilt of slaying Him. He never came under man's influence in any way, nor did He serve man's purposes at all. He came according to God's will, by God's determinate counsel and foreknowledge. On the side of man's responsibility He was found slain, but on the divine side He was the Heifer brought down into the "ever-flowing watercourse" of God's blessed activities in grace. That is a stream which has been ever flowing independent of man altogether, flowing in spite of man's wickedness.

Peter in Acts 2 brought upon consciences the slaying of Christ, but he also took his hearers into a region which was quite apart from any actings of man. This may be suggested by the watercourse being neither tilled nor sown. It is in such a region that Christ can be apprehended as having died to accomplish expiation according to God's purpose and grace, in view of those who were under blood-guiltiness having remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Such could only clear themselves of the guilt of innocent blood by washing their hands over Christ as the One whose death had wrought expiation. Pilate washed his hands, and this was a solemn testimony permitted of God against the Jews, but it did not expiate Pilate's guilt, for he did not do it with the slightest apprehension of Christ as making expiation by His death. He did not wash *his* hands over the Heifer. But those convicted under Peter's preaching, and who repented, did clear themselves of the blood of Christ, and they recognised that expiation had been made on God's part, according to His determinate counsel, in the very act that spoke of their violence against His Anointed. Peter called upon them to be saved from the perverse generation that was under blood-guiltiness, and as so separated morally from their act and deed they were cleared, and could "answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood". They learned the death of Christ, not as bringing blood-

guiltiness upon them, but as the righteous ground of forgiveness, redemption, and expiation.

The elders and the priests were there, in a spiritual sense, for Peter and the eleven were men who had ability to take knowledge of what had transpired, and to bring home the conviction of it to those who lay under responsibility. They were also able to bring Christ into their view as the Heifer whose death was the only divine ground of expiation. Guilty as the people were, through infinite mercy and grace they could righteously wash their hands over the Heifer and clear themselves of blood-guiltiness. The nation will yet do so when they take up the language of Psalm 2, and when Zechariah 12:14 to Zechariah 13:1 is fulfilled. The slaying of Christ will then be estimated in a priestly way, and also its precious import as making expiation for sin. In principle every convicted sinner does so when he is brought to see the expiatory value of the death of Christ. The measuring to the nearest city, from this point, of view, would indicate a bringing home of responsibility to those who may have been previously unaware of it. It is a deeply serious matter that, the innocent blood of Christ has been shed; and the only One entitled to live here has been slain. It is in God's sight the most fearful thing that has ever happened in the world, and the Spirit of God would bring home to every man's conscience the necessity for clearing himself in regard of it.

But "the scope of no prophecy of scripture is had from its own particular interpretation". As being spoken under the power of the Holy Spirit Scripture has a very wide bearing. I have no doubt that principles are brought out here which were intended of God to be instruction for us when conditions are found "in the land" which are abnormal. The principle here enunciated would have some bearing on "every controversy and every stroke" (verse 5) which raises a question in regard to which all God's people have to prove themselves to be clear. If something fatal to the enjoyment of the land takes place it is a serious matter; it affects the whole of God's people; all have to prove themselves to be pure in the matter. The elders and judges universally have to concern themselves about such a matter; its gravity demands that some action shall be taken; and the wisdom of God assigns responsibility for such action to the nearest city.

This is a divine principle to which we do well to take heed. It is not a question here of the responsibility of each local assembly to deal with matters that arise within itself. That would be established by 1 Corinthians. But here responsibility is assigned on the ground of proximity, indicating that in abnormal circumstances we may be called upon to take some action by reason of nearness to the place where such circumstances have occurred. The man

found slain being "in the land" and "in the field" gives the circumstance a universal bearing. The holiness of God, and the purity of His land generally, are involved, and the gravity of the case requires that it shall be taken up somewhere. When moral questions arise, and things take place which are not according to the mind of God, it is not His way that they should be left undetermined. It cannot be regarded as nobody's business if something has happened that is contrary to the character of "the land" as the sphere of life. All Israel is concerned in such a matter, but responsibility is definitely fixed in "the city that is nearest". It is not left to be taken up voluntarily by any city that thinks fit to do so. If something not strictly local has to be taken up, in view of universal assembly conditions, the elders and judges should be careful to observe this rule. "The priests the sons of Levi" will come near when the right city takes the matter up, but they could not be expected, according to divine order, to come near if another city intervened. One would confidently look for light and spiritual discernment to be given where responsibility lies according to God's mind.

"And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them Jehovah thy God hath chosen to do service unto him, and to bless in the name of Jehovah; and according to their word shall be every controversy and every stroke". When that element comes near there is priestly discernment, and things are determined according to God.

The "heifer" and the "ever-flowing watercourse" would indicate that all such exercise as is contemplated here is to be taken up in the light of the death of Christ, and of the unceasing activities of divine grace. It is a question of doing what is right (verse 9) not merely in a legal way, but in consistency with the grace of the dispensation, so that God's people generally may be relieved of implication in wrong-doing, and may continue under priestly blessing. "Every controversy and every stroke" is to be righteously determined in view of this. But responsibility to take action is definitely assigned to the "city that is nearest".

In the next two sections of the chapter we have, first, a relationship which is probational, and which may be disowned if the requisite conditions are not fulfilled; and then a relationship which is unalterable, the rights of which are inalienable. If we would understand the ways and grace of God, and learn how to distinguish between things that differ, we must pay attention to what is here before us.

The captive woman of verse 11, is, no doubt, a figure of Israel. Ezekiel 16 and Hosea may be compared. Jehovah had desired Israel, and proposed to have her for Himself in definite separation from all that marked her origin in a

natural way. He would have her in covenant relations with Himself. But the thought is suggested here that, after having got her, He might "have no delight in her"; He might have to "let her go according to her desire". How truly does this depict what actually occurred! Jehovah did not have delight in Israel, and she went voluntarily away from her blessed relations with Him. He did not treat her as a slave, He would not retain her against her desire; He did not "sell her for money" as giving any other a *right* to her; He has "let her go according to her desire". How sad is her position as being thus let go!

The solemn lesson of this is as much for us as for Israel. Those in the Christian profession have been called to be in suitability to Christ, and for His delight, as having laid aside all that pertained to our former state. But does the present state of the church yield delight to Christ? I speak of the church now as that which stands professedly for Christ in the world. Alas! it is far otherwise. Long ago Paul had to say, "For all seek their own things, not the things of Jesus Christ". Early in the church's history the Lord had to say, "I have against thee... I have a few things against thee... But I have against thee" (Revelation 2:4; Revelation 2:14; Revelation 2:20). To the last phase of the church He says, "I am about to spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:16). Public and collective departure is the result of private and individual departure, so let us see to ourselves in this matter. It is a searching question for each one of us; are we ministering delight to Christ, or are we hankering after other things! What are the desires that really govern us in a practical way? Perhaps some of us would be ashamed to say? Suppose we were let go according to our desire, where should we go to? The Lord does not retain people unwillingly; if my desire is to go He may let me go. Many disciples went away from the Lord (John 6:66), and he let them go. He said to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" If I desire to be spiritual, and to minister to the delight of Christ, He will grant it. But if I want the world He may let me have it. "Demas has forsaken me, having loved the present age" (2 Timothy 4:10); "All who are in Asia... have turned away from me" (2 Timothy 1:15). With sorrow of heart he had to let them go. Judas had been in service and apostleship, but he "fell to go to his own place". John says of some that "They went out from among us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have surely remained with us, but that they might be made manifest that none are of us" (1 John 2:19). People sooner or later go to their own place; they go into associations that correspond with their inward condition and desires. But even apostates carry the evidence that they have once been positionally near to Christ; they carry into the world elements which it could never have derived from men like Buddha or Confucius. But it is intensely solemn to be let go because Christ has no delight in us, and because our desires are not really for

Him at all. Such will be the fate of that great body of profession which bears His name only to dishonour it. May each one of us heed the warning!

The subject of verses 16 - 17 is the inalienable right of the firstborn, This has reference to the saints as being the fruit of divine working, and not merely as being in a place of outward privilege. The two wives here would represent, I think, the outward human conditions in which God works, whether in Israel or among the Gentiles, but the firstborn in either case is the fruit of the operation of divine power. At the present time God's firstborn for heavenly blessing is being brought forth among the Gentiles; the firstborn for earthly blessing will be brought forth by Israel; but in either case "the right of the firstborn" is inalienable. The firstborn represents what is of God — "the first-fruits of his vigour", to use the language of the type — and a "double portion" of the inheritance is secured to such by His appointment. We were all by nature in the state described in Ephesians 2. Yet divine power wrought, and a firstborn has been brought forth, and is being brought forth, to inherit with Christ who is the true Firstborn.

Israel is today in the position of the hated wife. God has no complacency in her. He has had to say of her, "Not my people ... not beloved" (Romans 9: 26). But His divine power will work, and Israel will yet bring forth a firstborn for earthly blessing. But at the present time the firstborn brought forth amongst the Gentiles has taken precedence by divine appointment, and has obtained an inheritance that Israel will never have. There is nothing probational about this; "the heirs of the promise" get their portion according to the unchangeableness of God's purpose.

That which has been outwardly in relation to God without any true subjection to Him is set forth in the "unmanageable and rebellious son" of verses 18 - 21 . This was Israel's case, and it is very largely the case in christendom also. God's election in either case obtains blessing (Romans 11: 7) as the firstborn, the fruit of His own gracious work, but the rest disclose their true character, and will eventually come under His unsparing judgment.

Then the closing section of the chapter (verses 22, 23) has touching reference to Christ as taking up vicariously the sin, death, and curse of His people. To be hanged on a tree is to be publicly in the place of curse, and Christ was found there in infinite grace. All that stood connected with sin, death, and curse was defiling, and the body of one who had been in that place was to be buried that day. The man under curse was to be buried. In the light of this we can understand the significance of the place which Scripture gives to the burial of Christ. See 1 Corinthians 15: 4. The man under curse has gone out of God's sight in the burial of Christ, never to be seen again to defile God's land.

The “night” is suggestive of the present period, which so far as believers are concerned is to be marked by burial. “We have been buried therefore with him by baptism unto death, in order that, even as Christ has been raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6: 4.). “Buried with him in baptism” (Colossians 2: 12). If we are not in accord with the burial of Christ we shall defile the land by keeping the man in view who has been publicly seen in the cross of Christ to be “a curse of God”. It is a matter of righteousness now that we should accept the place of burial with Christ. The Ethiopian eunuch said, “What hinders my being baptised?”; his desires went that way.

CHRIST LIFTED UP AND BURIED (CAC 17)

John 3:14-16; John 8:28; John 12:32,33; John 19:38-42; Colossians 2:12; Deuteronomy 21:22,23

There is great spiritual gain in the consideration of our Lord Jesus Christ in every aspect in which Scripture presents Him to the view of faith; and the above scriptures call our attention to Him as being lifted up and being buried. The Spirit of God has linked the two thoughts together in Deuteronomy 21: 22, 23. Being hanged on a tree refers to one as "lifted up", and the thought of burial is closely connected with this.

When the Son of man spoke of being lifted up He referred to the particular manner in which He was about to die. Death by crucifixion involved being held up to view as one worthy of death, and, indeed, seen publicly as having become a curse, "for he that is hanged is a curse of God". Two of the most profound statements in Scripture are found in Galatians 3: 13 and 2 Corinthians 5: 21: "Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, (for it is written, Cursed is every one hanged upon a tree)". "Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us". One is the great redeeming act of Christ in love to those under curse; He became a curse; the other is the wondrous act of God having in view His purpose that we should become His righteousness in Christ. The Son of man as lifted up was publicly seen to be in the place of sin and curse, but it is our peace and joy to know that He was not there on His own account at all, but in divine love on behalf of those who were under sin and death. His lifting up, as referred to in John 3: 14, was on God's part as given in love, that eternal life might be brought in and become the portion of those who were under sin and death.

The "serpent" being lifted up shows that God had in mind the original source of evil. In the lifting up of the Son of man the principle of evil which originated in the serpent was judged. It was judged in man in such a way that its judgment has become favourable towards men as a righteous ground of blessing. The serpent does not benefit by the lifting up of the Son of man, but it has become the way of infinite good to those whom he deceived and brought into transgression.

The state in which man was before God was publicly set forth in the Son of man lifted up. But this testimony comes to men in the way of grace, for the One who has been lifted up in the place of sin was there as the great manifestation of divine love. This is brought into the view of all; it comes within sight for the whole creation under heaven. Attention is called, in the lifting up, to the publicity of it; it is a great universal testimony. The object of

gospel preaching is to make men see that they are concerned in this great matter.

In John 8: 28 it is "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". The lifting up in chapter 3 is on God's part in love, but in chapter 8 it is what men do: "When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man". Men fully exposed their own state when they put that blessed One to an open shame. He had done nothing but good. We are told that they "sought false witness against Jesus, so that they might put him to death". If they had wanted true witnesses they would have had no difficulty in finding them. They might have called Lazarus and Bartimaeus and Mary Magdalene and many cleansed lepers and once-blind men who could now see; they might have called many who had heard from His lips mighty words of healing and forgiveness. There was, indeed, the fullest testimony available that the blessed light of God revealed in supreme grace was there, but in lifting Him up men rejected it all in a shameful way; they put Him to public dishonour. In this great and solemn act the whole state of the world, and of man's heart, has come out. But every one who took part in that act will be made to know that all He said was of the Father, and that the Father was with Him. It is most certainly true that those who put Jesus, or even His feeble representatives, in the place of shame and reproach, will be made to know what they have done.

In John 12: 32 we pass over to another side of this matter, and we see God's great design in it, and that He brings it to pass notwithstanding what is true of man. "And I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all to me". He becomes, as lifted up out of the earth, a divine centre of attraction. His death has given Him a prominence, a place of advantage in relation to men universally, which He did not have before He was lifted up. As on the earth He said, "I have not been sent save to the lost sheep of Israel's house", Matthew 15: 24,

but as lifted up out of the earth He draws all to Him. The particular kind of death that He should die was designed by infinite wisdom, so that He should not die on the earth, but as lifted up out of it. It is important that, when speaking of the death of Christ, we should lay stress on the kind of death that he died. It was the death of crucifixion, so that He died as lifted up out of the earth. As in that position He was outside all limitations; He can draw all to Him. He has died in a way that was designed of God to set forth that it was the divine intent that He should come within the view of all. His death, in this sense, has given Him a wonderful elevation, so that all the ends of the earth can look unto Him and be saved, He can draw all to Him. The divine gathering

centre to which all must come for blessing is not any place or person on earth, but One lifted up out of the earth. This is the blessed way which divine love has taken to draw men away from a world fully exposed as having nothing in common with God. All the work of grace during the last two thousand years has been the drawing of men to Christ as the One lifted up. This is still the public position, and the testimony of God as announced to men.

In the light of this we can see how important the cross is as the universal testimony of God to men. Paul and John are in perfect harmony as to this. Paul came to the Corinthians announcing the testimony of God, and he said, "I did not judge it well to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified", 1 Corinthians 2: 2. The great thing in preaching is "that the cross of the Christ may not be made vain"; that is, emptied of its true meaning. There is wonderful meaning in the lifting up of Christ on the cross, and its real force is to be brought home to men. "The word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to us that are saved it is God's power". Christ crucified is "to Jews an offence, and to nations foolishness; but to those that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ God's power and God's wisdom", 1 Corinthians 1: 23, 24. When this testimony comes to men "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" it brings them clean out of the world. It is a testimony that can only be truly presented in spiritual power; hence Paul came to Corinth in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, not that he was afraid of the Corinthians, but he feared lest some element of human wisdom should come in to mar his service.

We gather, further, from Deuteronomy 21: 23, that one who has been publicly exposed, as become a curse, is viewed as a defilement to the land. Hence it is written, "thou shalt in any wise bury him that day ... thou shalt not defile thy land". No doubt it was as having this scripture in mind that the Jews were anxious that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, John 19: 31. But there is divine instruction in the ordinance, and it gives the burial of the Lord an important place. As having been identified with sin and curse — as bearing it vicariously — the burial of the Lord was necessary that the very condition in which He was made sin might pass completely out of sight. So long as He was exposed upon the cross what was in public evidence was One in the place of sin and curse. His death did not remove Him from that position publicly, but His burial did, and He never reappeared in the condition in which He was made sin. The condition which He had taken up as coming into holy manhood, in which He could bear sin and die, went out of sight when He was buried, and as raised from the dead He is in a new condition to which neither sin nor death could ever be attached. Viewing this matter in the light of Deuteronomy 21: 23 we can understand why the burial of Christ is included in

the glad tidings which Paul preached, 1 Corinthians 15: 4. The condition in which Christ was made sin went out of God's sight in His burial, and this is of immense importance when we consider all its consequences in their bearing on those who love Him. Burial is viewed in Deuteronomy 21: 23 as removing defilement from the land. When seven of Saul's descendants were hanged before Jehovah for his sin against the Gibeonites, it was when they had been buried we are told, "afterwards God was propitious to the land", 2 Samuel 21: 14. The sentence having been executed, and the condition in which it was executed having been removed from God's sight in burial, the matter was righteously ended. The Christ on whom we have believed is One who has not only died, but who was also buried.

It is well to bear in mind that when the Spirit of God by Paul draws attention to Christ as descending, He does not stop short of burial. For His burial is clearly the full depth of His descent according to Ephesians 4: 9, 10. "But that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens, that he might fill all things". Paul is led to speak of this by thinking of Him as ascended on high according to Psalm 68: 18. His having ascended implied that He had descended, and the depth of His descent was "into the lower parts of the earth". This is in keeping with the Lord's own words, "For even as Jonas was in the belly of the great fish three days and three nights, thus shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights", Matthew 12: 40. He descended from the place that was ever His in eternal deity not only to the cross but to the grave. He descended in the strength of His love to the lower parts of the earth; we get the full measure of His descent as we take in the thought of His burial. Mary of Bethany seems to have been the only one of His disciples who had His burial definitely in view. She was in concert with His mind in this. In anointing His body for burial she showed that the full depth of His descent in love was before her heart. But in doing it "beforehand" she made manifest that she had no thought of His remaining in the tomb. Her pound of costly ointment was put upon Him in view of His burial, but it was done "beforehand" because her heart understood that He would not be available for anointing after His death. The greatness of His divine Person was before her: if such a Person descended to burial it was impossible that He should remain there; He must, as He Himself had said, ascend up where He was before, John 6: 62. The descending and the ascending are equal, for it is the same Person who does both. In ascending up above all the heavens He went to "where he was before". But He went in a new condition, for He ascended as Man "that he might fill all things". No scripture could more clearly establish His deity. No wonder that Mary's heart

was filled as in the spirit of adoration she anointed the feet of Jesus! As regarded in the light of Ephesians 4: 9, 10, we could not think of any creature anointing His head. Adoration at the feet of such a Person is the only right attitude.

In Mark's gospel the setting of the incident is different. The woman is not named, and we are told that she had "an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly; and having broken the alabaster flask, she poured it out upon his head", Mark 14: 3. Our attention is called in this scripture to the vessel in which the ointment was, and to the fact that it was broken. As seen in Simon the leper's house the Lord would be viewed as known in the midst of Israel. He was the blessed Person in whom everything that was precious to God was found, and the woman, as divinely taught, understood that His path of service was to lead Him into death. It was what her affections had gathered up as a result of what she had seen and heard. He was God's Anointed to carry out all His will, the One in whom every promise would be fulfilled. He is viewed in Mark as the great Servant of divine pleasure, and, in keeping with a view of Him in the greatness that attached to Him officially by God's appointment, the woman poured out her ointment upon His head.

In John the vessel is not mentioned, but we are told that "Mary therefore, having taken a pound of ointment of pure nard of great price, anointed the feet of Jesus". I believe that in the setting of this gospel the Spirit of God would lead us to regard Mary herself as the vessel. She had stored up in affectionate appreciation, a wealthy knowledge of One who was so great personally that He had descended from Godhead's fullest glory that He might go down to the lower parts of the earth. He was descending to burial, and He took account of her as having kept her ointment for the day of His preparation for burial. One who could so descend must necessarily ascend up where He was before, and regarded thus in His personal greatness it is fitting that His feet should be anointed and not His head.

It is important to notice that the reference to the Lord descending into the lower parts of the earth is in the epistle to the Ephesians, for that epistle gives us the full height of things, and also the full depth. Indeed, we have the "depth and height" particularly mentioned in it, chapter 3: 18. "The lower parts of the earth" must be understood as indicating where the might of God's strength wrought in the Christ, as we read in Ephesians 1: 19, 20. The apostle prays that we may know "the surpassing greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of the might of his strength, in which he wrought in the Christ in raising him from among the dead". The mighty power of God acted in those "lower parts of the earth" into which Christ had

descended in love, so that His burial really took Him to the point which would witness to the fullest expression of the might of God's strength. I do not know that we have anywhere else in Scripture such an accumulation of words descriptive of divine power, and they impress upon us the greatness of the power that operated in the raising of Christ from among the dead. They give a very solemn impression of the tremendous power that is necessary to effect resurrection. The Lord being found, in infinite grace, among the dead gave occasion for that power to be exercised. His burial brought Him to that low point where the surpassing greatness of God's power could be known, and known in a way that is "towards us who believe". As buried, the Lord is viewed as having come under the whole weight of what rested on us, and the surpassing greatness of God's power came in and raised Him from that point. Love descended to that point, but the might of God's strength came in to raise Him. The love in which He descended was towards us, and the power that raised Him is towards us also. The whole matter had in view God's wondrous purposes of love in regard to us.

The resurrection of Christ is a far greater expression of divine power than creation. In creation God spake and it was done. There is no suggestion of any extraordinary exertion of divine power in creation, but the words used in Ephesians 1: 19 do suggest the exercise of extraordinary power on God's part. God would have us to ponder this. It is necessary that He should give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him so that we may know this power, and understand that it is "towards us who believe". But the fact that Paul prayed for it for the saints is evidence that God is willing to give us this enlightenment.

A further result of the burial of Christ is its bearing on those who love Him. We are never to forget that He has been buried here, and that His burial was a matter that brought into activity the affections of His lovers. The world that lifted Him up was not allowed to make provision for His burial. Men did indeed appoint His grave with the wicked, but God would not allow that appointment to stand. In retaining the Lord's burial in the hands of lovers it seems as though God would say to every lover of Christ, This is a matter for you to be concerned about; how do your affections move in regard to it? We have seen how Mary's affections moved in relation to His burial, and in Joseph of Arimathaea we see one who took up publicly and wholeheartedly the position of identification with Christ in burial. This was his great privilege, but it is the privilege of all lovers of Christ, and therefore he may be regarded as representative of them all in this character. And there is special instruction in the experience of Joseph, for, though a disciple, he had not been publicly identified with the Lord before. What hindered him is the very thing that

hinders us, and God would show us how he got free from his hindrance so that we might get free in the same way.

He had been "a disciple of Jesus, but secretly through fear of the Jews". There had been with him, as with us all, a shrinking from reproach and suffering, and a desire for the easy path. He had not known what it was to see the body of the flesh cut off, but I believe he had been circumcised in a spiritual sense between the time when he was a secret disciple and the time when he "demanded of Pilate that he might take the body of Jesus". In the meantime "the circumcision of the Christ", (Colossians 2: 11), had taken place. Christ after the flesh had been cut off, and if He had been cut off, how could any lover of His desire to retain status as in the flesh? In the solemn hour of the death of Christ Joseph was "circumcised with circumcision not done by hand, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ", Colossians 2: 11, and he put off, in a spiritual sense, the whole body of the flesh, and with it his unbelieving fears, and his desire to retain a religious place here. He was prepared now for identification with Christ in burial. Demanding the body of Jesus was claiming a right to it. His love demanded the privilege of identification with Christ in connection with His burial. The tomb was Joseph's "new tomb which he had hewn in the rock", and when he put the body of Jesus in it, I think we may say that, in a spiritual sense, he put himself there, as represented in the Person of the One who had died for him. I cannot think that he was ever seen in the council again, nor that he was ever again identified with the religious doings of the priests and others who had consulted and accomplished the death of Christ. He was henceforth a buried man to all that. His going down to burial was a movement of love on his part, and it is a movement which we all have to make if we are to know the true meaning of being "buried with him in baptism".

It is evident that Joseph had had the thought of burial before him, for he had hewn out for himself a sepulchre in the rock. God had led his thoughts that way in view of the burial of Christ. His tomb was one of the things — like the colt and the guest-chamber — specially provided and reserved for the Lord. The sepulchre being in "the rock" suggested that the idea of burial was to have a permanent place in Christianity. The Lord Himself was to be there only for three days and three nights, but the thought of burial was to be permanent, for it is an abiding truth in Christianity that His lovers are buried with Him (Romans 6: 4; Colossians 2: 12). The Ethiopian eunuch was prepared for burial with Christ, when he said, "what hinders my being baptised"? It was the demand of a good conscience (1 Peter 3: 21), in keeping with Joseph's demand to have the body of Jesus for burial. The Lord went finally out of this world by burial, and His grave is left "hewn in the rock" as a

permanent spot for love to occupy, in a spiritual sense, as soon as there is a readiness to do so. Ruth said to Naomi, "where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried". How this tests us as to whether we are really prepared to go down out of the life of this world! Paul asks the Colossians, "Why as if alive in the world do ye subject yourselves to ordinances?" They were in danger of following the injunctions and teachings of men, and entertaining religious and philosophic thoughts which all belong to this world. We descend altogether out of that area when we go down in affection to burial with Christ.

It is helpful to see the steps by which believers are led to correspondence with Christ, as "complete (or filled full) in him". Those who are filled full in Christ certainly have no need to retain, as of value, anything connected with "the body of the flesh". So that, as a second step, they can afford to accept circumcision. Then, third, they come to the truth of burial with Christ in baptism. All this being on the way to a fourth step in apprehension that "ye have been also raised with him through faith of the working of God who raised him from among the dead", Colossians 2: 9 - 12.

In the interval between the lifting up of Christ on the cross and His resurrection by the mighty power of God on the third day, it seems to me that Joseph of Arimathaea was acting spiritually in accord with the mind of God at the moment. The women, we are told in Mark's gospel, "bought aromatic spices that they might come and embalm him". Nothing could have been more unnecessary under the circumstances, or less in keeping with the great spiritual truth of the moment.

The Scriptures might have assured them that He would not see corruption, and He had spoken again and again of rising the third day. Persons are embalmed because it is expected that they will long remain in death! The great and important truth of the moment was that He was about to be seen as the risen One. With regard to Nicodemus and his hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, the Spirit of God is careful to tell us that it was "as it is the custom with the Jews to prepare for burial". Their doings, particularly as referred to in John's gospel, are not marked by spirituality. We are perhaps much more influenced than we think by customs current, or that have been current, in the religious world. But spirituality is needed for the apprehension of what is suitable to the Lord at any particular moment; affection and devotion are not sufficient. Human sentiment, even of the choicest kind, tends to obscure what is spiritual. One would desire that there might be much more devotion to the Lord with all of us who believe on Him, but also that there might be more ability to honour Him in a truly spiritual way.

Joseph brought no spices, but he "bought fine linen, and having taken him down, he swathed him in the fine linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was cut out of rock", Mark 15: 46. I have no doubt the "fine linen" represented his apprehension of the Lord Jesus as having been here in holy flesh for the accomplishment of the will of God. But the very condition in which He had been here, and in which He had accomplished all for the glory of God, was now to disappear from view in the tomb. Christ according to flesh not only died, but was buried. And when He reappeared to His own in resurrection it was in a new condition. How much we need to ponder those words of Paul: "So that we henceforth know no one according to flesh; but if even we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know him thus no longer", 2 Corinthians 5: 16. This great truth lies at the root of Christianity. The Christ in whom we are is One who, according to flesh, has died and been buried. He has been raised in a new condition which never had, and never can have, any link with the life of the world. "So if any one be in Christ, there is a new creation". Nothing is more important for Christians to understand.

In the wisdom of God the fine linen which Joseph brought held an important place, for it became the evidence of Christ's resurrection. When John saw the linen cloths lying in the tomb we are told that "he saw and believed", John 20: 8. The very way in which the linen cloths were lying was the proof of resurrection. What he saw convinced him that the Lord would not return to the condition in which they had known Him, and in which He had been made sin and had died and been buried. The "fine linen" represented that condition — a condition absolutely holy and perfect in every way, and divinely suitable to all that was accomplished in it, but "according" to flesh, and therefore a condition in which Christ would be known no longer. They must now look to see Him in a new condition, the First-fruits of the resurrection harvest. His burial was a necessary step on the way to this, and hence its importance in the unfolding of God's ways in Christ.

THE TWO PRODIGALS

Deuteronomy 21:18 - 23; Luke 15:11 - 24

There is a striking contrast between these two scriptures — between the prodigal who got exactly what he deserved, and the prodigal who got what he never deserved at all.

One of these two men represents each of us, for each one will either receive in righteous judgment exactly what he deserves at the hand of God, or as a penitent recipient of grace he will get blessing measured, not by his deserts, but by the love of God.

Suppose you get what you deserve, have you thought what it, will be? Perhaps you suggest that God is merciful. I do not see any trace of it in the first scripture I read. "All the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die". If a man is to be treated as he deserves, he must not talk of mercy — it is a question of justice. Are you prepared to meet "the righteous judgment of God", and to have your deserts awarded by that holy tribunal?

God has declared that "out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness" (Mark 7: 21 - 23). You may depend upon it that God knows your heart thoroughly. It is easy enough to keep up appearances before men, but God searches the heart, and knows what is there. Woe be to such a sinner, if he gets what he deserves! The eye of God searches out all the evil of your heart, and in a coming day He will judge "the secrets of men".

Every person who stands at the great white throne will get

EXACTLY WHAT HE DESERVES.

Think of the dread day in which you will be raised again to stand before God, that you may receive in holy judgment all that you deserve. Is it not a terror-striking prospect for your conscience? I know that this is a day when these things are thrust into the background, but it is a tremendous reality that there is righteous judgment with God. Take care how you brave it!

In Luke 15 we learn that all the love of God's heart is for a poor wretch who deserves

NOTHING BUT JUDGMENT.

At the end of chapter 14 the Lord told out in the plainest terms the condition of fallen men. Man created in innocence was good salt; but, alas! the salt has lost its savour, and is "neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill" — fallen man is good for nothing. Having declared this, the Lord added, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear", and we are told that "then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him". It was a congregation prepared to own the truth as to their good-for-nothing condition that gathered round the Lord, and heard from His lips the unfolding of this matchless grace.

The younger son was willing to take all he could get from his father, and then wanted to have nothing more to do with him. We owe our health, strength,

faculties, abilities, means, and everything, that constitutes our fortune, to God; but how are we using our "portion of goods"?

Every unconverted man is afraid to trust God with his happiness; he prefers the far country to the Father's house. The thought in his mind is that he would be a loser by turning to God. What wretched pride is this! Indeed, it is the very essence of the serpent's poison first instilled into man's heart in the garden of Eden. The serpent's suggestion to Eve was, that God was withholding some good — in other words, that man could do better for himself than God was willing to do for him. The prodigal broke away in independence of will, and set up on his own account, and this is just what man has done, and each one of us in particular. "We have turned every one to his own way".

Having got away from his father, the prodigal set about to enjoy himself, and it is in one way or another, the object of every unconverted man to make himself happy; and this, regardless of the thought that he is doing so at God's expense.

Remember, you are responsible to God for every moment of a life that can only be rightly spent for His glory.

But in gratifying himself the younger son became poorer every day, and thus it is with you.

YOUR FORTUNE IS GOING FAST.

How soon you will be reduced to the poverty of a shroud! And even with all the resources of health and wealth, man gets poorer every day, because things lose their power to satisfy his heart. There was probably a moment in your history when a penny rattle would have made you perfectly happy, but a thousand pounds would not do it today. You are poorer, and you know it.

Look at Solomon with all the world's resources at his command, and yet compelled to say, "All is vanity!" A man of the world had to declare —

> "My days are in the yellow leaf,
> The flowers and fruits of life are gone,
> The worm, the canker, and the grief
> Are mine alone!"

That is what I call poverty. Queen Elizabeth reached its awful depths when she cried in her death-agony, "Millions of money for a moment of time!" There is a terrible picture of irremediable poverty in Luke 16 — poverty of the deepest

kind, where a millionaire's wealth could not buy one drop of water to cool his tongue.

Thank God! if you reach the moment of poverty now, you may be eternally enriched by His wondrous grace. An old writer has said, "Free grace is a harbour that no vessel ever puts into unless driven to it".

It is a fine moment when a man comes to the end of all his resources, and must needs turn to God. "He came to himself", and the first sign of it is that he thinks of his father. "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough to spare, and I perish with hunger!" Note those words,

"ENOUGH AND TO SPARE".

The first glimpse of light from God in our souls, is the thought that we may count upon His goodness. "I am worthless, but there is goodness in the heart of God even for a wretch like me. There is bread 'to spare', even for me".

How blessed to find that the God we have dreaded, and of whom we have thought that He wanted more from us than we could render, is waiting in infinite love for us to turn to Him for blessing! "I will arise", says the prodigal, "and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants". Much of this is most touching and appropriate, but the last clause spoils it. It looks like humility, but in truth it is wretched pride, for it contains the assumption that he was worthy to be a hired servant. He was as little worthy to be a hired servant as he was to be a son. When people talk of hoping to be worthy of a place just inside the door, it is simply pride of heart and self-deception. If you get what you deserve it will be the lake of fire, and nothing else.

Look at this wonderful picture of grace! "When he was yet a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him". Footsore, heart-sick, and empty-handed he comes — his confession yet unmade — and it is enough for the father. His only qualification for favour was that he had his face turned to the father, and that was sufficient. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that *repenteth*".

We hear nothing about being a hired servant after this. The father's embrace squeezed that last bit of pride out of his heart. In the presence of such grace he could only take the ground that he deserved nothing — not even to be a hired servant — and allow unmerited love to have its own wondrous way with him.

The best robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf killed, and the merriment that fills the house, all express the wealth and joy of God in the riches of grace which He lavishes upon the repenting sinner. What a lovely picture! None could have told it out but the One who perfectly knew the heart of God. Do you believe that it is a true picture? Have you made this grace your own?

But is it not somewhat of a mystery that a vile and worthless sinner should have such a reception with God?

WHERE IS JUSTICE?

Where are holiness and truth? Well, be sure of this, that not one jot or tittle of the holy claims of God's majesty has had to be set aside to make way for such a result.

The closing verses of Deuteronomy 21 bring the cross before us. "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, *and thou hang him on a tree*: his body shall not remain all night upon the tree". It is at the cross of Christ that all the prodigal's deserts have been unsparingly meted out. There the obedient and devoted One stood in the sinner's place, and was made "sin" and "a curse" for us. He was forsaken of God, He drank the bitter cup of judgment to its dregs, and thus God has been glorified in righteousness, so that He is righteously free to take the prodigal into boundless favour.

God has raised Christ from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand. He there lives — glory-crowned — to the delight of God's heart, and on the ground of His work God is receiving prodigals into the favour and acceptance of which He alone is worthy. This is the key to Luke 15. You must have life, righteousness, and acceptance in CHRIST, or be for ever lost.

CHRIST AS LIFTED UP AND BURIED (CAC 29)

John 3:14 - 16; John 8:28; John 12:32, 33; John 19:38 - 42 Colossians 2:12; Deuteronomy 21:22,23

There is great spiritual gain in the consideration of our Lord Jesus Christ in every aspect in which Scripture presents Him to the view of faith; and the above scriptures call our attention to Him as being lifted up and being buried. The Spirit of God has linked the two thoughts together in Deuteronomy 21:22, 23. Being hanged on a tree refers to one as "lifted up", and the thought of burial is closely connected with this.

When the Son of man spoke of being lifted up He referred to the particular manner in which He was about to die. Death by crucifixion involved being held up to view as one worthy of death, and, indeed, seen publicly as having become a curse, "for he that is hanged is a curse of God". Two of the most profound statements in Scripture are found in Galatians 3:13 and 2 Corinthians 5:21: "Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is every one hanged upon a tree" and "Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us". One is the great redeeming act of Christ in love to those under curse; He became a curse; the other is the wondrous act of God having in view His purpose that we should become His righteousness in Christ. The Son of man as lifted up was publicly seen to be in the place of sin and curse, but it is our peace and joy to know that He was not there on His own account at all, but in divine love on behalf of those who were under sin and death. His lifting up, as referred to in John 3:14, was on God's part as given in love, that eternal life might be brought in and become the portion of those who were under sin and death.

The "serpent" being lifted up shows that God had in mind the original source of evil. In the lifting up of the Son of man the principle of evil which originated in the serpent was judged. It was judged in man in such a way that its judgment has become favourable towards men as a righteous ground of blessing. The serpent does not benefit by the lifting up of the Son of man, but it has become the way of infinite good to those whom he deceived and brought into transgression.

The state in which man was before God was publicly set forth in the Son of man lifted up. But this testimony comes to men in the way of grace, for the One who has been lifted up in the place of sin was there as the great manifestation of divine love. This is brought into the view of all; it comes within sight for the whole creation under heaven. Attention is called, in the lifting up, to the publicity of it; it is a great universal testimony. The object of

gospel preaching is to make men see that they are concerned in this great matter.

In John 8:28 it is "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". The lifting up in chapter 3 is on God's part in love; but in chapter 8 it is what men do, "When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man". Men fully exposed their own state when they put that blessed One to an open shame. He had done nothing but good. We are told that they "sought false witness against Jesus, so that they might put him to death". If they had wanted true witnesses they would have had no difficulty in finding them. They might have called Lazarus and Bartimaeus and Mary Magdalene and many cleansed lepers and once-blind men who could now see; they might have called many who had heard from His lips mighty words of healing and forgiveness. There was, indeed, the fullest testimony available that the blessed light of God revealed in supreme grace was there, but in lifting Him up men rejected it all in a shameful way; they put Him to public dishonour. In this great and solemn act the whole state of the world, and of man's heart, has come out. But every one who took part in that act will be made to know that all He said was of the Father, and that the Father was with Him. It is most certainly true that those who put Jesus, or even His feeble representatives, in the place of shame and reproach, will be made to know what they have done.

In John 12:32 we pass over to another side of this matter, and we see God's great design in it, and that He brings it to pass notwithstanding what is true of man. "And I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all to me". He becomes, as lifted up out of the earth, a divine centre of attraction. His death has given Him a prominence, a place of advantage in relation to men universally, which He did not have before He was lifted up. As on the earth He said, "I have not been sent save to the lost sheep of Israel's house", Matthew 15:24, but as lifted up out of the earth He draws all to Him. The particular kind of death that He should die was designed by infinite wisdom, so that He should not die on the earth, but as lifted up out of it. It is important that, when speaking of the death of Christ, we should lay stress on the kind of death that He died. It was the death of crucifixion, so that He died as lifted up out of the earth. As in that position He was outside all limitations; He can draw all to Him. He has died in a way that was designed of God to set forth that it was the divine intent that He should come within the view of all. His death, in this sense, has given Him a wonderful elevation, so that all the ends of the earth can look unto Him and be saved, He can draw all to Him. The divine gathering centre to which all must come for blessing is not any place or person on earth, but One lifted up out of the earth. This is the blessed way

which divine love has taken to draw men away from a world fully exposed as having nothing in common with God. All the work of grace during the last two thousand years has been the drawing of men to Christ as the One lifted up. This is still the public position, and the testimony of God as announced to men.

In the light of this we can see how important the cross is as the universal testimony of God to men. Paul and John are in perfect harmony as to this. Paul came to the Corinthians announcing the testimony of God, and he said, "I did not judge it well to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified", 1 Corinthians 2:2. The great thing in preaching is "that the cross of the Christ may not be made vain"; that is, emptied of its true meaning. There is wonderful meaning in the lifting up of Christ on the cross, and its real force is to be brought home to men. "The word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to us that are saved it is God's power". Christ crucified is "to Jews an offence, and to nations foolishness; but to those that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ God's power and God's wisdom", 1 Corinthians 1:23, 24. When this testimony comes to men "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" it brings them clean out of the world. It is a testimony that can only be truly presented in spiritual power; hence Paul came to Corinth in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, not that he was afraid of the Corinthians, but he feared lest some element of human wisdom should come in to mar his service.

We gather, further, from Deuteronomy 21:23, that one who has been publicly exposed, as become a curse, is viewed as a defilement to the land. Hence it is written, "thou shalt in any wise bury him that day ... thou shalt not defile thy land". No doubt it was as having this scripture in mind that the Jews were anxious that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, John 19:31. But there is divine instruction in the ordinance, and it gives the burial of the Lord an important place. As having been identified with sin and curse — as bearing it vicariously — the burial of the Lord was necessary that the very condition in which He was made sin might pass completely out of sight. So long as He was exposed upon the cross what was in public evidence was One in the place of sin and curse. His death did not remove Him from that position publicly, but His burial did, and He never reappeared in the condition in which He was made sin. The condition which He had taken up as coming into holy manhood, in which He could bear sin and die, went out of sight when He was buried, and as raised from the dead He is in a new condition to which neither sin nor death could ever be attached. Viewing this matter in the light of Deuteronomy 21:23 we can understand why the burial of Christ is included in the glad tidings which Paul preached, 1 Corinthians 15:4. The condition in

which Christ was made sin went out of God's sight in His burial, and this is of immense importance when we consider all its consequences in their bearing on those who love Him. Burial is viewed in Deuteronomy 21:23 as removing defilement from the land. When seven of Saul's descendants were hanged before Jehovah for his sin against the Gibeonites, it was when they had been buried we are told, "afterwards God was propitious to the land", 2 Samuel 21:14. The sentence having been executed, and the condition in which it was executed having been removed from God's sight in burial, the matter was righteously ended. The Christ on whom we have believed is One who has not only died, but who was also buried.

It is well to bear in mind that when the Spirit of God by Paul draws attention to Christ as descending, He does not stop short of burial. For His burial is clearly the full depth of His descent according to Ephesians 4:9, 10. "But that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens, that he might fill all things". Paul is led to speak of this by thinking of Him as ascended on high according to Psalm 68:18. His having ascended implied that He had descended, and the depth of His descent was "into the lower parts of the earth". This is in keeping with the Lord's own words, "For even as Jonas was in the belly of the great fish three days and three nights, thus shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights", Matthew 12:40. He descended from the place that was ever His in eternal Deity not only to the cross but to the grave. He descended in the strength of His love to the lower parts of the earth; we get the full measure of His descent as we take in the thought of His burial. Mary of Bethany seems to have been the only one of His disciples who had His burial definitely in view. She was in concert with His mind in this. In anointing His body for burial she showed that the full depth of His descent in love was before her heart. But in doing it "beforehand" she made manifest that she had no thought of His remaining in the tomb. Her pound of costly ointment was put upon Him in view of His burial, but it was done "beforehand" because her heart understood that He would not be available for anointing after His death. The greatness of His divine Person was before her: if such a Person descended to burial it was impossible that He should remain there; He must, as He Himself had said, ascend up where He was before, John 6:62. The descending and the ascending are equal, for it is the same Person who does both. In ascending up above all the heavens He went to "where he was before". But He went in a new condition, for He ascended as Man "that he might fill all things". No scripture could more clearly establish His Deity. No wonder that Mary's heart was filled as in the spirit of adoration she anointed the feet of Jesus! As

regarded in the light of Ephesians 4:9, 10, we could not think of any creature anointing His head. Adoration at the feet of such a Person is the only right attitude.

In Mark's gospel the setting of the incident is different. The woman is not named, and we are told that she had "an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly; and having broken the alabaster flask, she poured it out upon his head", Mark 14:3. Our attention is called in this scripture to the vessel in which the ointment was, and to the fact that it was broken. As seen in Simon the leper's house the Lord would be viewed as known in the midst of Israel. *He* was the blessed Person in whom everything that was precious to God was found, and the woman, as divinely taught, understood that His path of service was to lead Him into death. It was what her affections had gathered up as a result of what she had seen and heard. He was God's Anointed to carry out all His will, the One in whom every promise would be fulfilled. He is viewed in Mark as the great Servant of divine pleasure, and, in keeping with a view of Him in the greatness that attached to Him officially by God's appointment, the woman poured out her ointment upon His head.

In John the vessel is not mentioned, but we are told that "Mary therefore, having taken a pound of ointment of pure nard of great price, anointed the feet of Jesus". I believe that in the setting of this gospel the Spirit of God would lead us to regard Mary herself as the vessel. She had stored up in affectionate appreciation, a wealthy knowledge of One who was so great personally that He had descended from Godhead's fullest glory that He might go down to the lower parts of the earth. He was descending to burial, and He took account of her as having kept her ointment for the day of His preparation for burial. One who could so descend must necessarily ascend up where He was before, and regarded thus in His personal greatness it is fitting that His feet should be anointed and not His head.

It is important to notice that the reference to the Lord descending into the lower parts of the earth is in the epistle to the Ephesians, for that epistle gives us the full height of things, and also the full depth. Indeed, we have the "depth and height" particularly mentioned in it, chapter 3:18. "The lower parts of the earth" must be understood as indicating where the might of God's strength wrought in the Christ, as we read in Ephesians 1:19, 20. The apostle prays that we may know "the surpassing greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of the might of his strength, in which he wrought in the Christ in raising him from among the dead". The mighty power of God acted in those "lower parts of the earth" into which Christ had descended in love, so that His burial really took Him to the point which would

witness to the fullest expression of the might of God's strength. I do not know that we have anywhere else in Scripture such an accumulation of words descriptive of divine power, and they impress upon us the greatness of the power that operated in the raising of Christ from among the dead. They give a very solemn impression of the tremendous power that is necessary to effect resurrection. The Lord being found, in infinite grace, among the dead gave occasion for that power to be exercised. His burial brought Him to that low point where the surpassing greatness of God's power could be known, and known in a way that is "towards us who believe". As buried, the Lord is viewed as having come under the whole weight of what rested on us, and the surpassing greatness of God's power came in and raised Him from that point. Love descended to that point, but the might of God's strength came in to raise Him. The love in which He descended was towards us, and the power that raised Him is towards us also. The whole matter had in view God's wondrous purposes of love in regard to us.

The resurrection of Christ is a far greater expression of divine power than creation. In creation God spake and it was done. There is no suggestion of any extraordinary exertion of divine power in creation, but the words used in Ephesians 1:19 do suggest the exercise of extraordinary power on God's part. God would have us to ponder this. It is necessary that He should give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him so that we may know this power, and understand that it is "towards us who believe". But the fact that Paul prayed for it for the saints is evidence that God is willing to give us this enlightenment.

A further result of the burial of Christ is its bearing on those who love Him. We are never to forget that He has been buried here, and that His burial was a matter that brought into activity the affections of His lovers. The world that lifted Him up was not allowed to make provision for His burial. Men did indeed appoint His grave with the wicked, but God would not allow that appointment to stand. In retaining the Lord's burial in the hands of lovers it seems as though God would say to every lover of Christ, This is a matter for you to be concerned about; how do your affections move in regard to it? We have seen how Mary's affections moved in relation to His burial, and in Joseph of Arimathaea we see one who took up publicly and wholeheartedly the position of identification with Christ in burial. This was his great privilege, but it is the privilege of all lovers of Christ, and therefore he may be regarded as representative of them all in this character. And there is special instruction in the experience of Joseph, for, though a disciple, he had not been publicly identified with the Lord before. What hindered him is the very thing that

hinders us, and God would show us how he got free from his hindrance so that we might get free in the same way.

He had been "a disciple of Jesus, but secretly through fear of the Jews". There had been with him, as with us all, a shrinking from reproach and suffering, and a desire for the easy path. He had not known what it was to see the body of the flesh cut off, but I believe he had been circumcised in a spiritual sense between the time when he was a secret disciple and the time when he "demanded of Pilate that he might take the body of Jesus". In the meantime "the circumcision of the Christ" (Colossians 2:11), had taken place. Christ after the flesh had been cut off, and if *He* had been cut off, how could any lover of His desire to retain status as in the flesh? In the solemn hour of the death of Christ Joseph was "circumcised with circumcision not done by hand, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ", Colossians 2:11, and he put off, in a spiritual sense, the whole body of the flesh, and with it his unbelieving fears, and his desire to retain a religious place here. He was prepared now for identification with Christ in burial. *Demanding* the body of Jesus was claiming a right to it. His love demanded the privilege of identification with Christ in connection with His burial. The tomb was Joseph's "new tomb which he had hewn in the rock" and when he put the body of Jesus in it, I think we may say that, in a spiritual sense, he put himself there, as represented in the Person of the One who had died for him. I cannot think that he was ever seen in the council again, nor that he was ever again identified with the religious doings of the priests and others who had consulted and accomplished the death of Christ. He was henceforth a buried man to all that. His going down to burial was a movement of love on his part, and it is a movement which we all have to make if we are to know the true meaning of being "buried with him in baptism".

It is evident that Joseph had had the thought of burial before him, for he had hewn out for himself a sepulchre in the rock. God had led his thoughts that way in view of the burial of Christ. His tomb was one of the things — like the colt and the guest-chamber — specially provided and reserved for the Lord. The sepulchre being in "the rock" suggested that the idea of burial was to have a permanent place in christianity. The Lord Himself was to be there only for three days and three nights, but the thought of burial was to be permanent, for it is an abiding truth in christianity that His lovers are buried with Him (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12). The Ethiopian eunuch was prepared for burial with Christ, when he said, "what hinders my being baptised?" It was the demand of a good conscience (1 Peter 3:21), in keeping with Joseph's demand to have the body of Jesus for burial. The Lord went finally out of this world by burial, and His grave is left "hewn in the rock" as a permanent spot

for love to occupy, in a spiritual sense, as soon as there is a readiness to do so. Ruth said to Naomi, "where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried". How this tests us as to whether we are really prepared to go down out of the life of this world! Paul asks the Colossians, "Why as if alive in the world do ye subject yourselves to ordinances?" They were in danger of following the injunctions and teachings of men, and entertaining religious and philosophic thoughts which all belong to this world. We descend altogether out of that area when we go down in affection to burial with Christ.

It is helpful to see the steps by which believers are led to correspondence with Christ, as "complete (or filled full) in him". Those who are filled full in Christ certainly have no need to retain, as of value, anything connected with "the body of the flesh". So that, as a second step, they can afford to accept circumcision. Then, third, they come to the truth of burial with Christ in baptism. All this being on the way to a fourth step in apprehension that "ye have been also raised with him through faith of the working of God who raised him from among the dead", Colossians 2:9 - 12.

In the interval between the lifting up of Christ on the cross and His resurrection by the mighty power of God on the third day, it seems to me that Joseph of Arimathaea was acting spiritually in accord with the mind of God at the moment. The women, we are told in Mark's gospel, "bought aromatic spices that they might come and embalm him". Nothing could have been more unnecessary under the circumstances, or less in keeping with the great spiritual truth of the moment. The Scriptures might have assured them that He would not see corruption, and He had spoken again and again of rising the third day. Persons are embalmed because it is expected that they will long remain in death! The great and important truth of the moment was that He was about to be seen as the Risen One. With regard to Nicodemus and his hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, the Spirit of God is careful to tell us that it was "as it is the custom with the Jews to prepare for burial". *Their* doings, particularly as referred to in John's gospel, are not marked by spirituality. We are perhaps much more influenced than we think by customs current, or that have been current, in the religious world. But spirituality is needed for the apprehension of what is suitable to the Lord at any particular moment; affection and devotion are not sufficient. Human sentiment, even of the choicest kind, tends to obscure what is spiritual. One would desire that there might be much more devotion to the Lord with all of us who believe on Him, but also that there might be more ability to honour Him in a truly spiritual way.

Joseph brought no spices, but he "bought fine linen, and having taken him down, he swathed him in the fine linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was

cut out of rock". Mark 15:46. I have no doubt the "fine linen" represented his apprehension of the Lord Jesus as having been here in holy flesh for the accomplishment of the will of God. But the very condition in which He had been here, and in which He had accomplished all for the glory of God, was now to disappear from view in the tomb. Christ according to flesh not only died, but was buried. And when He reappeared to His own in resurrection it was in a new condition. How much we need to ponder those words of Paul: "So that we henceforth know no one according to flesh; but if even we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know him thus no longer". 2 Corinthians 5:16. This great truth lies at the root of Christianity. The Christ in whom we are is One who, according to flesh, has died and been buried. He has been raised in a new condition which never had, and never can have, any link with the life of the world. "So if any one be in Christ, there is a new creation". Nothing is more important for Christians to understand.

In the wisdom of God the fine linen which Joseph bought held an important place, for it became the evidence of Christ's resurrection. When John saw the linen cloths lying in the tomb we are told that "he saw and believed", John 20:8. The very way in which the linen cloths were lying was the proof of resurrection. What he saw convinced him that the Lord would not return to the condition in which they had known Him, and in which He had been made sin and had died and been buried. The "fine linen" represented that condition — a condition absolutely holy and perfect in every way, and divinely suitable to all that was accomplished in it, but "according" to flesh, and therefore a condition in which Christ would be known no longer. They must now look to see Him in a new condition, the First-fruits of the resurrection harvest. His burial was a necessary step on the way to this, and hence its importance in the unfolding of God's ways in Christ.

NOTES OF READINGS ON DEUTERONOMY (5) (JT 7)

Deuteronomy 21

JT If the chapters that follow upon chapter 16 are carefully examined, it will be noticed that there is great consideration for God, and for Christ, and for the priests and Levites, and for men in general. Now, if we apply this to Christianity it shows that the fully developed Christian state ensures all this. The believer is free with God, and he has consideration for others. You have the thought of a man going to war. There was to be due consideration for those whose responsibility it was to go to war.

JM What we get in chapter 16 really provides the state for this.

JT It might, perhaps, help to point out the things which are in that chapter, upon which we dwelt last night. It presents to us in type what Christ is to the soul, as delivering it out of Egypt through His death; and then the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost, bringing in what He is in heaven; and finally the future enjoyment of what we shall have in His presence. The soul is established in that light. It is the past, the present, and the future. One is free from anxiety in one's soul, and in that way we are able to consider for the good of others. No doubt the Lord Himself is in view in Deuteronomy 20, as the One who would go to war. As having the assembly He is exempt for a year, so to speak. Thus there is consideration for Him.

TMG What is the force of being exempt for a year?

JT I think it refers to Christ. He has the assembly now, and the believer is sympathetic with Him in that. There is due consideration for the marriage relationship.

JM The assembly is in that relationship with Christ.

JT Yes; it says in Deuteronomy 20:7, "What man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her". And in verse 5, "What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it".

TMG Let him get the good of his house now, and the good of his wife now.

JT Yes and the believer recognises that. The conflict must not interfere with the enjoyment of the blessings vouchsafed by God in the land.

JM How does consideration for others show itself in the saints?

JT I think it is seen in a man whose soul is in liberty; he is free from himself. In a certain sense it is right to consider for yourself until you are entirely clear; and when you are clear, then it is that you stand forth in the scene of God's operations, as sympathetic with Him in all that He is doing.

TMG You are sympathetic with Him in His interests.

JT Yes; so that everyone gets his due. You have a right judgment about things; you are not legal, nor circumscribed; you are spiritually broad.

JM I suppose all that was seen in Christ when He was here He considered for God.

JT Yes. Every right object, and every right relation, had due consideration from Christ.

WK "Render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's". Matthew 22:21. We see the principle in that.

JT It is intelligence in love, so that all receive due consideration from you, and you are a benefactor.

WH You are brought to that in your spiritual stature, so that you are free to consider everything according to God.

TMG And that is what we have had in the previous part of this book; we are brought up to that, so to speak.

JT Yes, I think too much stress cannot be laid on chapter 16, because it shows a fully developed state of soul. These chapters present certain sets of circumstances in which the delivered one is seen acting, and moving, and judging. Nothing comes within his range that he has not a right judgment about; he has spiritual observance; he is not unbalanced. It is remarkable how in Deuteronomy the minutest thing is taken account of; a bird's egg, for instance.

JM And it is only a spiritual man who has a true judgment of everything.

JT Yes; the more you are with God, the more sympathetic you are; without Him a sparrow does not fall to the ground.

WH I suppose the way a spiritual man would prove everything would be according to the truth; whereas everything in the world is out of gear, and unreliable.

JT Yes, you have a true estimate of everything; but then your heart is in it; you are not above sympathy even with the lower creation. But it especially works out in Christians in their relations with one another; we consider for God

we consider for Christ; for the priests, and for the Levites and indeed for everything in God's creation. We all have to admit how unbalanced we are, and how much we are affected by natural considerations. We get affected by things here. Astronomers find out where certain bodies are by their influences on other bodies. And there are so many influences which unbalance *us*. Deuteronomy 16 presents what produces a fully balanced man; he has all his sense exercised; and if a man has all his senses exercised, he is balanced.

WK He that is spiritual discerneth all things.

WH But he has to be vigilant as to every principle in himself which might arise.

JT Yes, otherwise he becomes beclouded. Natural considerations are, you will find, very largely the cause of a great deal of difficulty. You may call them harmless, but no matter how praiseworthy they may be, from another point of view natural things are sure to influence us unduly. As the Lord said that, a man has to deny himself daily; that is, that you have to deny natural considerations.

WH It is not a question of natural things being bad in a natural point of view, but of what is opposed to following Christ.

JT Yes; what is natural is to give way to what is spiritual. Hence a man is to hate "his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also". Luke 14:26. That is a remarkable thing to be said; it puts the natural outside the door for the moment so to speak, but after the spiritual has been fully established, *it* comes in in its place.

WK But on another basis.

JT Quite so; when Christ has His place in the heart, then the natural gets its right place; and you will find that that will extend even to your animals, or anything that belongs to you.

SL Is not that a beautiful verse in connection with what you say: "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk", Deuteronomy 14: 21.

JT Yes, that shows how fully every right natural feeling is considered for by God, therefore by the spiritual.

WK A merciful man regardeth the life of his beast.

JM There is nothing inconsiderate, or unseemly in Christianity.

JT No; but, for the moment, while the spiritual structure is being set up and established, the natural is ignored.

WK What are we to get out of chapter 21?

JT Well, I think the first great point is what we have heard so much about, "local responsibility". Whilst a man is very broad in his vision and sympathies, and the house of God is universal, nevertheless he cannot ignore his local responsibility.

WK This is fairly clear here.

JT Yes, and especially if in the locality there is any dishonour, or persecution, in regard of Christ.

WK The point here seems to be the *location* of it.

JT Yes, the location of responsibility.

WH The elders of the city that is next unto the slain man wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley.

JT Yes, responsibility belongs to the place nearest to that where the crime was committed.

WK Hence they measured it.

JT It is one of the most remarkable chapters in Scripture in the light of establishing what is rightly called "local responsibility".

PL Then that would exclude any other city having to do with it?

JT Yes. It is the city that is nearest to it.

W.K. Morally nearest?

JT And I suppose geographically too. If it be a question of moral nearness, the saint who loves you most, wherever he lives, would be nearest to you. But the idea of geography is not ignored even in the New Testament. It says: "All that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord". 1 Corinthians 1:2. That surely has a reference to geographical position.

WK I suppose the epistles, both those of Paul and John, to the churches recognise geography.

JT Quite so; and geography that man has regulated too.

TMG Would you kindly make a little plainer what you understand by all this.

JT Well, it says; "If one be found slain in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field and it be not known who hath slain him; then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain and it shall be that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an

heifer". Deuteronomy 21: 1 - 3. There is clearly the question of locality. So that the responsible party is distinctly located.

WK And then they are bound to clear themselves.

JT Yes; therefore if evil occurs, it always affects Christ; the slain man undoubtedly typifies the death of Christ. Dispensationally the passage refers to the Jews; but it emphasises the thought of local responsibility. Wherever anything occurs that dishonours Christ, those nearest to it have the special responsibility of it.

WH So that they would have divine authority to take it up and inquire into it.

WK Provided always that they have spiritual capacity to do so.

JT Well, as you have it here, there was the acknowledgment that someone did it, and the matter it taken up. In Christianity we are all responsible. You cannot say you are not. Achan had sinned, but that involved that *Israel* had sinned.

WH The Spirit puts it that way, that Israel had sinned.

JT Yes the fact is, that something has happened against Christ here; it was, that He was put to death; He was murdered; innocent blood was shed; there is really no other *innocent* blood but His. However little or much guilt there may be in an ordinary case, it is against Christ, and no true lover of Christ will feel indifferent about it. I believe the real cause of protracted difficulties in localities is because the responsibility is not accepted by those to whom it belongs.

EM Are we responsible in the sense that if we were fulfilling our obligations to one another we might act as a preservative?

JT I think when some evil has occurred, the first thing is for some saints in the locality to accept the fact that it has occurred, and they are obviously the responsible ones. But then if it should be a case where the local company becomes disorganised, or divided; what then? The responsibility becomes more extended. The real secret of the prolongation of these difficulties lies in the fact that the guilt is not accepted as belonging to *all*.

WK You mean not accepted generally?

JT If the locality does not deal with it, the direct responsibility becomes more extended.

TMG It should imply us all in a way.

JT Yes. The city is responsible, so the elders of it come forward. Then there is to be the sacrifice in connection with the priesthood. If we have a true sense of these things, the due recognition of the guilt, that Christ had to die for it, and the priestly state in regard to it, you may depend there will be recovery. It says, "The elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared, nor sown, and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley. And the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near; for them the Lord thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the Lord; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried". Deuteronomy 21:4,5. So that recovery is really in connection with the priestly state.

JM And there would be the full acceptance of the thing to begin with.

JT Yes, the elders accept it.

JM They took it home to themselves and owned it.

TMG It is the principle of eating the sin offering in the holy place.

JT Yes. The elders represent the people. The great difficulty lies in the want of acknowledgment, where there is an avowal on our part that the guilt is there, where there is that acknowledgment, you will always find priestly state.

WH So that there will be healing; otherwise the trouble extends.

JT Yes; and there is priestly judgment. You see how all that is bound up in verse 5; "The priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near; for them the Lord thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the Lord; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried". Deuteronomy 21:5. That is the priestly service in both its branches. The priest has title to draw near to God; but then also his function is to bless; and then further, "By their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried". Deuteronomy 21:5.

TMG All depends upon a priestly state.

JT Yes, the priest is supposed to be there.

Ques Do you mean in the local company?

JT Very often where these difficulties have occurred the door for priestly ministry has been closed, and left closed. Now, the divine thought is to introduce priestly intervention. You see the idea of local responsibility implies that there is a neighbour. But to do the part of a neighbour one must have the oil and the wine, spiritually.

TMG We should try to help in the Spirit of Christ.

Ques In the beginning of Revelation do we get the same thought of responsibility in connection with the angel?

JT The angel is representation; and representation in responsibility. It would be more the elders here.

TMG If there was the priestly state, and the grace, and the priestly intercession so to speak, there would be recovery.

JMcF Is this the way an assembly is to clear itself if any evil breaks out?

JT Yes, that is what I thought.

WK Then how would you apply the terms and the figures that are here used, to the assembly clearing itself.

JT Well, the assembly is, so to speak, the city, and the elders are the responsible element in it, but, of course, no one would claim to be irresponsible from the Christian point of view.

WK You do not leave it to the committee.

JT Exactly; that is what I mean. You often find it is left to a committee, so to speak, and the idea is that that clears me of responsibility. Then secondly, you have the sacrifice: you have the heifer. The heifer had never borne the yoke; that is the Lord had never come under human influences. You may depend upon it that the secret of all evil is human influence; that is how crime happens. Now the Lord Jesus was infinitely free from all that. We have to come to the acknowledgment that really the principles of the world have influenced us. The heifer was entirely free from the yoke; that means that those who committed the crime were not free. If the heifer had not been free from the yoke she could not have been sacrificed. That is to say, the Lord Jesus is perfectly spotless, perfectly free from human influences, and was a perfect sacrifice.

EM It is in a barren place that the heifer is killed.

JT Yes; it is Christ in relation to the creation, taken up abstractly as never influenced by man. The ground we walk on, the moral conditions around us, all are affected by man. But Christ was absolutely free from the principles of the world, so He is in that way fit to be the spotless sacrifice.

JM There would be the force of all that coming home to the soul of an elder; what that blessed One, who was free from every taint of human influence, had to undergo.

JT Quite so. The sin has arisen from the allowance of worldly principles. That is what brings it about.

EM Is this the owning of it together before the Lord?

JT I think so, in connection with the priestly state.

JM One feels the importance of what is set forth in chapter 18 being understood first, to enable us to enter into what we have in this chapter.

JT It shows, that God is reverting back in the sacrifice of the heifer, the kind of sacrifice she was, and the ground on which sacrificed, to things as He created them. That is to say, all that man has brought into the world has to be blotted out; and we are to endeavour to maintain that. I believe all that man has done, every trace of his invention, all is to be effaced; and we have to come to that in the spirit of our minds. We are so accustomed to what man has brought in that we think lightly of it; but God does not think lightly of it.

WW If in a town, or city, everything breaks up, what would the result be? Would it be that those who would be geographically nearest to it would have to take the matter up.

JT They might have to take it up; but they would have to recognise the responsibility in that locality, remained in it. If there is one saint there, responsibility remains, and the Lord holds him responsible in that locality. If you profess to be a neighbour, then act in a neighbourly way; and you must have the oil and the wine to do that. Hence the priesthood here. The responsibility is there; and the addresses to the seven churches make that clear. In spite of the breakdown of the churches in Revelation 2 and 3, the angel is recognised in each, and he was held responsible. The angel of the church at Ephesus was not held responsible for the church at Smyrna; and the angel of the church at Smyrna was not responsible for the church at Pergamos. But then there is the thought of a neighbour; but to do the part of a neighbour requires the priestly state.

WW Well, let us suppose everything was divided up here; the oil and wine would be found in the nearest meeting?

JT But you must fully recognise that the responsibility is here just as much as before the difficulty occurred. I think it is a very great question the Lord has raised in recent years.

RL The nearest meeting would be responsible to take up the question, as set forth here, and judge it before the Lord, before they touch it.

JT You use the word "judge" I suppose advisedly. But I think it is well to bear in mind that the priests also bless in the name of Jehovah.

RL They get right before the Lord, and they seek to set others right.

JT The priests not only judge, they bless in the name of Jehovah.

TMG That brings in Luke 10.

JT Yes. "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing". 1 Peter 3:9. There is positive power there.

TMG They must take the matter up as if it were their own; but they must also recognise that the responsibility rests with those *where* it has occurred.

JT Yes. Cursed is he that removeth his neighbour's landmark; you get that in Deuteronomy 27:17. It is a very strong expression that. He is your neighbour, but still he has his landmark that you cannot transgress.

Ques As to the responsibility in connection with the meeting dealing with the trouble, are there degrees in responsibility? Is one more responsible than another? that is to say, are those who take the care more responsible than those who do not?

JT I think one is responsible according to what one has received; that is, the measure of one's responsibility is according to the measure of what one has received from the Lord. And, in another sense, it is the ground you take.

WK He gave to one ten pounds, and to another five.

JT That's right. Obviously the man who had the ten had the greater responsibility.

TMG He gave to everyone according to His own measure.

RH It is the elders that accept responsibility.

JT Yes, in the Old Testament it was so, and the principle has been brought over to the New Testament. The apostle called for the elders of Ephesus, and placed the responsibility on them. But no exercised believer would disclaim responsibility.

TMG It would not do to leave out anybody; everyone who is in the assembly is responsible.

JT I think anyone that assumes to be irresponsible has disqualified himself for the assembly.

JMcF Would you say something on what follows in the chapter?

JT Well, the time has gone, and there is a good deal in it. The Spirit proceeds to speak of Christ in regard to the assembly; and the placing of the inheritance. A very solemn thing is seen in the stubborn son, and the one who is hanged, at the end of this chapter. Israel was guilty of the death of Christ,

according to what we have been speaking of; but then the guilt is put away, and the testimony of it is presented to them. In the earlier chapters of the Acts they are held as having sinned ignorantly, and the guilt is atoned for by Christ. So that the Jews had a great opportunity, which they failed to answer to; but the assembly comes in; and I think the stubborn son is seen in the opposition of the Jew to what God was doing. The "elder son" in Luke 15 would not come into the house; he was stubborn. But then another thing comes to light, and that is, instead of him being stoned, you have Christ typically dying on the tree, as a *curse*; "cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree". Galatians 3:13.

WH At the end of the Old Testament we have the words "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse". Malachi 4:6. There was that possibility. But the New Testament brings in the blessing.

JT Yes, so that Christ was made a curse for us, as it is written "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ", Galatians 3:13, 14.

See further remarks on Deuteronomy 21 on pages 323 to 335.

CHURCH PRINCIPLES (JT 7)

Exodus 33: 7 - 11 Deuteronomy 21: 1 - 9

I thought this passage would help us in regard to fellowship. In the first passage Moses had the light of God's mind in his soul, and it was a question as to that with which he would connect it. The testimony really has a universal bearing, and what is in connection with it locally must be in accord with it. You cannot have one set of principles in one locality and another in another locality, you must have uniformity. In the second passage read we get the thought of local responsibility, in the city next to the slain man. It is not only a question of what I can connect myself with, but having the testimony of God in my soul, I am concerned as to what it can be connected with. Moses came down from the mount with the desires of God in his heart, and what was he going to do? It calls for consideration as to the persons you can connect yourself with and principles which are to govern you.

What decided Moses to take the course set before us in Exodus 33 was the knowledge he had acquired of God. He considered for God and what was suitable to God. The wonderful experience he had had with Jehovah since He first revealed Himself to him, added to the experience on the mount would greatly increase his sense of what was due to God. He had received from God on the mount communications which typically referred to Christ; so Moses would increase his sense of what was due to God, and his action was governed by that, rather than by a specific commandment.

This chapter is interesting, because it gives us the principles of God in regard to the people. You have to take the previous chapter to get the bearing of it; indeed, you have to consider the whole section beginning from chapter 25. Holiness, the law of the house, influenced Moses. He must have had a wonderful sense of what God was. The whole environment in which the communications were made affected him. In Exodus 19 your mind is impressed with the particular care with which God guards His righteousness; there was a boundary set round the mount. Of course, there are other sides to it, but God would impress upon His people what He is. Then in Exodus 24 they saw the God of Israel, and the pavement of sapphire under His feet. But Moses was received up there alone with God; for forty days he neither ate nor drank; his soul was sustained in the presence of God; that is, he was sustained outside of nature. A man like that coming down into the camp, as it was at that time, was very serious. His ear was exercised, and he discerned that it was not the voice of war, but of pleasure, in the camp; so he broke the tables; he could not bring them in there. He takes the tabernacle and pitches

it outside, indicating that there was a receptacle for the light he had in his soul. He could not connect that with the camp. The light was more to Moses than himself. These are the kind of exercises which govern us as to fellowship not only that I am in fellowship; but I have exercises as to what is of God, and the circumstances with which it is connected. We have to remember that the ark of the covenant was long without a resting-place. Every right minded Israelite would consider for that. Under Samuel and Saul it never had a resting place. That is the thing to consider for can you find circumstances suitable for the ark; suitable for Christ?

The same kind of feeling governed David when he said, "I will not give sleep to mine eyes". Psalm 132:4. He had heard of the ark at Ephratah, no doubt when he was very young; that was the controlling object of his life. It was one thing to hear about the ark, and another thing to seek a place for it. He would not sleep until he had found a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. Moses had the same sentiments. He had not had time to construct the tabernacle; the material was not available; the people had given their ornaments for idolatry; whatever tent he pitched it was provisional for the moment. The wonderful thing is that God put His approval on what he did. "The Lord spake to Moses as a man speaks to his friend". Exodus 33:11.

The tent Moses pitched became an interest to the people. Those who sought the Lord went out to it. The first consideration is the testimony and the place for it. I have thought that if we take care of the principles God will take care of the people. To have a place for the testimony you must, in Christianity, have the people; but if you look after the principles, God will look after the people. Even the putting off of their ornaments did not qualify them to have the tabernacle; the tabernacle was taken away from them. They worshipped at the door of their tents; that was not what God wanted; and those that sought Him went out. God wants us to worship at the door of His tent, and for that you must go out.

Divine principles are abiding; they are eternal; the principles we stand for will be public in the world to come. They will hold good, and will govern the people then. God's thought is that we should stand by them now. If you stand by the principles, He will look after the people. We have a seal with two sides, "Let him that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity" 2 Timothy 2:19; that is our side, that is the principle we are committed to; to withdraw from iniquity. The other side is, "The Lord knoweth them that are his". 2 Timothy 2:19. He will take care of them.

We have to see that the testimony is maintained in a clean place. That is the idea. You would not commit it to anything unclean or unsuitable. Here is a

man fresh from the presence of God; he comes into the camp which is permeated with idolatry. What does he do? The Lord did not tell him what to do, but he had principles in his heart produced by his knowledge of God. He had a great regard for what was due to God. That is what is seen in this passage. Moses had great love for the people, but he considered for God first. He called it "the tabernacle of the *congregation*". If he gave the tabernacle that name, it showed that he expected the congregation. The second epistle to Timothy is most interesting; our part is to consider what is due to God, to withdraw from iniquity. On the other hand, the Lord knows them that are His. You have the congregation there too, for you follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with *them* that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. The congregation will always be there. We should never expect to see ourselves without the congregation. The great point is that God is enshrined in the tabernacle. To find our way today we have these principles. The knowledge of God comes through the gospel, but popular evangelists send their converts to different religious systems, but that is not God's mind. The idea of the assembly is *called out ones*. The *call* is the gospel. We are called out to something. Christ becomes the Centre for the mind and heart; the gospel is concerning Him. Every divine principle flows from what God is. If you take them up, God will be with you. That is what you get here. Moses had been on the mount with God, and when he comes down his action is established by God.

Paul in similar circumstances says, "at my first answer no one stood by me", 2 Timothy 4:16 and the next point is "the Lord stood by me". 2 Timothy 4:17. If you stand by the principles God will stand by you, and the congregation will come. But you will only stand by the principles as you appreciate them; as you appreciate them you are set for them. Moses did more than that, he would die for the people. That is the next thing. If you are in the Spirit of Christ, you will stand for the principles and stand by the people, but the principles come first. It is a great mark of favour when trouble comes if the people are saved as well as the principles. Paul withstood Peter to the face. He stood for the principles, and Peter was saved as well.

Holding the truth in love is the great thing. If you do that you will not let the people go. You hold the truth, but you hold it in love. I think one of the most remarkable instances of divine wisdom is seen in the letters to the Corinthians. We should study them if we wish to serve in the house of God. They show us how a man acts who stands by the principles of God, and who loves the saints. He said, in effect, 'If I go to Corinth, I shall have to use severity, and I do not want to do that. I want to get all the Corinthians'. So, instead of going, he writes a letter and sends it by Timothy, one not only converted through

him, but one who knew his ways, and who would put the Corinthians in mind of them. He sends the letter, and the result is the mass of the Corinthians are saved. We do not want to lose the saints, and if we are not to lose any of them we are to act wisely, and love is the most skilful of all things. This raises the question as to how we are to conduct ourselves when difficulty arises. What are you going to do? The study of these two letters in connection with Moses' act here affords wonderful light as to how to act. Paul did not stand afar off from the Corinthians; he went through the exercises with them, which is a mark of priestly service.

Christianity is a system established in wisdom. The four gospels give us wisdom as seen in Christ. Divine wisdom is seen there in relation to everything that existed on earth. In other words, they are the book of Proverbs personified. The epistles give us the *children* of wisdom; they give us examples of persons who had learnt from Christ how to act. Christianity is not like the old system. We have not a prescription for every difficulty, but we have the Holy Spirit here, which those under the old system had not. Now things are more established on precedent than on commandment; it is more a question of discovering how Christ acted and how the apostles acted. We have not commandments exactly, there are such, of course, but we have principles, and how you face difficulties brings out what you are spiritually. The Lord lets us expose ourselves.

Moses here saves the situation. His conduct shows what a knowledge of God he had. The best test of a man as to where he is with God is how he acts in a case of discipline, especially if the persons are known to him, if he has lived with them. If he is not a spiritual man he will be governed by partiality. If we had a prescription for every difficulty there would be no need for exercise or spirituality. The punishment would just have to be made to fit the crime. Now the Lord allows things to arise, as if to say, 'Now what are you going to do?' And what you do proves what you are spiritually. It is a question of love to God and to your neighbour. The question of local responsibility all lies in the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy *neighbour* as thyself". Leviticus 19:18. It all hinges on that. If you have to deal with your neighbour, and you are not under the influence of the love of Christ, you will be governed by partiality, by some personal feeling.

The second scripture we read, Deuteronomy 21, gives the idea of what is local. I have thought that no conditions can arise which would prevent the working out of assembly principles. That is saying a great deal, but I am assured that we are never shut up. Love is the one thing that has never yet failed. No matter how bad the conditions are, you can carry out assembly

principles. Things could not be much worse than in Corinth. It is remarkable how the apostle on the one hand considered for God, and on the other hand considered for the saints; they were all saved. On the other hand, if the conditions are so bad that flesh rules absolutely instead of that which is spiritual, you are not shut up. If such conditions arise the apostle supposes in 2 Timothy, that there is still a way for us; we withdraw from evil.

The foundations were untouched at Corinth. If the foundations are not destroyed you can go on, but if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? If the foundations are destroyed, then it means that Christ is given up, as in the public systems of men. They may not become absolutely apostate, but if Christ has no place there, the righteous must withdraw from that; but then, you do not give up assembly principles. You can go on because you have the congregation. It is beautiful to see the way Paul acted, and his basic principle was love. If he had considered for his own authority and fame he would have gone there. That is what lies at the bottom of many of our difficulties, our fame and reputation. There were those who said that Paul was not truthful; those who said his speech was contemptible; the enemy's attack was to set aside his authority. He did not consider for that, he considered for God.

The difference between the state of the Corinthians and that described in 2 Timothy is, that the saints had not given up the foundations at Corinth. In the main they still held the truth; the Holy Spirit was there; they were still regarded as the body of Christ. "Ye are God's building", says Paul. 1 Corinthians 3:9. They had not given up the foundation truths of Christianity. 2 Timothy supposes that the foundations are given up. Luke 10 shows the character of the true neighbour. If you are in the nearest meeting to the one in trouble, the question is, have you the oil and the wine? That is the obligation; the neighbour is to *be* a neighbour.

The passage here reads "And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near ... and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried" Deuteronomy 21:5. What we see there is that alongside the principle of local responsibility is the priestly thought. The priest is to determine things. What you find, where difficulty arises, is that it is really a question of the constitution of the meeting. It is the outcome of the underlying state of things, and what is required is to build them up. Where difficulty arises locally you will often find that saints are feeding on controversy, and if you do not bring in good food there is very little hope for them. If local difficulties arise, what is needed is a priestly state. I think that is the point, and that is where Christianity comes in. The priest is the man who loves. The leading feature of the high priest is the

breastplate and the *shoulderpieces*. The priest says, as it were, I have you on my heart to speak well of you. The judgment of Israel was to be according to that. Your judgment is not to be based on your feelings but according to your love for the saints. It is the judgment of the breastplate.

The difficulty such as this Scripture has in mind develops where the priestly state is low. The only hope in Israel was the priest. Everything hinges on the priest. If the priest is not there there is no hope. The priest is able to minister Christ to the saints it is in the priestly state that you can minister. Of course, it is Luke that records that. It was Christ Himself who was the Samaritan. He was attendant upon man here. It required the priest to do that; to bring in oil and wine. Evidently it is Christ who is Priest. It is remarkable that the apostle can take account of the Corinthians as he does when there was division there. But the foundations were still there. If you go to the place with the ministry of Christ, that will revive the saints' spirits. What souls need when they are hungry is food. They want ministry to lift them out of ruts; even when they say, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos" 1 Corinthians 1:12. Ministry is the great thing. If the priest is active, there will be help.

The working out of the thing in Corinth produced the spirit of self-judgment. He says, "In all things ye have proved yourselves to be clear". 2 Corinthians 7:11. They proved themselves to be clear, but they had to accept the responsibility of what existed among them. That is the first thing. Now this chapter establishes the fact that the nearest meeting is the one held responsible; it does not say that the others are excluded, because fellowship is general as well as local. So it says, in Corinthians, "To all that in *every place* call on the name of the Lord" 1 Corinthians 1:2; it is universal as well as local. That is important, because there is danger in applying it only to the local side of things, and people outside of that are not in touch with it.

This chapter guards us, but in a general way, the nearest meeting is held responsible. If we acted wisely, we would act on this principle; you may not have to wait. If the nearest meeting is not acting in a priestly character, try and get it right, because if you go over their heads you may lose them, and then you will not gain much. You act on those lines and maintain that fellowship is general as well as local.

THE CITY NEAREST TO THE SLAIN MAN (JT 7)

Deuteronomy 21: 1 - 9

The above passage has clearly a dispensational significance, "the slain man" referring to Christ as slain near Jerusalem, although the city is not charged with the guilt of His death, but rather in grace given an opportunity to clear itself. The remaining subjects in the chapter follow on the death of our Lord in regular order, bearing on the assembly and Israel as seen in the Acts. The "stubborn and rebellious son" Deuteronomy 21:18 is a type of the Jews as utterly disregardful of divine grace and authority in Christ presented to them in the gospel. He would "not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother". Deuteronomy 21:18. Being brought to "the elders of his city" he is stoned to death by "all the men" of it Deuteronomy 21:21. But verses 1 to 9 contain most important principles in relation to local ruptures, or other causes of uncertainty involving fellowship among the saints of the assembly.

First, as to *general* responsibility. "Thine elders and thy judges shall go forth". Deuteronomy 21:2. This refers to the saints universally viewed in their responsibility as to any sin or division, the cause of which is unknown, but which must be investigated so that judgment according to God may be rendered. The next direction deals with *proximity* to the scene of the sin. The nearest city is determined by the measurement of those *generally* responsible, and this matter of proximity is in view throughout the instruction. The fact that the nearest city to the slain man has to clear itself rather than determine the murderer or murderers, does not set aside the importance of proximity as a principle. A divine principle is always valid. Scripture may confirm itself, but does not necessarily repeat. One scripture is enough to establish any point, as John 10:35 shows. Some would make the Old Testament secondary, or a matter of detail, but the New Testament constantly insists on the equality of the Old Testament with itself, Throughout these verses 1 - 9, the mind is focussed on "the city that is nearest unto him that is slain", "the elders of that city", and "all the elders" of it being mentioned.

Then *priesthood*. "The priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them Jehovah thy God hath chosen to do service unto him, and to bless in the name of Jehovah; and according to their word shall be every controversy and every stroke". Deuteronomy 21:5. They represent the spiritual elements; those who are spiritual, and so can "discern all things". 1 Corinthians 2:15. Note, they are not regarded as local, nor as belonging to the people: not "thy priests". They are on God's side chosen of Him. But observe a very important fact, that as the sons of Levi are mentioned, the elders of the city nearest the slain man

are *again* introduced and the priests are *not* mentioned again, while the elders of the nearest city *speak to Jehovah*. The onus of slaying the heifer was on them, and they wash their hands over her. Then they say, "Forgive thy people Israel ... and lay not innocent blood to the charge of thy people Israel" Deuteronomy 21:8. They act *as priests*, and not simply for themselves but for all Israel. This as applied today, would mean that the meeting or meetings nearest to a locality in which division and consequent uncertainty as to the sin involved exist, as judging the matter in the light of the death of Christ and depending upon the Spirit, for the heifer had her neck broken in a "water-course", show themselves to be spiritual, and so capable of discerning and judging according to God. A decision reached under these circumstances will be accepted by "Israel", and morally binding.

Christian fellowship is general as well as local, and so if its practical expression in a locality ceases through division among the saints there, the general aspect is involved; in principle responsibility as to it belongs to all the gatherings. This is recognised in verse 2, "thy elders and thy judges", but afterwards *all rests with the nearest city and the priesthood*, the elders of the former merging into the latter. Thus a local sorrow, such as we are contemplating, after general responsibility is accepted, resolves itself into proximity and priesthood. These must go together, and as they do, the nearest meeting will not act arbitrarily, or officially, but on moral grounds, recognising that what they have on hand is not in their own midst and for which they are responsible to the Lord only, but in another locality, and so coming within the range of all; but that wisdom and confidence in others would leave the service of adjustment with them as the nearest to the scene of sorrow.

While the unmanageable and rebellious son alludes to the Jews, as already said, verses 18 to 21 afford important instruction relative to the subject under consideration. He was to be brought "unto the elders of *his* city and unto the gates of *his* place". Deuteronomy 21:19. This links with 1 Corinthians, and shows, that when actual sin is in question, and determined, judgment of it must be where the guilty person resides. "All the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die". Deuteronomy 21:21. This is done on adequate testimony, for his father and mother accuse him before the elders. In the light of this, as connected with the letters to Corinth, matters belonging to a given locality cannot be scripturally adjudicated upon in another locality.

Thus while responsibility as to the slain man is determined by measurement, his position is not presented exactly as a locality; the measurement is from *him*, not the field. Nor is the heifer slain there, but in the valley, or watercourse, and expiation thereby made for Israel, although in professed

innocence of the death of the man. But when sin is active, innocency no longer contemplated, the guilty person is regarded as of a city and his judgment is there. In truth as evil has to be met the two cities merge into one, for the principle established is that sin occurring in a local assembly must be dealt with *there*, although a nearby assembly may have responsibility as to it, because of division or inability otherwise in the former to deal with it. Leviticus 14: 33 - 53 governs this.

But the extension of fellowship by a nearby meeting to saints in a place where division has existed is not exactly the same as dealing with sin in it, although it may involve the judgment of some who cannot be recognised because of their conduct it is a question of owning "the approved". This action is as of one assembly to another, and so is done, so to speak, by the neighbour assembly in its own locality, after godly deliberation, based on full inquiry.

Referring again to verse 2 of our chapter, it is a grave mistake to assume that what is said of "thine elders and thy judges" warrants brethren from many gatherings, whether of a district or generally, coming together to judge of matters belonging to another locality. There is no scriptural warrant for such a procedure; indeed it would set aside the truth governing the local assembly taught in 1 and 2 Corinthians, which is, that as having the Holy Spirit, it has the character of the temple of God and the body of Christ, and so furnished with what is needed for its guidance and maintenance; gifts, as for the whole assembly, being also available.

The truth governing the assembly, as seen in local companies, taught especially as we have seen in 1 and 2 Corinthians and Deuteronomy 21, the disregard of which has caused widespread sorrow, needs to be constantly pressed, particularly in places where this sorrow was lightly experienced, where many of Israel have not known "*all* the wars of Canaan".

Pages 336 - 406 — "That which was from the Beginning". New York, May, 1915(Volume 29).

FELLOWSHIP — GENERAL AND LOCAL (JT 91)

1 Corinthians 1:1 - 3; 2 Corinthians 1:1,2; Colossians 4: 16; Deuteronomy 21:1 - 9

JT I was thinking of general fellowship and local fellowship, and the responsibility that attaches to each. I thought this subject would be one that would yield something for us at this meeting — that is, the subject of fellowship in a general and local sense and particularly the responsibility attaching to each respectively, for we at times are unduly local and unduly general. So that a right balance is what the Lord would always lead to, and it occurred to me that the first scripture read links the two ideas together, or rather makes them one; for whilst the address is to the assembly of God which is at Corinth we read it is to the "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours". It is not, of course, that the apostle would imply that his directions as to administration should be taken part in by all at one time, but certainly any act of administration at Corinth should not be of an independent nature, it should be such as would take account of "all that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours". So that any question raised at Rome or in Jerusalem or in Africa as to an act in Corinth would be answered and would not be regarded as a matter belonging to Corinth exclusively, for the obvious teaching is that the same Lord is "both theirs and ours". It is His matter and the principle of universality would be maintained while wisdom would recognise "put away from among yourselves that wicked person" 1 Corinthians 5:13 alluded to Corinth, but as put away in Corinth he would be put away everywhere. It would be regarded as an act binding on the assembly as a whole and the binding is necessarily the concern of all, subject to enquiry on the part of all.

I thought these remarks would cover the first part of our subject, and in the second letter the address is to the "assembly of God which is in Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia"; that is, the area is reduced, it is brought down to the province. Then in the epistle to the Colossians the thought is narrower still; that is, the letter addressed to Colosse was to be read to the assembly of Laodiceans, which was nearby, "and that *ye* also read that from Laodicea". The area is reduced to neighbouring assemblies, two assemblies, as if the exercises and needs would be somewhat alike, showing that as the area is reduced the current conditions are more nearly alike. I thought that this declining gradation of responsibility helps as to current matters amongst the saints, matters that are constantly arising in localities and the responsibility attaching to the difficulties arising.

AN Do you mean that the moral conditions in Colosse would possibly be true of Laodicea, so that the same epistle would apply to both?

JT That is what is intended to be conveyed; for example, characteristic conditions in London are likely to mark the suburbs. I think God considers for His people in that way. Adjacent meetings are likely to be suffering from nearby like conditions and therefore a word for one is a word for another.

AN I think that helps, that the special word which the epistle had would equally apply to the district.

JT That is right, and wisdom therefore as more extended to the distant meetings would take all this into account. The more adjacent meetings are more likely to be conversant with details and the Lord would use them. It seems to me that is the instruction in this declining gradation of responsibility. I thought in suggesting these scriptures in relation to Deuteronomy that we find all these ideas condensed in this type in chapter 21. That is, we have the facts of an occurrence concerning which responsibility had to be determined. The determination was not by local people but by those that represent the general idea — that is 1 Corinthians 1. "Thine elders", it says in verse 2, "thine elders and thy judges shall go forth, and they shall measure ...". That is, the determination of the responsibility is general, it is by those who represent the general fellowship. "Thine" is Israel's judges. And then we have the measuring and the local responsibility determined, and then the elders of the local city are brought in in verse 4; and then the priests, the sons of Levi, alluding to the spiritual condition — that a spiritual condition is required.

AS Is it the spiritual condition of the local meeting or the district?

JT The spiritual condition is general, that is, the word is "the priests the sons of Levi". They are not regarded as local. They represent a state that God can approve, that is, a priestly condition. They are not mentioned after that, you will observe. Their office is determined in verse 5 "by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried". And then the local people act as priests and say, "Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it". Their solicitation is for the whole of Israel, they never lose sight of the general fellowship — "Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel". That is the local people, but they are acting as priests.

RG How is the measuring done in a practical way?

JT Well now, before we get to that do you understand what was said in regard of 1 Corinthians and Colossians? It is important to get the basis in the New Testament. The first letter to Corinth is the the great general fellowship merging in the local. The second epistle brings it down to the province — the

saints which are in Achaia; and the third scripture brings it down to the immediate locality, for Laodicea was very near to Colosse. They are viewed as having like exercises and yet their distinctiveness as assemblies is maintained — they do not act together. Now if that be clear, we may consider how the elders and judges measured.

Rem So that in that way any local company acting would have the whole fellowship in view in the acting.

JT Yes, that is how it stands in Corinthians. It is "to all that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours". In the following address the apostle directs that certain persons be put away, delivered to Satan, and the like. Well, Corinth cannot assume that it is not the business of Rome.

Rem So that that would be ever in view in anything that might come upon a local company, they would recognise the brethren in the district and elsewhere.

JT I think that it is important that we get the full bearing of the fellowship. The unity of the Spirit is a collateral thought, there is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all — that is the spiritual side, the fellowship is the working out of it.

Ques Would you say that no assembly can act rightly in regard to the local fellowship unless they have the general fellowship in view?

JT Quite so. We act in relation to the general fellowship. Yet wisdom would leave it, of course, with the local assembly as to whatever is done.

Rem And yet as to the result Mr. Darby speaks very strongly, the man that was put away was outside the assembly altogether.

Ques Is there any instruction in the identification of Sosthenes with Paul?

JT Well, as has often been remarked, it is the brotherly element; the Spirit of God takes account of our way of looking at things, a brother would require a brother for brotherly consideration in all matters.

Rem In chapter 5 there is the "within" and the "without", "*Ye*, do not ye judge them that are within? But those without God judges. Remove the wicked person from amongst yourselves" 1 Corinthians 5:12,13 — there is the inclusive and the exclusive.

JT Those that are within are in the circle of the fellowship, the wicked man was to be outside of that.

Ques Would the fact that chapter 5 opens with the thought that it is universally reported suggest the link, that is, the general and the local?

JT The state of division amongst them was reported by the house of Chloe but the state of corruption was generally reported, without it being said who reported it. There was universal feeling about it. There is no doubt that in the house of Chloe there was godly concern, that there were conditions such as are spoken of in the assembly.

Ques Would you say a word as to the difference between priests, elders and the sons of Levi?

JT The first thing is "Thine elders and thy judges". Now the suggestion there, clearly, is persons who are responsible. Elders today are not general, the bearing of an elder in the assembly is local. "Thine elders" means the national elders of Israel, and what they represent in the type is persons who are responsible, they are distinct from the priests. The word denotes a person of experience, one who has grown up in the testimony and loving the Lord and His interests. They would have the experience which would lead them to be concerned about any and every matter which affects the testimony, so that they would denote today the element of responsibility everywhere. If there is no element of responsibility there is nothing for God. Responsibility means that the things of God are being looked after and if we cannot do it directly we can pray about it. And then judges refers to ability to judge, if there be not that the same thing applies — there is nothing for God. The same persons are alluded to, of course. The first is the responsibility and the second ability to judge. Then "the priests the sons of Levi" refers to the same persons, but it is looking at what is spiritual. The apostle says, "I think that *I* also have God's Spirit", 1 Corinthians 7:40 but he gives his judgment of himself as one who had had mercy shown him. Generally speaking, believers dealing with the things of God reckon on the Spirit and on spirituality, so that the word in Galatians is "Ye who are spiritual" Galatians 6:1 — that is what is alluded to. So that there are three things, the responsible element, the discerning element and the priestly element, that is the element that makes room for the Spirit of God, which applies to all christians — all christians are priests — hence all christians are brought into it. The priest always considers for God. The law was in his charge, he was custodian of the law and you can rely upon his word, and it says, "By their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried". Hence we need the priestly element or there is no authority. The incident brings all this holy organism into action, a very wonderful thing in this world. Think of a holy organism of God set down here in this world and it is right in its results — a great matter in God's account.

Rem I wonder whether that would be exemplified in the Lord personally in regard of His judgment and the priestly character of it: "My judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me". John 5:30.

JT There you have perfection of judgment. In the assembly, viewed as under the divine hand, governed by the Spirit of God, you get a like result. We are not guessing at things. It is not haphazard, the thought is you reach a judgment according to God.

AN If I am looking at things in relation to myself or others my judgment will be flurried, but if I look at it in relation to God there will be a right judgment.

JT Very good. In Deuteronomy 33 it says, "Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one". Deuteronomy 33:8. "Thy Thummim" is first (it is usually the Urim first), which means, I think, that the state was there before you get the light. If the spiritual state was there you can count upon the light from the Holy One. God had tested out Levi. It is interesting to compare the blessing of Moses, 'the man of God', and the blessing of 'Jacob the father'. Jacob gives the whole history of the tribes, good and bad. Genesis 49 is not based on conduct. It is prophetic, because the tribes did not really exist yet, save in the sense of family, so that the tribal conduct had not yet taken place, it was purely prophetic. But when Moses blessed the people, tribal conduct had become historic, the tribes had been tested and the blessing was based on the result of the testing. It is an important matter, especially in regard of Levi; that is, God had tested him and God had found him worthy of the Urim and the Thummim. Levi in many instances sided with Moses. In regard to the golden calf he sided with Moses and in another instance he disregarded his father, "whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him". Deuteronomy 33:8,9. Much is said about Levi, he is reliable, he entirely disregards natural relationships in dealing with the things of God. They are the most treacherous matters in dealing with the things of God.

AN I am sure that is important, that in local difficulties, where the question of natural relationships come in, or if I have a bitter spirit towards another, I will not have a clear judgment.

JT So he is called, "Thy holy one" — that expression applies absolutely to Christ — "Thou art the holy one of God" John 6:69 — it is a great discovery. He is the true Levi and we are to get character from Christ.

Rem There is a remarkable statement in 2 Chronicles 19:6, "And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who

is with you in the judgment".

JT That is good. "Take heed what ye do". That scripture you quoted regarding Levi is very beautiful, "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant". Deuteronomy 33:9 It is the father and the mother and the brother and the children that are set aside, natural relationships in the assembly; that was not prophetic, it had already come out. In Levi, God was dealing with what had already been proved. So that a person proved is reliable. God regards us as reliable and confides in us and counts on a right judgment. It is a question of what you will do tomorrow. You may succeed today but you may not tomorrow. God would have those that are reliable. So that Malachi brings out the priesthood in the end of the Old Testament. God sits as a refiner and tests us. God, as it were, puts up things to us; we may think ourselves spiritual and God says, Well, what are you going to do with this? and the testing goes on. If we are all clear about the general responsibility of "thine elders and thy judges", the next thing is the local persons — "the city that is nearest". Measurement is made by "thine elders and thy judges", then the next thing is that the immediate responsibility is determined — what will these do?

Ques Before going on to that do you mind saying who is the man that is slain in the field?

JT Oh, it is just an occurrence; it may apply to Christ, it is just an occurrence which requires adjudication, whatever requires a solution is in view. It is just a type, it is not that we have the direct teaching in the scripture we read, it is a type. A coroner's inquest is what the law requires, whoever the man is or however it may be set.

Rem Does it suggest a disordered state?

JT Yes, there is the murder, all that enters into the case. Now what is that city going to do? It is going to be tested. Is the murderer there? Do the elders of the city know anything about it? There are no loose ends in the Scriptures, things are taken up at once and we are provided with what we are to do.

Rem So that in the beginning of Acts when Peter brings it home to them, they say, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:37.

JT That is right. The suggestion is that the city is here, there is no imputation laid on the city, but they are to clear themselves. The point is for us to see how quickly the matter is taken up, and how beautiful the result of the instructions being followed. We have the priests in the locality who are able to speak to God. They are not thinking of themselves but of 'all Israel'. It says in

verse 6, "All the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley: And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel". They are able to act as priests and speak to God. But we have to take account of the "heifer ... which hath not drawn in the yoke", and "the valley which is neither eared nor sown", as it is said, "the city that is nearest unto him that is slain, even the elders of that city shall take a heifer that hath not been wrought with, that hath not drawn in the yoke; and the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto an ever-flowing watercourse, which is not tilled, nor is it sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the watercourse ... . And all the elders of that city that are nearest unto him that is slain, shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck is broken in the watercourse", Deuteronomy 21:3,4; Deuteronomy 21:6.

The heifer suggests the opposite to what might have brought about the murder. It represents one that has not been employed by man's will. The murder would have been the result of man's will. And there was to be no sowing in the valley. It is all the opposite of what would have brought about the murder. The scene of the murder is the scene of man's will, and where there has been sowing of some kind, wicked cultivation.

Rem I was wondering if Numbers 1 and 2 would support what we have been considering, first the whole host, that is the universal position, secondly the families, which might suggest the surrounding companies, and then the father's house, which might suggest the local aspect.

JT That is right, there were four sets of tribes, one on the east and one on the south and one on the west and one on the north representing the universal position, the universal element in the testimony. Then each set is subdivided into three and then the father's house is still a further subdivision. So that you can bring the thing down, as in the case of Achan, all the tribes were brought into it, it is a universal matter. Tribe after tribe is taken, then Judah is taken, then the father of Achan is taken and then Achan is taken. That is, the thing is worked out to the responsible person. As the Lord said, "One of you shall betray me", Matthew 26:21, Mark 14:18. John 13:21 but the thing has to be determined — each one says, "Is it I?"

Ques Would you say a word as to the breaking of the neck?

JT It is a question of man's will. It is murder — it is not a dead man, it is a slain man, and somebody did it and whoever did it had a stiff neck, he was a murderer. It all refers to conditions in this world finding a place amongst the people of God.

Ques Do you think that this regarding the heifer is what is lacking in us, there must be the apprehension of the death of Christ in this character?

JT That is the idea, He is the opposite of all this. Here the point is "not drawn in the yoke". The Lord Jesus never came under the human yoke, man's yoke. Anyone that commits murder has done so. It is usually a planned thing — the sowing in the valley. Now not being sown is the opposite of what was in those that perpetrated this wickedness. This is over against all that, and the elders of that city are to show that they are in accord with all this, and that is the point — I am to be in accord with Christ if I am to have part in this. I think, too, that we would enter upon a local difficulty with subdued spirits if we were affected by the death of Christ in this aspect.

Ques How does this aspect of the death of Christ work out in the breaking of the neck?

JT Well, the heifer's neck being broken is expiation. Christ entered into death for us and that is expiation. It says, "And the blood shall be expiated for them". That is, He became this for us. Look at Saul of Tarsus, an insolent, overbearing man he calls himself, an arrogant kind of man doing things legally and with a good conscience. A good conscience does not mean that I am right. "But", he says, "mercy was shewn me". 1 Timothy 1:13.

Ques Why is the word 'field' used so much here?

JT It is to fill out the type, I think, when there is nobody to see what happened. If it had been in the city you probably would have had witnesses. Showing that, no matter what happens, it is covered;

you cannot say 'It is not in our city'. No matter where it is, it is covered. An inquest is required, the thing has to be solved. So that Israel is cleared. That is what the elders say, "Forgive thy people Israel". That is, the saints must be clear in all these matters. We cannot have the imputation of guilt upon us. We cannot be here for God if things are not solved. There is nothing left unsolved in the assembly. That is one great point. The apostle says, "in every way ye have proved yourselves to be pure in the matter". 2 Corinthians 7:11.

Ques After they have established their innocence does their responsibility cease?

JT Well, they pray for all Israel. We are not concerned about our own meeting only, we pray for all Israel, as I have just read in verse 7, "Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel". That is what the Lord Jesus died for, to set up here a testimony free from guilt and He has put within us a means of solving things. This

chapter has proved most helpful and has saved a great many brethren in these latter days, that is, whilst the approved might be made manifest. Well, we do not want to lose any. They do not want to lose any. They pray for all Israel, the expiation is for all Israel. It is well to keep that in mind. In the great battle with Midian it says that not a man was lost, and the greatest spoil you get in Scripture is, I think, in that battle. Phinehas, you know, proved the reality of the priesthood, the everlasting priesthood. He set to the war with the holy instruments of God, even with a trumpet, that is, the testimony of the Lord. He sounded it, and sounded it, and sounded it. Phinehas would keep on sounding out the truth.

Rem It would seem that the responsibility is with the local city. In the Revelation it says, "The angel of the assembly" of a particular place.

JT Yes, then the next thing is, is the local city equal to the emergency? And that is why the priesthood is immediately brought in. Not the local priest, but "the priests the sons of Levi", that is, the holy condition amongst the people of God generally are brought into it. To my own mind that is important at the present time. God has used this scripture to save the brethren, not to cut any off, but to save them.

Ques Have you in mind that in cases of difficulty we have been perhaps concentrated on circumstances and the culprit rather than the responsibility which is the universal sorrow?

JT I think that things are often made too local and we lose the wealth that is available to us. If a man anywhere in the world has ability for government, he is available. These things are set in the assembly and it is important to give them scope, God has provided them for us. On the other hand that person ought to be concerned not to go beyond his service. I think the universal side needs to be emphasised because it embraces all that God has furnished for the assembly so that we do not want to shut anything out..

Rem The principle would be borne out in the epistle to the Corinthians, while it was apostolic yet there was a priestly element in it. That is, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit", 1 Corinthians 5:4. The principle of it is that he is thinking of it in relation to the Lord.

JT That is right, and his spirit was there. One would not be fanciful, but the idea is that he was not there in body but he was there in spirit. How far-reaching assembly elements are! Spirituality reaches out.

Rem A sectional movement would have a tendency to lose men, would it not?

JT So all these conflicts should yield wealth universally.

Ques Is verse 9 important? The guilt will never be put away when they do not do what is right in the eyes of Jehovah.

JT Yes, that is so. That is insisted on, “thou shalt do what is right”.

Deuteronomy 22

- DEUTERONOMY 22 (CAC 5)
- THE BELIEVER'S HOUSEHOLD CONDITIONS (JT 13)

DEUTERONOMY 22 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 22

This section of the book brings out principles which are very important in relation to the "labour of love" which is to go on in the land. The first feature of it is care that our brother shall not lose anything that belongs to him. It is very noticeable throughout this book how often the thought of caring for the good of others is brought in. How often we find a large circle of beneficiaries brought in to share the good of the land — the Levite, the poor, the stranger, the widow and the fatherless. Spiritual blessings are to be enjoyed in such a way that others get the benefit of them. If I am thinking of myself, I am not serving in love. It was very sad when Paul had to say, "All seek their own things, not the things of Jesus Christ".

The opening verses of this chapter suggest that we are to think of what pertains to our brother, and have a care that he shall not lose the gain and enjoyment of it. The care and service of Christ is with a view to our getting the good of all that belongs to us through the all-blessing grace and love of our God, and we are to have a like care for our brother. In Exodus it is our enemy's ox or ass that we are to bring back to him, as having come under a teaching of grace which leads us to seek the good even of one who hates us. But in Deuteronomy it is our brother's ass we are to look after, or anything else that belongs to him. *Our brother* has lost it, and it becomes our concern that he should have it back so as to have the good of it.

There is a constant working of the enemy to deprive the people of God of what belongs to them, and their own carelessness and want of watchfulness greatly contributes to the success of his efforts, But we are to care for our brother so that anything which has strayed or been lost shall be restored to him if it comes into our possession. Our brother's ox, or sheep, or ass, etc., would represent apprehensions of Christ and spiritual qualities by means of which the inheritance can be cultivated or enjoyed. We are not to be satisfied to have these things for ourselves; we are to be concerned about our brother. As we look around on our brethren we can see many who have lost spiritual property that really belongs to them by the gift and calling of God. If certain things which are essential to the enjoyment of the land have come into our possession we should bear in mind that they belong also to our brethren, and it should be a matter of active concern to us that they should have the good of them. We are not to hold spiritual blessings as if they were exclusively our own; they belong to the brotherhood; and as loving the brotherhood we desire and labour that they should have what is truly their own. Much spiritual good

is practically at the present time lost to its rightful owners, and if any of that good comes into our hand it is well to recognise that it is our brother's, and to be concerned that he should possess and enjoy it. The joy of being able to say that a spiritual blessing is *mine* is enhanced by recognising that it is also my *brother's*. When I recognise this I come under obligation to serve him as far as possible that he may have the good of that which perhaps his own carelessness may have allowed to go astray from him.

If we made the impression on our brethren that we had got something of great value that belonged to them,

and that we were holding it with intense desire that they should have it, it would have the effect of drawing them to us. They would surely come to "seek after it". If our brother is near, and we know him, we are to bring back to him that which he has lost. That supposes there might be brethren within our reach who have lost the good of things; our service is to bring back to them what they have lost. The brother not near, and unknown, would represent brethren that are out of our reach, as alas! so many are at the present time. Many of our brethren are not near to us; it is very difficult to find them out; but it is well to hold any spiritual good that we have as their property, and with the sense in our hearts that it belongs to them. How far do we hold the precious things of God with a deep sense that they are the property of all saints? Many of the people of God have lost valuable property at the present, time. If a little bit of it has come into our possession, there should be the feeling that we hold it on trust for those to whom it belongs; it is our brother's. Service amongst the brethren has this as a prominent feature. Certain things are discerned as belonging to our brother, but which he has lost the good of — perhaps through his own carelessness — and it becomes our concern that they should be secured to him by all possible means that he may have the benefit of them. It is just the opposite to self-consideration; it is active care for the good of the brethren. Paul in writing to the Philippians had to lament that the spirit of service had almost universally gone out. "All seek their own things".

The effort of the enemy is to deprive the people of God of their portion as in the land, or of what would contribute to their enjoyment of it, and I am afraid our own unwatchfulness often leads to things being lost. Whether it is an ox or a sheep or an ass or raiment, it pertains to the people as in the land; they are things which are essential for the enjoyment of the land. It suggests a large scope of service, whether for brethren near to us or for those far off. Those we can walk with are near to us; we can get at them more directly; but there are many not near and unknown. It is good to be in that spirit of care and

service that would desire that they all should have full enjoyment of what pertains to them. It is a question of the brotherly spirit towards all saints.

"It shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it" (verse 2), would imply that there would be some exercise on his part about what he has lost. If that which has been lost is with us there must be the consciousness on our part that we hold it as upon trust, but on the part of those who have lost things there must be a seeking after them. I think we might say that in some measure things are in the "house" at the present time if our brother will come and fetch them. If the brethren saw that we held something of value which they have lost, and that we held it with brotherly care that they might have it back, they ought surely to be moved to seek it. The Lord would have us to entertain a hopeful spirit about the brethren, and to look for them to come and get their lost property.

The practical difficulty is largely that the brethren often do not realise that they have lost any property. There must be divine awakening as to this, and we can pray for it to come about. The Lord can bring home to His saints that they have lost something valuable, but that it is available if they will only seek it. They will find it in the house of their brother. One feels sure that if we held things with brotherly care that all to whom they belong should enjoy them, there would be something attractive that would encourage the brethren to seek their property. We do not appropriate to ourselves exclusively any of the precious things;

we hold them as our brother's property as well as our own.

The ox would represent strength for labour (Proverbs 14: 4); the sheep ability to suffer uncomplainingly (Isaiah 53: 7). Both would be suitable for offering to God, so that for our brother to lose them would diminish his ability for sacrificial service Godward. The thought of being ransomed is connected with the ass as well as with man (Exodus 13: 13). As ransomed it is fitting that we should be lowly and unpretentious, and thus have features suited to carry the testimony of God at the present time (Zechariah 9: 9). Presently the Lord will ride on a white horse (Revelation 19: 11) to judge and make war, but His riding on the lowly ass characterises the present period. To lose such features is a serious loss indeed. Our brother's "clothing" would represent all that in which he is to appear at the present time as invested with righteousness and salvation; it would include the beautiful features of Christ as seen in Colossians 3: 12 - 14. It is not a question here of apprehending these things as our own, but of apprehending them as pertaining to our brother, but at the moment lost by him. It is to be our jealous care that he should have them again, for only

thus can he be adorned becomingly, or have the true privilege of the inheritance. What a "labour of love" does this entail!

"There shall not be a man's apparel on a woman, neither shall a man put on a woman's clothing; for whoever doeth so is an abomination to Jehovah thy God" (verse 5). Divine order is ever to be observed, and it is most important to have regard to this in a day when every feature of that order is being so largely set aside. In Christianity the man and the woman each have their distinctive clothing, and are only suitably adorned as they appear in it. The whole tendency of things today is to subvert divine order, but that order is to be maintained in God's assembly. Nature itself teaches a woman to be retiring and modest. Her glory is her long hair which is "given to her in lieu of a veil". Her distinctive glory according to nature suggests what is her true moral glory. Her "clothing" would represent her whole deportment and appearance, not excluding her actual dress. It is to be suitable to the place which she has of expressing in her own person how the assembly is subjected to the Christ. So Paul, representing the authority of the Lord, says, "Let a woman learn in quietness in all subjection; but I do not suffer a woman to teach nor to exercise authority over man, but to be in quietness" (1 Timothy 2: 11, 12). He also says, "Let, your woman be silent in the assemblies, for it is not permitted to them to speak; but to be in subjection, as the law also says ... it is a shame for a woman to speak in assembly" (1 Corinthians 14: 34, 35). There might, be cases where sisters were more spiritually intelligent, than brothers, but they are not to teach. It, is sure that in such cases the saints would be more edified by the observance of divine order than they could possibly be by the superior intelligence of the woman.

I have no doubt that the disordered state of the church is reflected in the uncomely behaviour of women at the present time, one feature of which is the hideous fashion of cutting their hair short. It is a, reproach to see women preaching, or putting themselves into prominence; it is a setting aside of their true glory — a putting on of man's apparel.

But then, on the other hand, "neither shall a man put on a woman's clothing". The men are not to retire from the place accorded to them; they are to "pray in every place (that is, not only in the assembly, but at home, or wherever occasion arises), lifting up pious hands, without wrath or reasoning" (1 Timothy 2: 8). The public expression of praise or prayer, the setting forth of things in ministry, and the responsibility for order and edification in the assembly, rests with the men, and it is well for all believing men to see that they do not retire from the responsible service of the house of God. It might be as uncomely for a brother to be silent in the assembly as for a sister to

speak there. It is well to reflect upon this, and to see to it that we appear in the habiliments which are suitable.

It is a day in which women are taking a prominent place in public religious activities, but it seems to me that this is a reproach upon the men. If the men had been wearing their proper apparel, and filling up their responsibility according to divine order, there would not have been occasion or room for the women to take the place which they have taken. But to violate divine order in regard to these things is serious; it has the character of "abomination to Jehovah".

The question might arise in some minds, Why should there be a divine enactment with reference to such a small thing as a bird's nest? I think it indicates that when we come into the land the smallest detail embodies great and divine principles. The smallest things teach valuable spiritual lessons. For example, in chapter 25: 4 we read, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn". And with reference to that very scripture Paul says, "Is God occupied about the oxen, or does he say it altogether for our sakes"? (1 Corinthians 9: 10). He shews what a lesson there is in it for us. This enactment as to the bird's nest (Chapter 22: 6, 7) is evidently of special import, for a definite promise is connected with it — "That it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days". It is not a casual matter, but one which has an important effect on spiritual prosperity. The "dam" represents an element amongst God's people which is to be "let ... go"; it is to remain active and free, and not to be brought under restraint. God would teach His people to regard the maternal instinct, even in a bird, as something to be respected. He would teach us, even by a bird's nest, what He would have to be preserved amongst His people, viewed as in the inheritance. We are familiar with the fact that a bird's care for its young is one of the most touching figures that Scripture presents of God's care for His people. (See Exodus 19: 4; Deuteronomy 32: 11; Ruth 2: 12; Psalm 17: 8; Psalm 36: 7; Psalm 57: 1; Psalm 61: 4; Psalm 63: 7; Psalm 91: 4; Matthew 23: 37.)

I think "the dam" represents the kind of spirit that was seen in Paul amongst the Thessalonians. "We ... have been gentle in the midst of you, as a nurse would cherish her own children. Thus, yearning over you, we had found our delight in having imparted to you not only the glad tidings of God, but our own lives also, because ye had become beloved of us" (1 Thessalonians 2: 7, 8). It was seen also in Timothy of whom Paul says that he had "no one likeminded who will care with genuine feeling how ye get on" (Philippians 2: 20). It is suggestive that we read in another place, "Our brother Timotheus is set at

liberty" (Hebrews 13: 23). God would have the spirit represented in Timothy to be free amongst His saints. "Thou shalt in any case let the dam go".

"The dam" sets forth the spirit of Him who would have gathered the children of Jerusalem as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings. The devotion of a bird to its young is very great; it will untiringly care for them. I saw a young bird picked up which had fallen out of its nest, and it was carried into a house, and the mother bird followed it in a self devotion that did not regard any personal danger, but was set on caring for her off-spring. God would not have that spirit brought under restraint. "That it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days" depends on the injunction being carried out, shewing that it is a matter of great spiritual importance. I take it that if maternal interest and care are not free and active amongst the people of God it will not be well with us, nor will our days be prolonged. Our prosperity depends on that spirit being at liberty.

The young being taken would suggest, I think, that *the product* of maternal care becomes available for the advantage of those who leave that care at liberty. The assembly benefits by the product, and fresh broods come along.

Then in building a new house there must be a parapet for the roof (verse 8). Building is an important aspect of service, but we must build with care. See 1 Corinthians 3: 10 - 15. We must not forget to safeguard what we build so that there may not be a point of danger, and one would gather from this verse that it is the high parts of the building which most need safeguarding! It is possible for true building in the land not to be sufficiently safeguarded, so that there may be a point of danger from which unwary persons may fall. I think it will be found that if there is such a point of danger the Spirit of God will provide "a parapet". He will bring something out that will give security at that point. But each individual builder is called upon to regard this regulation.

We have been warned against being "ecclesiastical", but those who have so warned us have been the very ones who have most strongly insisted on the maintenance of assembly truth and principles. They have made "a parapet" which would preserve us from thinking that they meant we were to disregard the truth of the assembly. If such statements were used to weaken assembly truth, or to bring in laxity as to assembly principles, it would be an entirely wrong use of them.

A great object of service in the land is to preserve an unmixed and uncontaminated character of things, so that personally, and in their associations and affections, the people of God may be marked by "uncorruptedness". There is a strong warning in the next section of the chapter (verses 9 - 11) against unsuitable mixtures. All that is in the world is

corrupting, and it is very largely so now because there is a certain admixture of good with it. In Christendom, at any rate, it would be hard to find unmixed evil, and that adds to the difficulty of the present time. God would have His people preserved from that which has a mixed character. The New Testament warns us not to be carried away with "various and strange doctrines" (Hebrews 13: 9) — things that are mixed. The most damaging things in christendom are a mixture of grace and law and human philosophy; and the little in them that is of God only makes them more dangerous, for it is deceptive.

The first injunction here is that the vineyard is not to be sown with two sorts of seed. That is, we are to look well to the kind of seed from which we expect to derive joy. The vineyard has in view that which makes glad the heart of man, and it is important to look for a joy that is unmixed in character. In Leviticus 19: 19, "thy field" is not to be sown with seed of two sorts. That would refer to service in general. There is an immense amount of sowing with two sorts of seed in service generally. I once heard a man speaking beautifully of Christ in the open air; he was evidently a true believer; but the next week I heard him again, and he was preaching temperance! To preach Christ, and to be labouring for the improvement of the man after the flesh, is to sow with seed of two sorts. The religious world is full of that kind of thing, and the power of Satan is behind it. Whatever may be of God in it is neutralised by mixture with what is of man.

In sowing our vineyard we have to be careful that we do not look to "seed of two sorts" for a yield of happiness. It is not to be a little of what is spiritual and then a little of what is fleshly or merely natural; not a little of Christ and then something of the world; not a little of what is heavenly and then something that is altogether of the earth. To sow on that principle is to forfeit all. That is a serious consideration. "Lest the whole of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the produce of thy vineyard, be forfeited". One might almost say that if we go in for what is spiritual we get something, and if we go in for what is natural we get something, but if we go in for both we get nothing.

The result of mixture is an entire breakdown of testimony, because true testimony depends on light being kept separate from darkness. There needs to be more distinctiveness. There is some good about all true believers — something of Christ — but Satan works by mixture to take away its distinctive character, and to bring in elements that are not of Christ and not spiritual, that there may be no pure fruit for God or unalloyed joy for His people.

We see great distinctiveness in Paul's life and service; he was an absolutely separated man — he was "separated to God's glad tidings" (Romans 1: 1). In

going to Corinth he determined to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He warned the Galatians against what he calls "a different gospel"; he warns them against "two sorts". Christ crucified is the complete public rejection of man after the flesh, and that man having been convicted and publicly rejected it is impossible to make anything of him for God; he cannot be taken account of as having any spiritual value.

Believers are looked at here as in the land, and as in the land having a vineyard, having that to which they look for joy, and they have to be careful that they do not sow it with "seed of two sorts". The recognition of the Spirit is most important; if we sow to the Spirit we reap eternal life. That is a fine vintage-wine on the lees, well refined. It is open to us all to be as happy as John was. He wrote his Gospel and epistle for that purpose. Paul too, had not been sowing his vineyard with "seed of two sorts"; he had been looking for his joy entirely in the spiritual direction.

Our vineyard has to do with securing our own joy, but ploughing raises the question of fellowship in service, and an unequal yoke is to be avoided. We are not to plough with an ox and an ass together. Some might think that if one had not two oxen an ass was better than nothing! No! They are not to plough together. An ox and an ass, however excellent the ass might be in itself, could never pull evenly together. I think it was on this principle that Paul would not take Mark with him on his missionary journey. It was not that Mark was not a Christian, but he had proved himself to be one who could not pull evenly with Paul. It is utterly impossible to work together with even true believers unless they are governed by the same principles so that they can pull evenly. It is often assumed now that one can join in Christian work with any true believer. People who differ as much one from the other as the ass does from the ox suppose that they can plough together. But it is not of God. I think it would be very difficult for an ox and an ass together to plough an even furrow. And if we take up associations in service with those who cannot pull evenly with us the work will be spoilt.

Was it not wonderful that Paul could address some brother in Philippi as a "true yoke-fellow"? Perhaps it was the jailor! But, whoever he was, he was one who could pull evenly with Paul. He must, indeed, have been an ox! Paul might have been the bigger and the stronger of the two, but whoever the "true yoke-fellow" was, he would not have been so spoken of if he had not been capable of ploughing with Paul. Paul delighted to have yoke-fellows, and though it does not follow that they all had the same degree of spiritual strength, they could pull evenly with him. He speaks of Timothy as one who

had served with him as a son with a father — they had pulled beautifully together.

Then "Thou shalt not wear a garment of mixed material, woven of wool and linen together", would suggest how we are to be clothed for the pleasure and service of God as in the land. "Wool" would speak of natural warmth and energy, while "linen" would set forth a spiritual restraint upon nature. We gather this from Ezekiel 44: 17, 18. "And it shall come to pass when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, when they minister in the gates of the inner court, and towards the house. They shall have linen tires upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird on anything that causeth sweat". The warmth of nature has its proper sphere in natural affections, and the like, but it is not to be "mixed" with that which in its character should be wholly spiritual. The priestly garments being of linen suggests a character of deportment that is free from elements which take their rise in the warmth of mere nature, and which would excite, or minister to, what is fleshly or merely of nature. How necessary it is to see that there is no mixture in regard to how we are clothed for service! The natural characteristics of the vessel remain, but they are all to be subordinated to what is spiritual. Almost the last word of the risen Lord was, "And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but do ye remain in the city till ye be clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24: 49). It is right to be fervent; the more fervent a man is in his spirit the better, but it is to be spiritual fervour, and not merely the warmth or eloquence that may be natural to the man. The "wool" and "linen" each have their place, but they are not to be mixed. All service should have a purely spiritual character. The "linen" suggests the fine texture of what is spiritual, a character of things which does not minister to what is natural, either in the one who speaks or in those to whom he speaks.

"Tassels shalt thou make thee on the four corners of thy clothing, wherewith thou coverest thyself" (verse 12). The "tassels" would imply something distinctive as marking the people of God from every point of view, for they are to be on "the four corners of thy clothing". Believers may be viewed either personally, or as in business life, or as in household relations, or as of the assembly. These might answer to the "four corners", and each is to be marked by spiritual ornamentation. I understand that the word translated "tassels" has a reference to flower buds, and if this is so it would have something to say of the energy of spiritual life coming into manifestation. There is no mention here, as in Numbers 15 of the "lace of blue", for this book regards the people of God as being wholly on heavenly ground, but they are to be invested with this distinctive ornamentation. It is good for us to be exercised that our

"clothing" should not only be without spot, but that it should have ornaments which evidence the energy of divine life in our souls. Outward correctness can be imitated, but the spontaneity of life cannot. We gather from 1 Peter 3: 3, 4 that ornamentation in a spiritual sense lies in the way our spirits are adorned, so that not only are right things done, but the spirit in which they are done gives them a grace and comeliness that is to God's glory and praise. All that is uncomely should stand rebuked by the excellency and divine adornment seen upon the people of God. The "tassels"

speak, surely, of this, and of how God would have His people to be distinguished from all others as having spiritual adornments.

From verse 13 is obviously a new section, and it concerns the "virgin" character amongst the people of God. It is of the utmost importance that this character should be preserved without reproach. A "chaste virgin" might be charged with "things for scandalous talk", and be given an evil name in Israel. This is what the enemy has been seeking to do all through the history of the church. He would, if possible, bring in reproach on the fair name of that which is espoused to Christ, and he can only be silenced by the maintenance of true "virgin" character, and by the undeniable evidence of it. The true tokens of virginity are hearts uncorrupted from simplicity as to the Christ. Paul was anxious as the father of the Corinthians that the tokens of virginity should be forthcoming. "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. But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craft, so your thoughts should be corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ" (2 Corinthians 11: 2, 3). The whole of Paul's two epistles to them had in view that the enemy, who was seeking to fasten an evil name on them, should be silenced and condemned, and that they might be truly presented as a chaste virgin. Otherwise they could only be condemned as having yielded to the world's corrupting influence. If we yield to the corrupting influence of that which has no title to us it really means spiritual death. The enemy is at work to bring reproach on our virginity, but we see the energy of divine love in Paul, and his faithful labour that we may be clear of that reproach, and that it may become manifest that we have chaste virgin character as maintained in true-hearted devotedness to the One to whom we belong. The saints at Corinth had, to some extent, yielded to the corrupting influences of the serpent and his world. But Paul laboured to free them from all those influences by presenting Christ to their affections as the One who alone was entitled to those affections.

This is how the Spirit works to secure the tokens of virginity in the saints. The Lord said of the Spirit, "ye know him". How do we know Him? By the way in

which He presents Christ to us, and glorifies Christ in our affections. If we yield ourselves to His precious ministry we shall be preserved in true virgin character. Christ will, ere long, present the assembly to Himself "glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any of such things". She will be presented without a mark of decline or decay. That is viewed in Ephesians 5: as brought about by Christ sanctifying the assembly, purifying it by the washing of water by the word, that it may answer to all that it is according to divine purpose. All His service of love has that in view. One can understand how incessantly the adversary would work to bring in elements of unfaithfulness, so that "an evil name" may attach to that which bears the name of Christ. He will do this either by subtle craft or by violence; he is as intent upon corrupting the affections of the saints as Christ and the Spirit are intent upon preserving their simplicity and integrity.

I have heard of a father compelling his converted child to go to the theatre that Christ might be driven out of her mind, but he did not succeed in his object. Under pressure of this kind it is our privilege to cry and be delivered. "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of trial". But woe be to us if we do not "cry" under such circumstances. The latter part of the chapter would suggest that there is a security in the "city" which may not be found in the "field". To keep near to our "fellow-citizens" is a great safe-guard; the companionship of the saints is full of preservative influence. To get away from it often leads to falling an easy prey to what is corrupting.

THE BELIEVER'S HOUSEHOLD CONDITIONS (JT 13)

Deuteronomy 22: 8 - 12

Notes of a Reading at a Household Baptism

JT These verses stand together in the construction of the chapter. In the building of a new house, it is to be protected lest blood should come upon it through something happening because of the lack of protection: then sowing is to be of a kind, we have one end in view — one crop, the vineyard is not to be of two sorts; then we are not to plough with an ass and an ox to ether, in our operations we are not to have mixed associations. Following on that our garment is not to be of mixed material; and then we are to have the four corners of our clothing tasselled, that is, marked off at the turning of it, the corners being something to distinguish us, which, according to Numbers, is to be of blue, the lace of blue and the tassels. These are the thoughts that enter into these verses, and I think apply to a house into which a child is born, that, as brought up, its cultivation has one end in view — it is a seed that is *wholly* right, not mixed. In Genesis we learn that in agriculture each was to be of its own kind, the fruit tree bearing fruit after its kind. The babe in a believer's house is of a kind; God graciously regards it as holy in an external way, and that helps as to what it is potentially, and whatever would militate against that thought is to be abandoned. That is what I was thinking the Lord may impress us with; it all bears on the working out of Christianity in us, developing in what is heavenly, as the tassels, compared with Numbers, have in mind.

EG Why does it start from the roof of the house?

JT Well, it serves to bring out a thought, a parapet is a protection on the roof, the house is to be guarded from what would be damaging — of course, it is not only the child in the house, but anyone. A young child could easily be damaged seriously, blood might be brought upon the house by the allowance of something which would damage it and which could be avoided. It is a convenient way of calling attention to what might happen in a house through want of care and vigilance. It is not an addition to the house, it is something that is to be an integral part of it.

EG Do you think it might be possible that there should be a fall from the house?

JT I think so, I think individuals and families have fallen through want of vigilance, of safe-guarding, for it is a matter of what is spiritual now, not a material parapet. Many young people have been damaged by want of vigilance on the part of the builders of the house, the parents.

PL Would Timothy illustrate this? "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures". Were his mother and grandmother concerned about the parapet, the divine protection? He was preserved in separation from defiling influences, his father being a Greek. Did it not all issue in the tassels of blue being seen as Timothy becomes available under Paul for the assembly?

JT That is the order, "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures". What would prevent or vitiate the knowledge of the Scriptures with a child would be the allowance of other reading matter. For instance, if the mother were to read light literature (although the Scriptures might be read), and went out to worldly affairs, a child would soon become vitiated in its appetite for the Scriptures, its knowledge would be vitiated, too. But in Timothy they were said to be "the holy scriptures", showing they were not mere ordinary literature in the eyes of a child, they were "the *holy* scriptures;" there would be a sense developed in the child of holiness in reading them. Many other such things in the parents would answer to the idea of the want of a parapet, or safeguard. It is a fall-trap; if the mother does something, why should not the child do it, and do more?

Ques Why emphasise the mother?

JT Because the mother is so much with the child. It is Timothy's mother that is alluded to; it does not look as if the father were of much account — he was a Greek — and I think the fact that so little is said of him only emphasises the importance of the mother's and grandmother's training — the maternal side in both cases. Of course, there is the other side. If the Christian father, for instance, smoked his pipe before the child, the child would, in due course, do the same, although the father might say, 'You must not do it' — and many other such things.

EG There is the thought of shedding blood in the land, but this is bringing blood on the house. What do you think as to that?

JT That works out now, and in the course of God's government one's house suffers. God respects those who are vigilant to prevent anything in their houses that would cause the children, or anyone else, to fall. One says, 'If Mr. — — — does this, he is a leading brother and I am a young man, why should not I do it, and much more?' That is how things work out, and something happens and the responsibility is yours. It is very like Romans 14, destroying the weak brother. On account of your place in the testimony, or your intelligence, you become the occasion of another falling, and God holds you responsible. The idea of blood on your house or on yourself now has to be noticed, for the type means something.

PL Would the history of Eli suggest that he brought blood on his house through lack of a parapet, his two sons being slain and himself dying, too?

JT He is a striking instance of it.

PL Hannah was the contrast to that, even in the thought of a garment — the little coat she made for Samuel, it was not mixed, it was a linen garment.

JT Yes, she followed up the child with the garment every year. With some valued brothers whom God uses, there is nothing in their houses for God. God will know how to discriminate as to that, but it is a question as to whether there has been a parapet in the house of such, whether one has not brought blood on his house; the facts would the rather indicate that the government of God is on it.

Ques Would you connect blood being on the house with the fact that there was not a blessing in the house?

JT We have to look at it in that way, for a blessing is promised on the believer's house, "Thou shalt be saved and thy house;" why should it not be there?

PL Have you the idea of the parapet in what was said to Manoah and his wife? The angel says: "... the boy shall be a Nazarite of God", and it says later: "the child [referring to Samson] grew, and Jehovah blessed him", Judges 13: 5, 24. Would that be the answer to the parapet that the angel urges in regard of his mother particularly?

JT You may be sure she followed it out. It is very sorrowful to see a gifted man, it may be, a valued brother, having no blessing in his house. God blessed the house of Obed-edom because he kept the ark, that would not be merely his house, but all he had.

Ques It says, "If anyone should in any wise fall from it". Does that go outside the actual members of the house?

JT I think so — "anyone". I believe a Christian household is intended to be a place of safety, a clean place, so to say (that is a scriptural expression). Falling from the roof might be fatal, it might mean that the person is never recovered spiritually. Well, the blood is on that house. Suppose the young people came in and there is a game of cards started, or some other thing like that, which seems harmless in itself, perhaps, as we say, yet is worldly, and leads in that direction. If a young person sees it in a believer's house, he goes further; 'Why should I not go further?' he says. So the blood is on the house, and I believe houses are devoid of blessing just because of that.

Ques In connection with the word to the Philippian jailor you mentioned in prayer. "Thou shalt be saved and thy house" — how far does salvation go there?

JT It is salvation in the fullest sense.

EG Do you think David recognised in his last words that perhaps there had been some of these features missing? He said, "Although my house be not so before God", 2 Samuel 23: 5.

JT Well, the sword was there, and it was against his house — a terrible thing, a governmental penalty. A very solemn thing! For instance, you have two brothers; Absalom slew his brother, and then Absalom suffers, and the sword was never to depart from David's house; it was not a sword against the enemy, but against his house. David always had a sword against his enemy, but a sword in his house is against his house, and it is by God. A very solemn thing!

EG Does it come out in regard to Adonijah? It says he never refused him anything. Would that be the lack of a parapet?

JT Exactly. Eli, too, did not restrain his sons. He did it in a perfunctory way afterwards; he says, "No, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear" (1 Samuel 2: 24); but why should he not have followed up his sons and dealt with them at the outset. Yet he was a man you could not but respect. He was a fat man, a man like that is lazy spiritually and does not mind what the children do.

The seed of one kind means that you have one thing in your mind for the child; you want him to come into fellowship and be of service in the testimony. When that is what you aim at, everything hinges on that. But if you want him to shine in the world, you have another crop in mind, another seed — many have that, they send their children to college to make something of them in a worldly way; it may appear to be legitimate, but you have another thing in view, it is not merely that he may be able to make an honest living, but to give him a status in the world; many do that and think it is right. You have a boy or girl in fellowship, but you want them to have a place in the world, and that is another crop.

Ques You are not despising education?

JT Oh, they need to learn to read and write but what crop have you in mind?

AEL Why is it the grape that is chosen, not wheat or barley, for instance, as an example of the seed?

JT The vineyard has a great place in Scripture. God had planted one for Himself, what did He have in mind? That it would make His heart glad and make the heart of man glad, too — wine does that. It is not a cereal, as you say, it is a vineyard. The way it reads literally is: "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with seed of two sorts, lest the whole of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the produce of thy vineyard, be forfeited". The second sort would damage the whole and it would be forfeited. The margin reads, that it might be hallowed or set apart to God; but I suppose the reading here is correct, that the thing is lost. It is a poor thing to see a child brought up in a dual sort of way, half for the testimony and half for the world; it is not fair to the child itself. We are obligated to our children, and if we are not true to our obligation, there is forfeiture, he is lost; whereas if he had been properly cared for and properly watched over in his infancy and boyhood, he would be a wholly right seed and shine in the testimony.

AEL Giving joy to his father's heart and possibly also joy to God.

JT Quite so. Obed was a worshipper, or servant of God; Scripture gives a great place to that thought, one that is to become famous in Israel, that would be famous, of course, in God's account.

PL Did his mother start early with the parapet? — "Where thou diest will I die", "Thy people shall be my people", and so on.

JT Yes, she would impart all that into the child, that would be her ideal. So that we have the line in connection with her and Rahab. Rahab began with the idea of a line, the line is through Rahab and Ruth; that is something going through, she is equal to Rahab. Rahab is an ancestress, she is on the line, but on the maternal side; she was a person of another character at one time, but she was now drying flax and she had thread and she had a cord; it all emanates from the flax, that is the thought, the raw flax is spun into a thread, then into a cord, something powerful by which she let down the spies that they might go another way, different from the world. So that the line ran through and David is the great result — Bethlehem-Judah. Christians generally lose this thought of the household and how it preserves and conserves what is of God.

We should see to it that it goes through and is not stopped at any given turn, but that it goes through to the full issue.

Rem I was thinking that all the households that were brought before us produced something to stand in the breach at the time of breakdown, Samuel and Samson and David, and then Timothy.

JT Quite so.

EG With regard to the question of seed — "thy seed", it says, "which thou hast sown;" in Genesis, alluding to the seasons, it speaks of a seed-time; I was wondering if there is in the household a seed-time, a time specially suitable for sowing.

JT Yes, the allusion here would be to what you put into the child by way of instruction and what you set before him, the impressions that you make on him. "While the earth remains", it says "seed-time", but there is no use in seed-time if there is not to be a harvest, and the harvest is the end in view. Genesis 1 sets out the principle that the harvest is to be according to the sowing, there is to be no mixture. Then there is the cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, all that stands in relation to the seed. There would be the cold and heat in the house, the summer and the winter, and the day and the night; the day and the night, I think, allude to the building up of manhood by gaining experience. All that enters into this.

FS Have not most of us had to own that it has been the prayers and influence of our mothers that have in any measure brought us into blessing?

JT Quite so. I suppose the first great mother is Sarah; she is the model mother. With her it was a question of what kind of companionship her son should have: "The son of this handmaid shall not inherit with my son" (Genesis 21: 10).

Rem She saw that all would be forfeited on that line — two seeds. Paul refers to it in connection with the thought of seed in the epistle to the Galatians.

JT There is a wonderful line of mothers, beginning with Sarah. Then Rebecca, who took the curse on her for her son — "On me be thy curse, my son" (Genesis 27: 13) — a remarkable carrying on of the maternal thought. Then Moses' mother: she saw the child was proper and fair to God and hid him; she put him into death, and in baptising our children we are doing what she did. She put him where, in the full recognition of death he was safeguarded, in the sedge. It was not the current of the river, you would not put a child there, no one could go into the current of the river but Jesus — I mean the full thought of death — but we put the child into the sedge; it is just the symbol of the thing, it is the river, but it is a question of the child having part in it in that sense, not the flowing river; it could not subsist in the current, but it is wonderful that it is the same river, it is the same death, he is accredited with it.

Then the principle of the ploughing with an ox and an ass might easily enter into the household, bringing in a foreign idea in our operations and undertakings. And our garments, that is, our circumstances, are not to be

mixed; we do not go to tea parties in the neighbourhood with the worldly, that is, our neighbours; it is very easy to link on with people. Our neighbours are the Lord's people, and only those; we are not thinking of anything beyond being courteous to others. "Wool and linen" — it is the warp and woof of the thing, you have that in your mind, that you will not recognise the social around you.

PL I was thinking of Elizabeth and Zacharias. The child John was brought up in the deserts. You see the kind of company Elizabeth his mother kept, when Mary visited her.

JT That is right, and the hill country is a suggestion of moral elevation, above the level of the world. So that our surroundings are, so to speak, all linen, the wool is left out.

The idea of a thing woven gives the thought that you must have something in view, it is not something taken on later, it is the whole fabric of your life. You have a right principle to start with and you do not admit of anything different all the way through.

AEL So the Lord's tunic was of one piece throughout.

JT Just so. Here it is just the material in the garment. We cannot help having garments, we must have them, but it is a question of the material in them, what you make them of. Then in verse 12 we have the garments themselves. "The four corners of thy clothing, wherewith thou coverest thyself". This is an additional thing, it is not only that you have the saints in your surroundings and all that sort of thing, but this is an additional thing, a turning point, the corner where you turn round. You might get out of sight of the others, that is the idea of a sharp corner — it is in the turning the tassel is to be, that is, it is what you do on Monday as well as on the Lord's day.

PL This is the right kind of Monday; the saints have the blue, the heavenly colour, on the hem of their garments.

JT Yes, you are referring to Numbers 15, for the allusion is to that. In Deuteronomy we have the actual dwelling in Canaan. The blue lace was simply ornamental, it is not alluded to here. I suppose the tassel could be seen on either side of the garment, for it is a question of a corner, where a person turns round, so to speak, in his circumstances. There is equalisation: You are not different on Monday or Tuesday from what you are on the Lord's day. You go to business on Monday, your brethren do not see you, perhaps — what are you now?

ECG Is your thought that, instead of the circumstances overwhelming you, you are helped of the Lord to ornament them?

JT That is what I understand by the corners; it is a peculiar expression as to the garments. The force of it is in the antitype, I think, it is a question of the believer's surroundings.

GRG Would the four corners indicate all round?

JT That is what I thought; a tassel on each corner.

Deuteronomy 23

- DEUTERONOMY 23 (CAC 5)

DEUTERONOMY 23 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 23

"The congregation of Jehovah" is necessarily exclusive of what is unsuitable to Him. The word translated "congregation" is only used before in this book with reference to the assembly at Horeb; the Greek translators rendered it *ecclesia*, and the fact that the Lord used this word to designate *His* assembly gives it deep interest for those who love Him. It generally refers in the Old Testament to the actual gathering together of the people of God for His service, though it is sometimes used of them in a more general way. Psalm 22: 22, 25; Psalm 35:18; Psalm 40: 9, 10 shew that it is the place of holy activities on the part of Christ both Godward and manward. "The congregation of Jehovah" when the Lord was here consisted of those to whom He could make God known, and in the midst of whom He could praise, though this could not be realised in a full sense until redemption was accomplished and He was risen from the dead. The congregation is spoken of in Psalm 149: 1 as "the congregation of the godly". The effect of its true character being realised in Nehemiah's day was that "They separated from Israel all the mixed multitude" (Nehemiah 13: 1 - 3). It was a grievous offence when Eliashib the priest allowed Tobijah the Ammonite to have a chamber in the courts of the house of God. It shewed a complete absence of the exclusive spirit which can alone maintain holy associations. There is no such thing contemplated in Scripture as God's service or worship being carried on by a "mixed multitude".

The eunuch, the bastard, the Ammonite, the Moabite, would represent what is unsuitable to God, and therefore cannot have any place in His congregation. This does not mean that any individual is excluded from the blessings of grace, whatever may be his condition or birth. The Ethiopian eunuch, Ebed-melech in Jeremiah 39 and Ruth the Moabitish woman shew this clearly, and Isaiah 56: 3 - 8 is a beautiful word in this connection. Grace can, and does, remove every disability where there is turning to God in repentance. But the moral character represented figuratively here can never be in the congregation of Jehovah.

A eunuch represents that which has lost its original and God-given character and energy, and has become like a sapless and fruitless tree. How much in the Christian profession is like this! Such a condition is ready for complete apostasy. It is like the dried up fig-tree (Matthew 21: 19), or the dried up branch of John 15: 6. Jude refers to some as being "trees without fruit"; they were outwardly amongst the people of God as "spots in your love-feasts", but

they had no place truly in His congregation; God will not have such an element there.

The bastard represents one who has not come legitimately amongst the people of God, and not having a true pedigree has never been a partaker of the chastening to which all God's sons are subjected (Hebrews 12). An Ammonite or Moabite, being descended from Lot, represents those who have had some connection, according to the flesh, with the people of God. It is to be noted that Ammon and Moab are regarded much more severely than Edom and Egypt. They originated in the moral abasement of a true, but failing, saint, and when what is of God is corrupted it is worse in His sight than that which is purely natural or worldly, and it results in greater hostility to His people and testimony.

Those who have departed from the truth are more hostile to it than those who have never known it.

Neither an Edomite nor an Egyptian were to be abhorred. They were both to be regarded, in the light of this chapter, as in the view of God for blessing. "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob *and Esau* concerning things to come" (Hebrews 11: 20). Edom represents those whom we are to regard as brethren, and who have an assigned portion from God, which, nevertheless, stops short of His full thought for His people. The Egyptian would be rather the man of the world as such, living on his own resources and without the knowledge of God, but not viewed as an adversary. This scripture supposes that of such there might be some who would desire to share in the privileges of the land and the congregation of God, and "in the third generation" they might acquire a new status whereby they might be qualified to do so — typically as on the ground of death and resurrection. The spiritual privileges of the congregation are exclusive of elements contrary to God, or unsuitable to Him, but they are open to those who through godly exercise desire them, and who recognise that they can only be taken up as of a new generation and on spiritual grounds. In the congregation of God things are maintained in spiritual vigour, and in the true and holy affections of sons, and elements of departure and fleshly pride are not admitted. The congregation is holy because it is "the congregation of Jehovah".

The "congregation" is the place of privilege, but there is also the "camp" — the place of conflict; there will not be the enjoyment of the one without taking up the strenuous exercises of the other; and holiness is necessary in both. As in the land we have to face many subtle foes, and we shall not be able to overcome them save as God is with us. The enemy has ever been attacking those who have in any measure occupied divine territory,

but when holiness has been maintained God has walked in the midst of the camp to deliver His people. Hence it is of the greatest importance to "keep thee from every evil thing ... and thy camp shall be holy, that he see nothing unseemly with thee, and turn away from thee" (verses 9, 14). If we lose the presence and power of God we shall have no true power for conflict, and to secure His presence there must be holiness which removes every unseemly thing.

Then verses 15, 16 are a beautiful touch of evangelical grace. Any runaway slave is to be received; "he shall dwell with thee, even in thy midst". God's people are to give refuge to any fugitive from the bondage of sin, the world or Satan. It supposes that he has heard a report of the grace that reigns amongst God's people, and has escaped from his old master unto them. He appreciates a place amongst them, and chooses it as seeming good to him, and what he desires is to be freely accorded. He is to have the liberty of the land, and to dwell "in the place that he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it seemeth good to him". Onesimus being sent back to Philemon is quite in keeping with this scripture, because he was sent back to be received "not any longer as a bondman, but above a bondman, a beloved brother". He was to be received, not to be in bondage, but with all the welcome that Philemon would have accorded to Paul, his beloved father in Christ, God would have His people to be known as liberators. How beautifully the Spirit of God has put together the holiness of the congregation, and of the conflict which will maintain what is due to God, and the compassionate mercy which will freely open its doors to receive a poor runaway slave, and which will put no burden of oppression upon him.

Verse 18 contains the only mention of the house of God which is found in this book, and it is here seen as the place where vows are paid; that is, where the devoted affections of His people find expression. It is blessed to consider that God looks for movements of devotedness to Himself that will find expression in His house. This is a very distinct feature of the house of God, characterising it from Genesis 28 onwards. See Genesis 28: 17, 20. A vow is the fruit of exercise God-ward, and the scripture before us shews that what is unclean cannot be dedicated to God. Everything that has the true character of a vow must be spiritual and not fleshly.

Jacob's vow was that of one who was small in divine things; he was spiritually immature, for he was thinking of himself and his own needs. There is a great contrast between the free and magnificent commitment of God to him in grace and faithfulness (verses 13 - 15) and his conditional commitment to God (verses 20 - 22). But still in the sense of dependence upon God he vowed; he

felt it was due that there should be something for God. And no doubt his vow was acceptable so far as it went. If we are only prepared to give a tenth to God He values that; the purpose of heart that there should be *something* for Him is very precious in His sight. Jacob had to go through a great deal of discipline to prepare him to pay his vow. If at any time we have purposed in our hearts any true dedication to God, and afterwards let other things hinder it, it is very likely that He will bring us back through His chastening ways to pay our vows.

Hannah's was a more advanced exercise (1 Samuel 1). She was godly, but was under reproach from an adversary, and the reproach intensified in her soul the spirit of a vow. If all had gone smoothly, and she had had "ten sons" she might never have vowed at the house of Jehovah, and for the house of Jehovah. Thanksgiving has not the same character as a vow (see Leviticus 7: 15, 16);

it has not the same intensity of devotion. Sometimes the ways of God with us seem to leave us under reproach. We do not appear to have the same manifestations of divine favour as others. There may be that which the adversary uses to provoke us. It is well if such an exercise develops in us the spirit of a vow — an intense desire and purpose to bring forth something that shall be entirely for God. Hannah's thought went far beyond Jacob's; he would give one-tenth to God and retain nine-tenths for himself; but she would give *the whole* of what He gave her back to Him for the service of His house. Hannah overcame the wicked one, and thus shewed that divine strength was with her.

In Psalm 116 there is a further experience. Here is one who can perform his vows. He loves Jehovah because his voice and his supplications have been heard. He has known a full deliverance; he has believed, and he is full of Jehovah's benefits; he returns to his rest, and knows the bountifulness of God's dealings with him. He is really in the blessedness of life, walking before Jehovah "in the land of the living". And, in result, he performs his "vows unto Jehovah, yea; before all his people, in the courts of Jehovah's house". It is touching to see that "Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints", stands in immediate connection with the performing of vows. It seems to intimate that their very lives are given up in the spirit of a vow, and this would be in keeping with Romans 14: 8. "For both if we should live, it is to the Lord we live; and if we should die, it is to the Lord we die; both if we should live then, and if we should die, we are the Lord's". Paul's readiness to be poured out (Philippians 2: 17; 2 Timothy 4: 6) is a beautiful example of one prepared to die in the true spirit of a vow.

One would desire to think more of the house of God as the place where there is something for God. It is noticeable that when the house of God is spoken of there is a tendency to dwell upon what is there for men, but Deuteronomy only presents it as the place where vows are paid — the place where there is something for God. God has enriched us with precious thoughts of Christ which have become, to some extent, the wealth and joy of our hearts. But do we think sufficiently that God would have such things to be dedicated for His pleasure? The result for God is, after all, the most important thing. We have the privilege of bringing our vows to His house. Their being paid "before all his people" gives them assembly character; all are to be refreshed and stimulated by them. If we are conscious that we are possessed of something which God can delight in, let us not be behind in the purpose of heart that will devote it to His service in His house.

Jephthah's vow (Judges 11: 30) is a warning against vowing unintelligently, and saying more with our lips than we have thought of doing. Such a vow might not really be for God's pleasure at all. I am afraid that most Christians are guilty of having said more in their prayers or hymns than they are prepared to carry out practically. If all believers had performed the vows thus uttered there would have been a very different result for God. Those who vow and do not pay their vows are regarded by God as fools, and He has no pleasure in them. (Ecclesiastes 5: 1 - 5). See Deuteronomy 23: 21 - 23.

The fullest exemplification of One with the vows of God upon Him was the Lord Jesus Himself; He was the true Nazarite, and His self-dedication in love as the Hebrew Servant (Exodus 21: 5) was in the true spirit of a vow.

Then verses 19, 20 shew that amongst the people of God there is to be found a kindly affection which acts without thought of any gain for self, and on different lines from what is legitimate in our commercial dealings with men. Our brother has need, and we do not shut up our bowels from him, nor do we use his need to secure any gain for ourselves. It is the true spirit of "the brotherhood" (1 Peter 2: 17). The principle of it would apply both to "the world's substance", and to the spiritual wealth gained in the inheritance. Both are to be used in grace for the benefit of the brotherhood with no self-advantage in view such as place, reputation, or the praise of men. The taking of "interest" in that form would be displeasing to God. But it is always right to seek "the glory which comes from God alone", or, as we read here, "that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the business of thy hand in the land".

The grace in which the inheritance is held makes us welcome to go into our neighbour's vineyard or cornfield and eat our fill of his grapes or corn. But the same grace would restrain us from appropriating them in a wholesale way as if

they were our own (verses 24, 25). The "vessel" and the "sickle" are for use in our own vineyard or cornfield, but not in our neighbour's. The fruits of our neighbour's labour, and of God's favour to him, are not to be dealt with as if they were our own produce. We have liberty to enjoy personally the good of our neighbour's spiritual fruits. Whatever he has of joy in the Holy Spirit, or of the preciousness of Christ, we may freely appropriate for our own joy and nourishment. But we must beware of using the "vessel" or the "sickle". The apostle's words in Galatians 6: 4 are in keeping with what is here before us: "But let each prove his own work, and then he will have his boast in what belongs to himself alone, and not in what belongs to another". We are welcome to get the good for ourselves of the spiritual thoughts of others, but it is unlawful to use them as if they were the fruit of our own exercises. One might pass off thus as having a good vineyard or cornfield, when in truth all belonged to another. And "if any man reputes himself to be something, being nothing, he deceives himself". A man may get a reputation by repeating the thoughts of others as if they were his own, when he only has them in his "vessel", and not as masticated and assimilated food, but it is not the kind of reputation to be coveted.

Deuteronomy 24

- DEUTERONOMY 24 (CAC 5)
- OUR HEAVENLY PART (JT 57)
- THE LORD AS A MAN OF LEISURE (JT 61)

DEUTERONOMY 24 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 24

The first section of this chapter contemplates an action which is not according to the heart of God. He says, "I hate putting away" (Malachi 2: 16). And the Lord Himself said, referring to this scripture, "Moses in view of your hard heartedness, allowed you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not thus" (Matthew 19: 8). Divine thoughts were disclosed at the beginning, and they will ultimately be established and secured. But God has often to take a course governmentally which is not at all according to His heart. He does it reluctantly, as the glory went away in Ezekiel. In Hezekiah's day He asked His people, "Where is the bill of your mother's divorce? ... for your transgressions is your mother put away". (Isaiah 1: 1 and see also Jeremiah 3: 8). First Israel and then Judah were sent away; their going into captivity was their public divorce from Jehovah; and yet His heart followed them, as we see so touchingly in the prophets, and Jeremiah 3: 1 intimates that there was grace in His heart that would, in case of repentance and returning to Him, rise above all that was governmental and receive them again.

Unseemly things in God's people may necessitate His publicly disowning them; and the assembly has to act in harmony with God's government as well as with His grace. There is binding as well as loosing, retaining of sins as well as remitting (Matthew 18: 18; John 20: 23). But it is always after much long-suffering that God disowns what has stood in relation to Him; He lingers over it in the reluctance of love. The secret of all departure is getting away from the consciousness of divine love; then unseemly things come in; leaving first love opens the door for other things to come in. As we read Revelation 2, Revelation 3 we see how one unseemly thing after another came in until in the end the Lord had to say, "I am about to spue thee out of my mouth". But His appeals to the assemblies shew the reluctance of His love to break off relations; even to Laodicea He says, "Behold I stand at the door and am knocking". He may be compelled to remove the lamp out of its place, or to spue the assembly out of His mouth as nauseous to Him, but there is no "hard-heartedness" on His part. Persistent evil, unrepented of, eventually necessitates this action of holy and righteous government.

Jehovah called the attention of Jeremiah to the fact that He had given "backsliding Israel" a bill of divorce, and that "treacherous Judah", had not taken warning from this. I think that Protestantism is very much like "treacherous Judah", not having taken to heart the Lord's dealings with that

part of the Christian profession which answers to Israel, where the woman Jezebel is permitted, who teaches and leads astray the Lord's servants to commit fornication and to eat of idol sacrifices (Revelation 2: 20). The fact that the Lord owns a remnant in Thyatira is really a disowning of the public body, and in that sense a removal of the candlestick; this, I believe, has taken place as regards the Papal Church. But Protestantism, though having peculiar privileges, has not answered to the Lord's mind any more than Popery, and is in imminent danger of being also sent away as divorced. But a door of repentance is still open for all in the Christian profession, if they will avail themselves of it. Judah had a privileged place, and yet turned out to be worse than "backsliding Israel"; the fact that she had more light and privilege than Israel made her more culpable and more distasteful to God. If unseemly things are found in those who have greater privileges than others they are so much the more offensive to God. It therefore becomes us not to be high-minded but to fear; if we continue in the goodness of God we shall not be cut off.

The prophets shew what a great place the thought of recovery has in the heart of God. See Isaiah 54, Jeremiah 3, Hosea 2, etc., etc. Israel and Judah went after "many lovers", but the faithful love of Jehovah yearned for their return to Him, and He will yet bring it to pass in His mercy. Becoming "another man's wife", would, I think, imply the formation of a definite bond like the covenant of Daniel 9: 27, or Isaiah 28: 15. This would indicate a state of complete apostasy, from which there is no return to divine favour. The scriptures in Hebrews 6: 4; 10: 26 refer to definite apostasy. But there may be sad departure, and great unfaithfulness in going after "many lovers", which has not the character under God's eye of apostasy, and from this there may be recovery through the faithfulness and mercy of God. It will be so with Israel, and saints of the assembly have proved recovering mercy in a remarkable way, if we consider what Church history has been. In christendom today there is not only gross departure, but the air is full of the spirit of actual apostasy. Let us beware of decline in the appreciation of divine love, and the weakening of affectionate fidelity to Christ, for if we begin to slip away there is no telling how far we may go! On the down grade the tendency is ever for movement to be accelerated rather than arrested.

The man having "newly taken a wife", or, as it is literally, "having taken a new wife", in verse 5 has, I believe, specific reference to Christ and the assembly. Verse 1 would have a bearing on the Church, as well as Israel, viewed as in responsibility, and finding no favour because of "some unseemly thing". But verse 5 views the assembly as the product of the work of God and the subject of the complacent love of Christ — His blest companion, gladdened by Him. It is the assembly viewed as the fruit of divine purpose and spiritual formation;

as such she is His own flesh, and there are no unseemly things in that. Think of Christ being *entirely* for His house and His wife at the present time! This present period answers to the "one year". He is not going out with the army to subdue His enemies now; He will do that presently when the year has expired. The "one year" is a kind of parenthesis in the ways of God; it is a special period during which the service of Christ towards the assembly is going on. *God* is at the present time ordering and over-ruling providentially in the world, and keeping doors open for His glad tidings, but *Christ* is entirely devoted to the assembly; no kind of business otherwise is imposed upon Him. Jehovah has said to Him, "Sit at my right hand until I put thine enemies as footstool of thy feet" (Psalm 110: 1). Christ is exempted from every business; He is in restfulness at God's right hand to be free for His house, and to gladden the wife whom He has taken. His undivided attention and affection is given to her to gladden her; He is wholly for the assembly. Our response in affection to Him will be commensurate with our apprehension and appreciation of His love and service. That service is very effective, for it eventuates in the assembly being presented glorious, "having no spot, or wrinkle, or any of such things". The assembly is subjected to the Christ as her Head; she is subjected to His love and to love's service and gladdening; she appreciates and enjoys it. The world is not getting the attention of Christ today either to judge things or to put things right; He said expressly, "I pray not for the world"; He is not occupied with nations and their ways. The world is going on with what it thinks great, but Christ is occupied with "his own flesh" down here. His "house" is the circle of His interests, but His "wife" is the delight of His heart, His comfort as He is hers.

God's thoughts were "from the beginning", and in the end they will be brought to fruition. The assembly will be presented glorious, and Israel will be clothed with the comeliness of Christ, and will be Head of the nations. But between the beginning and the end there come in the divine ways governmentally with reference to what stands responsibly in relation to Christ. In that connection unseemly things may be found, and a letter of divorce may be given.

Faithfulness on the line of responsibility and the working out of things according to divine purpose will ultimately blend. When the assembly is caught up everything that has been the fruit of exercise and faithfulness in the responsible course will be found eternally secured in the condition of purpose. The undivided attention and love of Christ for the assembly could never be without spiritual result. I do not doubt that through the dark ages there have been those whose hearts have been kept in the consciousness of the love of Christ, and who have proved the fidelity of His service.

If we are not gladdened as the result of the activities of the love of Christ towards us it intimates that there may be some unseemly thing with us; it raises a serious exercise.

There is that in the public profession which has been, or will be, sent away as divorced; but there is something which will not be sent away, but which will be cherished and gladdened by the love of Christ through time and to eternity. An individual appreciation of the love of Christ prepares us to appreciate His love for the assembly. We learn to take account of the whole company that stands in relation to Him as Head, and is His counterpart, His own flesh, the subject of His love and service.

Then neither the handmill nor the upper millstone are to be taken in pledge (verse 6). To put our mills into pledge would mean that we should be left without ability to grind our corn. There is plenty of corn today, even the finest of the wheat. Those who minister the word are the oxen who tread out the corn (see chapter 25: 4); they thresh wheat as Gideon did in the wine-press. But before it can become bread it has to be ground in the mill, and this is an individual exercise of vital importance. Probably the small result from much ministry can be accounted for by the mills not having been used. We must do our own grinding; the ministers of the word cannot do that for us. We have to apply our understanding to what we hear, and not be content to hear precious statements without putting them through a process by which we apprehend in detail what they mean. I am afraid that many statements which we are constantly hearing really convey very little meaning to us. We often say that we have had a good word, but do we grind the corn? If we do not it will not become life to us. A statement of Scripture is not food for me until I understand spiritually, at least in measure, what it means, and understanding does not come apart from the exercise of which grinding the corn is a figure. It would appear to have been woman's work to use the mill, for the Lord speaks of "two women grinding at the mill", which would suggest typically its subjective character, and it would also intimate that two might co-operate in such exercises with mutual help and benefit. And this is important, not only for our life but for God's pleasure and service, for if we do not use the mill we shall have no "fine flour" for oblations (Leviticus 2). In result the priests will not be fed and the service of God will go down to a low level.

To steal a brother or to sell him (verse 7) is a very serious matter; it is a capital offence, punishable by death. There is the possibility that it may be done, or there would not be legislation against it. One may use one's personal influence over a brother in such a way as to get an undue hold upon him, so that he is no longer in spiritual freedom in the inheritance. A brother might be

stolen by personal kindness which brought him unduly under influence, like Absalom kissing the people and attaching them to himself; we are told that he "stole the hearts of the men of Israel". "The thief comes not but that he may steal"; he would have the sheep for himself not for Christ. Paul warned the elders of Ephesus, where there was the greatest light, that "from among your own selves shall rise up men speaking perverted things to draw away the disciples after them". That would really be stealing the brethren. A heretic is one who attaches people to himself by some particular view, and thus steals them away from the unity of the faith, and sells them into bondage to something that is not of God. Men-stealers had been at work both in Galatia and at Corinth; self was their object, not Christ nor the good of the brethren. How different were the motives of Paul! "We pray to God that ye may do nothing evil; not that *we* may appear approved, but that *ye* may do what is right, and *we* be as reprobates" (2 Corinthians 13: 7). This is the spirit of a true servant; he does not want the brethren for himself, or his own gain, but for Christ and for the pleasure of God. Paul was willing to be regarded as worthless if what was right could be promoted in the saints.

In immediate connection with this is a three-fold "take heed" as to the plague of leprosy (verses 8, 9). Having self as an object is very likely to result in what is leprous. It is a warning against the will of the flesh coming into evidence even in the land. Priestly teaching as to this is to be heeded. Nothing of the will of the flesh is to have place, Miriam is brought in as a warning, as one who had a very distinguished place in the testimony, but in whom the flesh came out in spiritual assumption, and an unwillingness to take a subordinate place when the sovereignty of God had given the chief place to another. It was flesh in a very religious form, able to criticise the conduct even of Moses, and to claim that Jehovah had spoken to them. We may learn in this the danger of the will of the flesh coming out in speaking against servants to whom the Lord has given a special place. In principle this is speaking against Christ. Indeed Christ is in the saints, and if we thought of this we should be very careful how we speak against them. The leprosy of the Jew came out in his reproaching Christ for taking up publicans and sinners, and now the Gentile, and also in claiming to be the one God had spoken to. Miriam had to learn how dependent she was for cleansing on the intercession of the one she had spoken against.

The divine nature would lead us to respect our brother even if he is poor in Israel. If a brother comes under any obligation to us we must take care that it does not become the occasion of any arbitrary exaction. The giving of his "pledge" (verses 10, 11) is to be a perfectly free act on his part; we are only to want from him what he is prepared to render in liberty; there is to be nothing compulsory about brotherly actions in such a case.

Then if he is needy his pledge is to be returned at the going down of the sun. Our brother's comfort is to be more to us than our own interest; his upper garment would be his comfort by night, and he is not to be deprived of it. It shews the magnanimous spirit which is to govern our brotherly relations. We should not like the help we have given him by our loan to become an occasion of discomfort to him.

But some one will say, What about righteousness? Well, if your brother blesses you that is better than having his pledge or your money! And God says, "It shall be righteousness unto thee before Jehovah thy God". We are very slow to learn that righteousness is to act like God! Then, on the other hand, as to what is due to a poorer brother we are not to delay to render it (verses 14, 15) "Neither shall the sun go down upon it". Is any one crying against me to Jehovah because I have not rendered to him what is in any wise due? That will be sin upon me, a very marked contrast to the action of grace in verse 13 being righteousness to the one who performs it.

Consideration for the poor, the widow, and the stranger is a marked characteristic of this book. See verses 17 - 22. The wealth of the land is to be enjoyed in a spirit of consideration for those who are less favoured. We are to remember that we were bondmen in Egypt, and that we have been redeemed in God's love and pity from thence, and that is to have such an effect upon us that the same spirit in which God has acted towards us becomes active in us towards others.

OUR HEAVENLY PART (JT 57)

Genesis 22:19; Genesis 24: 62 - 65; Deuteronomy 24: 5

JT We have alluded in our prayer to the opening verses of Ephesians: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ", so that our blessings are in the heavenlies, and not earthly. Although we are actually on earth, the assembly too, and the Spirit also, yet the assembly is heavenly; the assembly is out of heaven. Then in Corinthians we have, "Such as the heavenly one, such also the heavenly ones". With these verses in mind, the first scripture is read because it does not record that Isaac came down from the mountain. It records much about his going up, that is going up to die, and after the figurative death of Isaac it is said in verse 14, "Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh; as it is said at the present day, On the mount of Jehovah will be provided". Then we read, in verse 19, "And Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba. And Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba".

After this, we have recorded the genealogy of Rebecca, who is the assembly in type: "And Bethuel begot Rebecca" (verse 23). In chapter 23 Sarah dies, figurative of Israel's disappearance off the scene to make way for the assembly, and then the whole of chapter 24 speaks of the assembly in type. This is a very long chapter of 67 verses. The verses we have read refer to Rebecca's coming to Isaac, and it pictures Isaac, as it were, at leisure, not occupied in any ordinary manner, but just free. Nor does it speak of Abraham at the end of the chapter; it is Isaac, and Isaac is said to be the servant's master, therefore it is a question of Isaac and Rebecca. These are the great subjects of the chapter, according to the apostle Paul's comment in Ephesians, "*I* speak as to Christ, and as to the assembly". The type speaks of Christ and the assembly, and therefore the assembly peculiarly fits into it, and the Lord's supper fits into it. The verse in Deuteronomy is read from the books of Moses, that is the typical books, to show in type the Lord as having had a whole year of leisure after He takes the assembly. "When a man hath newly taken a wife, he shall not go out with the army, neither shall any kind of business be imposed upon him; he shall be free for his house one year, and shall gladden his wife whom he hath taken".

It is thought that this outline would indicate to the brethren what may be profitably before us and that it may tend to lift us up to our heavenly part, especially as we are now in the Lord's day, the first day of the week.

WH Would the thought of Mount Moriah, and going up to die, that you called attention to, suggest the elevation on which God is working, rather than the meeting of need? Are His own thoughts in view?

JT It would seem so. Genesis particularly affords God such opportunities. It is a book of liberty, not a book of the law, such as Exodus, Leviticus, or Numbers. In Genesis we see men at liberty, free to act according to their intelligence, and according to the liberty which God grants. So Christ and the assembly are peculiarly in it. It portrays the present time, which is not governed by public laws. The world of course is governed by Him in a providential way, but not directly; what He is dealing with directly is the assembly. The assembly does not come under the law in that sense. It is a remarkable period in which the Lord Jesus is seen above; of course, He is spoken of in the doctrine of Christianity as in heaven at the right hand of God, but He is not occupied particularly with anything on the earth or in the universe, but just the assembly and the gospel, which bears on it and has the assembly in view.

AR Would you say what you have in mind in remarking that Isaac is not said to have returned with Abraham?

JT Just that the Lord Jesus has gone into heaven. He will come out too, but not publicly; He comes out for the assembly with the assembling shout; but His public coming is subsequent to that. As it is rightly understood, we should be more taken up with that state of things, and we would be heavenly instead of grovelling down here in earthliness.

Ques Does the thought of divine co-operation come in — "they went both of them together", as in John's gospel, the Father and Son moving together?

JT Yes. The matter was between themselves, not a public matter. So the death of Jesus was carried out under divine direction. It was not simply that men did it; but it was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. They had taken and crucified Him, but that is how the matter is presented. The death of Christ is a public matter, as the book of Acts records it, but it is a question now of the Father, and the Son on the Father's throne. All the prophetic public matter is held in abeyance; according to what Peter says, "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things", Acts 3: 21. All the prophets since time began are bearing on it, but the fulfilment of their word is in abeyance at the present time.

AR Whom does Abraham set forth in the type in this chapter?

JT I would say generally the Father; God of course, but God as Father; only, when we come to the end of the chapter, he is not in evidence. It is Christ that

is viewed in the type as the master of the servant; Abraham is not mentioned at the close of the chapter. It is Christ, and I think that is how the matter stands in the Lord's supper.

Ques What is signified by the camels?

JT It is another type of the Spirit. There are several types of the Spirit in the chapter, and the camels are a type of the Spirit as the power by which the assembly is taken to Isaac, and the servant, of course, is a type of the Spirit. He does everything for Rebecca, and what is remarkable about him is that he is astonished at what he finds in her, that is, in the assembly. Then Beer-lahai-roi would refer to the Spirit as enabling us to rise up to the heavenly position, the position proper to Christ and the assembly. It had to do with Hagar; the well was in connection with her, but Isaac was occupied with it; he was coming and going to it. There is some allusion to it in the margin, literally 'came from coming to', as if it were the prime thought in his mind. He is meditating in the field; he has nothing special before him. The one thing in his mind is Rebecca, hence what he remarks is not that Rebecca is coming, but that camels are coming. They would suggest to us the power by which we are brought to Christ.

AR What is meant by the servant saying, "That is my master!" What have you in your mind as to it?

JT It is not Abraham. Abraham is his master at the beginning and of course, in the antitype, he represents the Father. John makes everything of the Father, in his gospel particularly, but in the Lord's supper the Lord is supreme Himself. It is not God's supper, nor the Father's supper, but it is the Lord's supper.

AR You are connecting this with our assembly position and the point where things pass over to where Christ is supreme, where "That is my master!" would come in, where Christ takes full control.

JT Exactly. It is hardly understood by brethren, because constantly we hear of God, and the Father too, being approached very early, before the Lord's supper is finished; whereas it is the Lord's supper. The book of The Song of Songs corresponds in the Old Testament in that it is a question of the bride and the bridegroom, whether it be the assembly or Israel; although God is mentioned in it, but only by the name of Jah, chapter 8: 6.

WH Would you say a word regarding the covenant in the Supper as relating to Christ rather than to God?

JT The Lord says, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood". "My" connects with Him. That is all I can say; of course much may be said of that, and it is

open to us to say it, because the new covenant in Christ's blood implies liberty. Paul says that God had made them able ministers of the new covenant, not of letter but of spirit, meaning that it gives liberty; "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty".

AR Does not the cup in some sense connect us with God, and with the love of God?

JT It is a question of a brother taking liberty to bring God into it; but the covenant here suggests the Lord, it is not the covenant of God; the Lord says, It is in "my blood". In the early part of the service of God it is a question of Christ and the assembly.

AR Would you say that one would address the Lord in regard to the cup, and not God, but it might suggest to our hearts the love of God, as well as speaking of Christ's blood shed for us?

JT It would, but it is well to keep it as it is. It is a question of Christ and the assembly.

Rem The cup is for a remembrance. "This do in remembrance of me" is said both in regard to the bread and the cup.

JT In the final light governing the Lord's supper, which the Lord gave according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 11, that is added in regard of the cup. It is not found in the gospels, it is only found there. It seems to be an additional thought which the Lord is pleased to add, in furnishing the light as to the Supper to His servant Paul. I think we should pay attention to that. It is connected with Christ; the whole clause is connected with Christ Himself, not God or the Father.

Rem In regard to 1 Corinthians 11: 23, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" suggests that the apostle had this directly from the Lord Himself.

JT Quite so. It is not anywhere else, but just there.

HB Does that link on with Matthew 16, when the Lord speaks of His assembly?

JT Yes, just so. It is God's assembly too, but in that passage it is Christ's assembly.

HB What you have before you is to introduce us into that setting, so that we are with Him in connection with His assembly?

JT It is what He is getting. You might say He has not anything else now. He has not got Israel, or the nations. He is "caught up to God", Revelation 12: 5. I

believe the assembly is caught up with Him. The One who is caught up is to rule the nations with a rod of iron; that is pending, but He is waiting; in the meantime He is occupied with the assembly.

RB Why does it say that Isaac saw the camels coming? It does not say he saw Rebecca coming.

JT There is the fact that everybody should see. You would think he would be looking for Rebecca, but he saw the camels coming. Possibly it might be said that, looking across the desert, the camels would be more obvious, but Isaac knew, and the type would imply that Christ knows. I think the point in the passage is that it is a question of the power by which she is carried. "Rebecca arose, and her maids, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man. And the servant took Rebecca and went away" (verse 61). Now in the next verse we read that Isaac had just returned, and, verse 63, "he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, camels were coming".

RB Does that link on with what we have in Song of Songs? "Who is this, she that cometh up from the wilderness like pillars of smoke?"

JT That is what I understand. It is mentioned twice, and it is described in chapter 3.

Ques In 1 Corinthians 11 are the affections of the saints engaged with the Lord Himself, and the way in which He presents Himself to us, so that we are led from one point to another in the service Godward?

JT That is right. There are sections, so to speak, in the service of God, for it extends beyond the Lord's supper, but the Lord's supper is taken, and was taken from the beginning as the inauguration of the service of God. It is said in Acts 2, they were "breaking bread in the house". That is what marked them "in the house" in contrast to the temple. It is detached from the Jewish system even from the beginning.

Ques Would we discern the movements of the Lord, as coming from and going to the well, thus touching the hearts of the saints, until all are engaged with Himself?

JT Well, I should say His coming from and going to the well would be stressing the place the Spirit has: the Lord is indicating that we are not relying on the Spirit enough. The Spirit's power underlies the Supper, and if we take it aright we must recognise Him. He occupies us with the Lord. It suggests that we do not recognise the Spirit enough.

AR You are suggesting then that at the early part of the meeting we address the Lord.

JT Yes.

AR But the Spirit would be conducting; He would lead us on to the point when Christ comes into control, and when He is supreme.

JT Well, yes. Only that the Spirit would be there all the time. We rely on the Spirit; things are done by the Spirit. He is viewed as the Spirit of God, or, to be more accurate, just the Spirit by Himself. Then, later on, He is the Spirit of adoption, whether relative to our place as the brethren of Christ or as the sons of God.

Ques The feature of the lifting up of the eyes is prominent in this chapter. What would we gather from this?

JT It is the action of Isaac himself; he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, the camels were coming, and then it says that Rebecca lifted up her eyes and saw Isaac; she sees him alone, and she sprang off the camel. That would be another suggestion of the spiritual power she had: suggesting Christ's occupation with the assembly and the assembly's occupation with Him.

Ques Would the upper and nether springs of Achsah apply to this?

JT It is somewhat similar, only that Caleb gives Achsah his daughter the springs, but I think we should not pass too quickly over chapter 22. The fact that Isaac is not said to have come down characterises the assembly period, it is a period, a nondescript sort of dispensation, things not being named specifically, but they are there. Everything is there, only we are supposed to see things and know things, to find things out, and hence, when the Lord's supper is in question, Paul says, "I speak as to intelligent persons", appealing to our intelligence, as if we should know things, and then he says, "Do *ye* judge what I say", 1 Corinthians 10: 15.

GD Does the Lord's supper produce this spring and energy with us, as seen in Rebecca springing off the camel?

JT I think it does, as when the movement is felt in the assembly, when the Lord is apprehended as coming in. "It is the Lord", as John the beloved said. When Mary Magdalene brings her message there is nothing very formal; she told the disciples that she had seen the Lord. I think things are informal; everything is free. The suggestion is that we are to be intelligent in everything.

AM Referring again to chapter 22, is the reference to Beer-sheba a reference to the Spirit here in the absence of Christ?

JT I think it would be a reference to the faithfulness of God. Beer-sheba is the well of the oath, therefore of the purposes of God. Abraham and his young

men dwelt there.

AM Do the dwelling conditions at Beer-sheba involve the Spirit of the dispensation?

JT Yes. The first and second epistles to Corinth are to establish us, especially the second epistle. Hence the apostle says, "Now God is faithful, that our word to you is not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, he who has been preached by us among you... did not become yea and nay, but yea *is* in him. For whatever promises of God there are, in him is the yea, and in him the amen, for glory to God by us. Now he that establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is God, who also has sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts". That is the idea in these two assembly letters, and they are intended to correct us and adjust us, and establish us. I believe that is the idea of the well of the oath, so that God is said to be faithful. In the first and second epistles to Corinth there is thus an allusion to Beer-sheba. The Spirit is here to establish us, and hence the great prominence given to the Spirit in these epistles.

FI Have you in mind, when referring to Isaac not coming back, that we should, in moving towards the Supper, have our eyes upon the Lord as He is in glory, so as to have the power to enter into all the Supper leads to?

JT Yes. We leave our houses, and we come to the meeting place; we meet the brethren first of all, we meet one another; it is a question of love, where we really value one another. We sit down together in love. All that is in the light of Christ in heaven, the rejected Man, cast out here, but glorified there. Then His movements are towards us.

AR Would you say there is a point when we ought to realise the Lord's coming in amongst us?

JT I would. I believe there is a stirring in our affections when that happens. The Spirit would never fail to occupy us with Christ, especially when there is anything like presentation, and so it is said that He presented Himself to them living, as if He would say, It is Myself. Your eye would be directed to Him.

Rem It was when she saw Isaac that she sprang off the camel.

JT That is the point. It suggests spiritual energy.

AR Then would you say that we would not address the Lord as in heaven, but rather as present amongst us?

JT I would say that.

AR One has been concerned lately as to addressing the Lord as in heaven after the breaking of the bread and the sense of His presence has been realised.

JT I think we should keep before us that we are in the Lord's realm, so to speak, and then in the Father's realm. First of all, we are in the Spirit's realm; He is here to take care of us. As the Comforter He abides with us. The Lord is up there taking care of our interests there, but the Lord has the right in His own Person to move, and I believe that Isaac represents that in the passage read, coming from and going to the well, and what he notices, and how Rebecca comes into view as having reverence for him, veiling herself, as if to say that she is not to be occupied with anyone else. She is wholly for him, as Paul said, "I have espoused you unto one man, to present you a chaste virgin to Christ", 2 Corinthians 11: 2. We are there for Him.

RMcK With reference to the energy in Rebecca, is the idea the same as Dan springing forth from Bashan (Deuteronomy 33: 22)?

JT He leaps from Bashan; it is power to get out of an awkward position. It is not to Christ, it is from Bashan, from some place. I do not know if that is in your mind.

RMcK I just wondered if the wilderness is the place where we break bread, and there is power to move over into the land.

JT The idea is that there is power in us. The Spirit is the power.

JM What movement of the Lord is suggested by Isaac walking in the fields to meet her?

JT Isaac had just returned from Beer-lahai-roi, for he was dwelling in the south country. It was a position of favourableness and liberty. We pointed out that Joseph was a man of affairs, he was lord over all Egypt, and he had many things to administer; the immensity of the work has been noted. When he would come to show himself to his brethren he comes in at noon as if to lunch, speaking simply. He has plenty to do and is going back to do it, whereas Isaac is not employed thus. He is at leisure, and all that accompanies that fact is presented to bring out the present dispensation, how the Lord is free now. He is not occupied ruling the universe, or the nations. He is not on the throne of David, not even on His own throne, but on His Father's throne. He has time and leisure, as you would expect, the liberty of the Son, and so the dispensation goes on for centuries. We wonder why He is so long detained at this period when Israel and the nations and Christ's place in creation are in abeyance, but He is occupied with the assembly, and the point for us is to be exercised to answer to it, to be like Rebecca. She had come a long way at the

behest of Abraham; she is to be for Isaac, and she knows it, and she says in effect, I am for you only, and she takes the veil and covers herself.

Ques What would be the thought of Isaac going to the field to meditate? He would be fully aware that the servant had gone to get a bride for him.

JT He would. The Lord is perfectly aware of everything, but He is seen in a subject attitude, and yet He is not subject on this particular occasion. He is the master, and He has a free hand; He is not occupied with other things. He is ready for us all the time and we want to be ready for Him. That is the point Rebecca makes; she is ready for him.

HB In that way we are occupied with the activity of love, seeking to introduce one another on to assembly ground, and into assembly function.

JT That is right. We come together to meet one another; we go there because we love one another and there is much done in the beginning of the meeting which bears on the general position of Christ's interests on earth, it is not yet the ruling of the nations; we have nothing to do with voting or the like, secret societies, or social functions. Business is of secondary importance, especially on the first day of the week; we are all ready for Him and the idea is that we have power over our own minds: "*I myself* with the mind serve God's law". We have power over our minds, so as to occupy them with certain things for a certain time, and that is with Christ.

AS Would Rebecca's question be of importance, "Who is the man"?

JT That brings out something else, it says, "she had said to the servant, Who is the man that is walking in the fields to meet us?" That is an historical thing, another matter to be considered, a matter of history in regard to Christ. The question who the Lord is enters into the service. The servant said, "That is my master!"

JB Does verse 65 precede verse 64 in that sense?

JT No doubt historically it did, because it says, "she had said... Who is the man...?"

JST Was Mary ready for the Lord when He called her by name?

JT That is it. That is when she comes in to the thing fully. She says "Rabboni".

WS When the servant said; "That is my master!" then Rebecca veiled herself. Would that suggest the spirit of devotedness?

JT Just so, and that we are exclusively for Him. I think the veil would mean that she was fully for Isaac.

RB Does she answer to the pearl at this juncture?

JT She does. Because that also is a matter of history, what he *gave* for her (Matthew 13: 46). That is historical: he "went and sold all whatever he had"; but in verse 44, speaking of the treasure, it is the present tense; for joy he "goes and sells all whatever he has". Therefore verse 46 is greater, because it alludes to the counsels and purposes of God. "Whatever he had" was historical; he sold all to have the pearl.

GL Would this be seen in Psalm 45? The King greatly desired her beauty.

JT Just so. That is, of course, on moral grounds. "Forget... thy father's house". What is said to her is not like the pearl; it is a question of what she forsakes, meaning that you will give up mere nature for Him, and the King will desire "thy beauty". But as to the pearl nothing is said about it in that sense, it is what it is essentially, it is of great price. The merchant would understand that.

Ques Can you tell us why the thought of securing a wife for Isaac originated with his father?

JT That is understandable. In Matthew 22 the king would make a marriage for his son. I mean, the Father was in that. Still, in figure, the Lord seeks a wife. We see that in Adam. God thought of it before him. It was not good that he should be alone, but he did not find anybody suitable, as if he were looking for one, showing how the truth runs concurrently, the truth bearing on divine Persons.

JL Could we have a word on Deuteronomy?

JT It is just to confirm Genesis, because Genesis is unique in the five books of Moses. I have no doubt the five books of Moses are like the five books of the Psalms. There is more latitude in the first book. In Genesis persons are shown as doing things of themselves, but when we come to the typical books we are on narrower ground, and it is what we are told to do; it is not what the person does but what he is told to do. "The Lord commanded Moses", for instance. In Deuteronomy 24 we have a reference to marriage, and it runs on down to the end of verse 4, and then we have, "When a man hath newly taken a wife". It is clear that it is a picture of something, and I think something in Genesis. I think all this would refer to Christ and the assembly. He is free from ordinary things that belong to Him, as we have already said. Israel belongs to Him, the nations, and the universe too; He made it, and He is to rule it, but He is free from all that at the present time, a remarkable figure. And He is to be in His house, which would be the assembly. Hebrews speaks about the Son, and that the Son is the builder of the universe, and the universe is God's house, and the Lord has right to it, but He is confining Himself now to the assembly. He is

occupied with the assembly for a whole year. "He shall be free for his house one year, and shall gladden his wife whom he hath taken".

JB What is the extent of one year?

JT It is used elsewhere for an indefinite period. The acceptable year of the Lord has lasted eighteen or nineteen centuries, and it is called a year.

Ques Do you link this verse in Deuteronomy with Isaac dallying with his wife Rebecca?

JT Quite so. It suggests what He has in the assembly; He is free to be occupied with us, not having any business on His hands. This is most suggestive and most touching, that He is with us and we are with Him, yet He is the maker of the universe. Joseph was called, *The sustainer of the life of the world*. Well, the Lord Jesus will be that, but He is now confined to the assembly.

WC Is that suggested in what Abraham says to his servant, "Bring not my son thither again"?

JT Yes. Isaac was to be a type of Christ. He is not to be brought back into the world yet, but God is going to bring the First-begotten into the world, we are told. The coming of the Lord is the fulfilment of this. We are enjoined to love His appearing, because it is the time He comes into everything that is His. In the meantime He is telling us how much He loves us, and He wants us to be with Him and so He is going to take us up with Him to receive us unto Himself.

AR In Genesis she became his wife, and he loved her and Isaac was comforted after the death of his mother, but in Deuteronomy it is from his side. He shall gladden his wife whom he hath taken. Does that suggest that it is reciprocal?

JT Yes indeed. And hence what a time the first day of the week is! Luke says in Acts 20, "And the first day of the week, we being assembled to break bread".

Rem "Newly taken a wife" — that is a beautiful touch; there is nothing historical about her.

JT Quite so, it is the newness of it. It is a new matter in his experience.

Rem The bride says in the Song of Songs that the bridegroom is altogether lovely. Do you think that the assembly should take on these features, what the Lord is to the assembly?

JT Quite so, and in the Song of Songs we have also, "Thou art all fair, my love".

Ques Does this bear on the gospel of John in a particular way, where the Lord has so much to say to His own in chapters 13 to 16?

JT Yes. He spends far more time with the disciples in John than He does in the other gospels.

THE LORD AS A MAN OF LEISURE (JT 61)

Genesis 22: 19; Genesis 24: 61 - 65; Genesis 26: 7, 8; Genesis 43: 16; Deuteronomy 24: 5

JT The intent is to call attention to these scriptures to show how the Lord reserves a time for occupation with the assembly as His bride; this over against Joseph who is not a man of leisure, but a man of affairs, who would come in at noon in the midst of his work, and we have the reference therefore in Genesis 43 to his readiness to occupy himself with these brothers, including Benjamin, as they came down from Canaan. It is said that he should come home at noon, being occupied as a man of affairs. Verse 16 says "Joseph saw Benjamin with them, and said to the man who was over his house, Bring the men into the house, and slaughter cattle, and make ready; for the men shall eat with me at noon". Now the verse of the first passage was read because it points to the Lord Jesus typically as having gone to heaven. Abraham and the young men who accompanied him went to Beer-sheba. It is said, "And Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba. And Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba". Because the verse does not note that Isaac came with his father to Beer-sheba, the type suggests that Christ has gone to heaven, and his relations with the assembly now are from heaven, and the verses in Genesis 24 speak of Isaac being at Beer-lahai-roi. "Isaac had just returned from Beer-lahai-roi; for he was dwelling in the south country". That is, he is not engaged with anything special, and so he is preoccupied with Rebecca. It says, "Isaac had gone out to meditate in the fields toward the beginning of evening. And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, camels were coming", meaning that he is occupied not so much with Rebecca as with the presence of the means by which she is carried, as if to remind us that the Lord is concerned as to whether we are being carried as part of the assembly or whether we are moving in relation to the power of nature, or according to human practice, or whether we are dependent on and separated by the Holy Spirit. The passage in chapter 26 only confirms this. Isaac is still seen at leisure, the word is 'dallying' with Rebecca, meaning that it is the time of affection, and the passage in Deuteronomy is to confirm further that the type requires that if a man takes a new wife he shall have a year of leisure. I hope these remarks will be intelligible.

JTW Have you in mind that this covers the whole period of the assembly, or is it the Lord's particular service now?

JT I should say it is the Lord's particular service now, while it is, typically, after the death of Israel. He is occupied with the assembly. This, of course, comes

out in the period of the Lord's supper, it does not go on constantly, but in the period when the Supper is celebrated, the first day of the week.

JTW As over against other interests He is occupied with?

JT Just so, in that it would be particularly worked out in a dispensational sense. He is not sitting on His own throne yet, He is sitting on the Father's throne. He is not ruling the world, nor Israel yet, He is devoted to the assembly, and hence the leisure that is suggested in these passages. Not that the Lord is not occupied with work, other scriptures would show that, but this scripture shows what I am speaking of, and involves an important feature of the truth. It may be that the brethren have not noticed that Isaac did not return from the place of his offering up, in death typically, but it is a fact that it is not recorded that he returned with his father and the men to Beer-sheba.

TB What are we to understand by that, that Isaac does not return with Abraham?

JT Well, the reference would be to the ascension, as spoken of in Luke 24, and Acts 1 and in John 20, and in Mark. The testimony to the ascension is very full, and the assembly is supposed in the typical books and apostolic letters to be involved in the Lord's ascension. She goes up with him. That is to be understood mysteriously, but it is a fact. According to Revelation the man child goes up to heaven and it is intelligible that the assembly goes, too, because she is not in the persecution, she is taken out of the way. He says in Revelation 3 that He will keep us from the great tribulation.

CEB Do we assemble ourselves together to break bread with the fact in mind that the Lord is in heaven?

JT The more accurate thought would be that He is rejected here. He is in heaven, it is true, but it is that He is rejected here that should be in our minds. "The stone which they that builded rejected, this has become the corner-stone". (Matthew 21: 42; Mark 12: 10; Luke 20:17; see also Psalm 118: 22)

Ques Is it your thought that Rebecca is typical of the assembly in a peculiar way as ministering to the affections of Christ?

JT Just so.

Ques So that He is peculiarly engaged with her in a leisurely way?

JT That is a good way to put it, in a leisurely way; hence the word in Genesis 26 (in the Darby Translation) is "dallying" not 'sporting' (as used in the Authorised Version) It is hardly in keeping with the position; the word 'sport' is hardly suitable, but 'dallying' is quite intelligible.

CEB Does dallying convey the idea of union?

JT Just so, and perfect familiarity in the sense of union.

JCE Is this the assembly's position as ascended with Christ or here?

JT As ascended with Christ. That is the idea. The position of the assembly now is ascension. We are not only raised with Christ but we are ascended. Colossians speaks of our being raised with Him through faith of the operation of God. That is, a person who is baptised not only goes into the water, but comes out of it, a figure of resurrection, but Ephesians gives you that, and tells us that we are raised up *together*, and made to sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

Ques Had the Lord this in mind in His ministry to Mary Magdalene when He said, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God"?

JT That is just the point. The fact of ascension is not stressed there, but it is simply He would ascend, or rather the truth "I ascend". Not exactly the tense but the fact. It is a fact that He does ascend.

CEB Does the thought of "dallying" convey the idea of responsive affections between Christ and the assembly?

JT That is right, and all the liberty and latitude that belongs to the position.

Ques Should the quickening in Ephesians 2 give us the affections that would take advantage of this leisure time?

JT Well, the Philistine king saw this liberty that Isaac had with Rebecca, and that Rebecca had with him, and he discerned the fact she was his wife and not his sister. Now we are in a wealthy position. The word 'spouse' does involve the marital relation, but not all of it, and therefore when Isaac said she was his sister that was a denial of the truth. We are related to Christ in the sense of the wife. The marriage of the Lamb has come; the wife has made herself ready, it is a wifely time.

CEB Does this follow on chapter 24, "Isaac led her into his mother Sarah's tent ... and she became his wife, and he loved her"?

JT That is just the fact. In chapter 26 he said she was his sister, whereas she was his wife. That is the important thing for us to understand; that is that we are united to Christ now as much as we shall ever be, and hence the possibilities of the assembly service at the present time.

Ques Is it necessary to understand what is involved in what is said that when the servant said "it is my master", she took a veil and covered herself?

JT Well, that was becoming, as if she would say, 'I do not want my beauty to be exposed to others' — she reserved it for Isaac. That is our suitability. It is said constantly, as in such as Abigail she was a woman of great beauty and good understanding, and so was Rebecca. She is said to be of beauty, her personal appearance is involved.

Rem She would reserve that for Isaac alone.

JT That is what I understand, that is why she took a veil, but what is suggested is that we are not always carried by the Spirit, and that is why I believe the Lord here (Isaac) notes the fact that camels were coming. We might have thought that he saw Rebecca coming, she saw Isaac, but he saw the camels, meaning she was carried by the proper power. Hence all the systems of Christendom are shut out.

Ques Is it not in measure as we know what it is to be carried by the camels, that we know what it is to see Isaac, and we are prepared to spring off the camels?

JT Yet she is perfectly in keeping with the position in her movements and acts, which are in order and suitable and seemly, and the Lord is pleased with how she has been carried to Him. There are many who are not carried by the Spirit, but are carried along by creeds and religious systems. Every believer has Him as the gift of God, and should use Him in relation to our approach and journey to Christ.

Rem This great matter of taking a wife for Isaac began with the father, Abraham, and he made a provision, sending out the camels and so forth.

JT That is good, so what we find is the servant — the chief one of his house, he is not called Eliezer in this chapter, he is just the chief servant of Abraham, and Abraham does not tell him what to do, he takes the camels himself, and is in complete charge of all that his master has. The position is thus very full, and very free from any human reservation and restriction; it is a sphere of freedom, the freedom of the Spirit. The Spirit is typified in the servant, and the camels, and therefore it is a time of liberation. The Spirit is also typified in the well by which Rebecca watered the camels, and the men. The well at Beer-lahai-roi is also a type of the Spirit. It is a very full position of spiritual power, and we should avail ourselves of it, and not be struggling with human systems and money and the like.

AO Is it possible in accepting the light we are not carried by the Spirit?

JT That is true, sadly true, and so we may be found making the ordinary customs of the brethren just a means of carrying us along, and the power is

not there. Paul said he had the power, and that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

Rem The Lord, speaking to the disciples of the Spirit coming, said, "He shall take of mine and shall shew it unto you". Was that the same thing as what is said of the servant? He takes the camels, without having been told to do so.

JT I had been thinking that. There is a peculiar liberty that is attached to the position; the Spirit here to serve, He is sent down from heaven, yet He is a divine Person, and He has to be apprehended as a divine Person, and yet serving in obedience.

FAW In verse 61 it emphasises that "they rode upon the camels, and followed the man. And the servant took Rebecca". Is that as being available to the Spirit He takes her on?

JT Just so. There is a remarkable amount of latitude in the fact that the man led her, and she followed him. The type carries so much that it suggests the Spirit, and the power of the Spirit to us.

CEB And as following the man she moves in a comely way, thinking of the way in which she springs from the camel and took a veil and veiled herself.

JT Like Abigail, who hasted and lighted off her ass. The power of the Spirit is a spring in our souls.

WJT That is contrary to what is found in Christendom.

JT That is just the point. We are to be set aside and be in the true light and liberty of this chapter. What is said about Joseph is also important. He came in at noon. He was a man of affairs. The Lord will be a man of affairs presently. God has fixed the day when He will rule the world. He will judge the world, and the Lord will take on the rule of the world, whose right it is. It is His right. The powers that be are of God, and in that position, but only provisionally. And the saints, the assembly, are to be with Him in that rule.

JMT In chapter 22 the suggestion is that Isaac is the ascended one, now in chapter 24 he is dwelling in the south country.

JT Well, that is another setting of the position. Although ascended into heaven we cannot say He is always stationary, for He tells us in John 14, "I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you". That would be involved in what we said; He is not stationary.

He has gone into heaven, in fact beyond all heavens. There is, indeed, rule in the Lord's present position.

WW Is that seen in the Song of Songs? "Behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills". Does that suggest the time He has to spend?

JT Very good. "I am coming to you" is very full of meaning. He would not leave us dependent upon what the ordinary religious societies depend upon. He is coming for us, too. We have to distinguish between His coming to us as in assembly and at other times, too. 1 Corinthians 15 tells us of the many times in which the Lord appeared to His own, first to Cephas, then to the twelve, then He appeared to about five hundred brethren at once, then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and then to Paul, showing that the Lord has latitude at the present time in the activities of His love.

JTW Are you linking that up with the south country?

JT Yes, it is a favourable country, not like the north where things are adverse, everything is favourable in this chapter. You are impressed with the wealth. Abraham disappears and Isaac is called the master in the end. Isaac is all.

TG The expression in verse 63, "toward the beginning of evening", is that suggestive of the anticipated time for leisure?

JT Yes, but we must not leave Rebecca out of it, as to activity, because verse 61 says, "and Rebecca arose, and her maids, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man". That is to say the feminine side is stressed, not in Rebecca only, but her maids. We have the same thought in Abigail, she had maids, and so it is in the assembly's approach to the Lord. The feminine side is stressed, and this has to be understood in assembly service. It is not simply that Rebecca arose, but her maids, and *they* rode upon the camels. That is to say they also were carried by spiritual power, and they followed the man. And then the servant took Rebecca and went away, meaning he is in charge. The Spirit of God is in charge in certain relations and circumstances. The Spirit Himself at times is supreme, and so in Acts 13 He says, "Separate me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them". That is, the Spirit Himself is acting there, acting divinely, as God, "and having laid their hands on them, they let them go", and they went. And so we have to understand that the Spirit Himself is moving, and is in charge of the position, and so it goes on "Isaac had just returned". He is not doing anything very special. "Isaac had just returned from Beer-lahai-roi; for he was dwelling in the south country. And Isaac had gone out to meditate in the fields toward the beginning of evening", showing the Lord has His own thoughts. He is a divine Person, but He has a mind to meditate in the field toward the beginning of evening, meaning the day had pretty well ended, and then "he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, camels were coming". It is simply camels, not *the*

camels. The Lord is taking in all the power by which we are carried, and the power which Rebecca began with was ten camels, which the servant selected, and they were at her disposal.

Ques What is suggested in Isaac lifting up his eyes and Rebecca lifting up her eyes?

JT All that is to be said in that way is that he lifted up his eyes and saw camels; she lifted up her eyes and saw Isaac. The inference is he is occupied for the moment with the power by which she is carried, and she is occupied with him, which is suitable and seemly.

JOS Would that enter into the way we assemble together?

JT I think so. We begin with the Spirit. I think we begin with ourselves as a matter of fact. "We being assembled to break bread", the scripture says. That is to say, the Lord leaves us, as it were, to meet, and in due course He joins us, but He would think of what we are, and what He has done for us, and made us, and what we are capable of, and He joins us. And so we must think of each other. How valuable we are in the Lord's eyes! As if He would look down from heaven and see us in our way of meeting where we have love enough to be content with each other.

Ques What does Sarah's tent convey to us?

JT It is Israel's position which will be again occupied. At the beginning of the Christian period Sarah's tent was occupied by the disciples. That is to say the Lord went up to heaven, and the disciples returned to Jerusalem, and they carried on for a considerable time. The breaking of bread is never said to be in the temple, but they did other things there. They disappeared, however, and the assembly took its own place. It is through Paul that the assembly claimed its full place, and Corinthians shows that the assembly takes the place of the temple, showing there is the metropolitan position — for a time the temple — and this in due course becoming the fixed position of the assembly on earth during the present dispensation.

Ques Is that in the mind of the Spirit in the expression "Israel of God"?

JT Yes, I think so, "our whole twelve tribes". Paul used it, and it went on for a time, but in due course the assembly was recognised, and nothing else, among whom we also are builded together.

WN Would verse 65 suggest that the assembly is inquiring as to Christ on the journey?

JT Well, it would. "She had said to the servant"; that is what we are doing now; these Bible readings are inquiries. We all get instruction by inquiry. It says we are to inquire of the Lord. The Lord will give us understanding, and the Spirit does, He takes of the Lord's things and shows them unto us. The servant here is a type of the Spirit.

SC Solomon says, "Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness?"

JT That is the millennial position, I think, in which the assembly fits in beautifully at times, as at the beginning of Acts, until Paul came into view, and he is formally recognised as the minister of the assembly; he has the light of it, and the ministry of reconciliation and the gospel, and he completed the word of God.

TG Is it understood that the Lord reserves a time to occupy Himself with the assembly (verse 67), and that the preceding verse suggests the detailed instruction leading up to it?

JT I would think so. The servant, as he is called, the Holy Spirit, instructs us, as in John's gospel, it is he that speaks of the Comforter. The Spirit is an active Person to instruct us about Christ. In John 20 we are told the Lord breathed into the disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit". We have to understand that and compare it, and cause it to coincide with Acts 2. John 20 is a pattern of the thing. The Lord breathing into them is a more intimate thought than in Acts 2.

JCE Psalm 45 says, "So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him". Does the thought of worship enter into this matter?

JT I would think so, as soon as Christ is recognised as the Master. He is called the master by the servant, "Who is the man that is walking in the fields to meet us? And the servant said, That is my master!" (verse 65). That is, Christ is God. He is a divine Person equal with the Father, and John's gospel opens that up to us.

Ques Does that stress the importance of the marital side in the Supper?

JT That is what I was thinking, and what we have in chapter 26 enlarges on it, and in Deuteronomy, which perhaps the brethren may note. "When a man hath taken a new wife". Isaac had just taken a wife. Christ has taken a wife. "He shall not go out with the army, neither shall any kind of business be imposed upon him; he shall be free for his house one year, and shall gladden his wife whom he hath taken". Now I think what we have been saying is seen there. It is called a year, and no doubt it is what could be seen in the

beginning, as the Spirit came down — no conflict, although that comes in in due time, but that is not stressed, it is what Christ has in the assembly after Israel (Sarah) had died.

WS You yourself said you linked this more particularly with the first day of the week, rather than the whole.

JT Well, it would be any time. The Lord is said to have appeared to the brethren five or six times in 1 Corinthians 15. We cannot say that this is the first day of the week. Some think that it may be mediatorial, that He comes by the Spirit, but that is not the truth, because facts maintained show that He came in a corporal sense in the time of the forty days and after it. We cannot restrict the Lord — a divine Person — He may come any time. He came to Paul even with the event recorded in Acts 9.

CEB Have you in mind that we should look for the Lord to come amongst us?

JT Well, I would hardly go so far as that. We can hardly expect what was at the beginning, miracles, etc., not in relation to the assembly but the gospel, and therefore the Lord would reserve to Himself His own liberty to come as it suited Him.

Ques You would say that He would appear to make His presence felt?

JT Yes, hence you would say, "It is the Lord". David said to Abigail, "Blessed be thy discernment, and blessed be thou".

TG What is your thought as to Deuteronomy 24? "He shall be free for his house one year, and shall gladden his wife whom he hath taken". Why the house first?

JT Well, Christ is the Son over His house; Son over God's house, but still it is His house, too, because the assembly is His. I would say it is the assembly as in the sense of Christ's assembly. He is free for that, and I therefore understand that the Lord's supper refers to Christ alone.

TG Would it be right to suggest that the Lord is doing His very best with the house for suitable circumstances for the wife?

JT Just so, to make it suitable for her, she has part in it.

WJT So the word in Genesis 24 is "Isaac was comforted", and here the wife is gladdened.

JT The Lord is not now hampered with any thought of Israel, she is defunct, she is dead. The fact is she is dead for the moment. Paul formally separated himself from the Jews in Acts 19, and finally in Acts 28. "Be it known to you therefore, that this salvation of God has been sent to the nations; *they* also

will hear it", as if the Jews were given up. So that the Lord is devoted to His own house, and I think Joseph is a type of the Lord in that sense; Christ among the Gentiles. The epistle to the Colossians is another suggestion of what He has among the Gentiles.

FAW It is the Supper as given to Paul. Would "*I* received from the Lord", bear on this point?

JT It does. It refers to Christ, it is the Lord's supper, not the Father's supper, it is the Lord's supper, and all that stands related to it.

Ques Where would you suggest, in taking the Lord's supper, this question of "dallying" would come between Christ and the assembly after the breaking of bread, or at the breaking of bread? Ecclesiastes says there is a time for everything, "a time to embrace" and "a time to love". (Ecclesiastes 3: 5, 8)

JT Yes, and so the Lord's supper is a time of love, hence we have the Lord saying "my brethren". "Go to my brethren". The thought of the Father came in in due course, but let us give plenty of time for the dallying, for it is the Lord's own part with the assembly, what she is to Him and what she is for ever. There is still a tendency to hasten on to the Father. What we are saying is needed, in some places very much, in others not so. The Lord has to have His rights in the assembly, and it is the first place. He is said to be called the master, and so it is that we are said to be priests of the Christ.

Ques If the Lord has His place in the way in which you are speaking, at the Supper, would we be led rightly to the Father, and there would not be the abruptness with which we sometimes turn?

JT Yes, I think that is good, and this question of priesthood implies intelligence in what we are doing. If we are abrupt in turning away from the Lord at the Supper we may do violence to the position. I am not saying it is so, but we may. The priests would correct all that. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and at his mouth they seek the law", and as I have just remarked, we are said to be priests unto Christ as well as unto God.

JTW We are to give Him a greater place in the economy and in the service, that is Revelation 20.

JT It would do us all good to read it.

JTW "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Revelation 20: 6).

JT Well, these are facts. It gives the Messiah the full divine place in the service. Other scriptures corroborate that. "He is thy Lord", for instance, "worship thou him".

WW It is the same in Ephesians as to the wife reverencing her husband in all.

JT It is, and so "*I* speak as to Christ and as to the assembly", as though Paul made much of the speaking. What he would be concerned about is Christ and the assembly.

Ques Would this matter of worship come out in the case of Abigail, as seen in the way in which she spoke to David; very much on the line of worship, and as "my lord"?

JT Quite so, and what is to be said in addition is that in 1 Samuel 25 which speaks of Abigail and David it contemplates not only Christ in relation with the assembly, but the elder brethren, those who rule in the assembly, and who may not be always right, because David drops from the level of the type of Christ in his behaviour towards Nabal. He has to change his mind about it. Although the types help us, sometimes they fail us, but we can discern where. The brethren may drop to the level of ordinary brethren, from the full level of the position of Christ as Head of the assembly. It is a remarkable thing that Abigail is chosen to bring that out, and she becomes quite settled in the matter, and David comes to her side, and recognises her discernment. "Blessed be thy discernment, and blessed be thou". She was blessed in his eyes.

JOS Does love and intelligence enter into priesthood?

JT Well, I think so, and so priesthood in Exodus is not attributed to Aaron and his sons until love is displayed, is plainly shown. It shows that priesthood is dependent on love; love being the side emphasised, so that you do not get priesthood applied to Aaron and his sons until Exodus 28, after love has been displayed, plainly shown, by the Hebrew servant. Probably that is the explanation of so much hesitancy and slowness and confusion because love is not ready — the priests are not ready.

Ques Is that why you linked the thought of Joseph's activities with his brethren and Isaac's leisure with his wife?

JT Well, he was serving them. When we spoke of leisure we applied it entirely to Isaac. Joseph is not that. Joseph is a great server, we can see that in other settings, whereas Isaac is not seen in that sense at all in the beginning. It is a question of latitude and liberty with dallying between Christ and the assembly in this dispensation. Joseph is serving his brethren. Pharaoh is said to have

given him a name by which he is intended to be a deliverer of the world. He is another type of a man of affairs, of great things.

JTW He could just come home at noon, whereas the Lord has plenty of time.

JT Exactly, He would afford enough time for his brethren.

TG It is the appreciation of Christ serving us in this way, the leisure, the restful, serene conditions.

JT Yes, I think so. We will never serve overtime to get the world's esteem on a Lord's day. If we are serving for money we will never get to the dallying point of which we have been speaking. The idea of a Sabbath is a prime idea in the scripture. The brethren so much need time in divine service, not to be in a hurry to get to it, but to be there leisurely. "In his shadow have I rapture and sit down".

TG Would not that fill out the periods of silence with the holiness that becomes the house of God, as well as the power?

JT Yes, you see the time is so valuable that it must be rightly spent. The priests need time. Time is needed, and they know what to do. This is a great matter amongst us, to know what to do.

JOS Would a word early in the meeting help in this matter of leisure?

JT I think it does, it sets the minds of the brethren at rest. The Lord's supper is a matter of the mind at first.

CEB Joseph would be a man of great activities in the famine periods, and he had a wife and children, that is the whole idea of what is marital and sonship is involved.

JT I think that is good, he has a wife and two children, and they got names that indicate that. That is seen in chapter 41. It says, "And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah, and gave him as wife Asnath the daughter of Potipherah, the priest in On, and Joseph went out over the land of Egypt". He was a man of affairs, and later on it says, "And to Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine came, whom Asnath the daughter of Potipherah the priest in On bore to him. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh" — forgetting his toil — "and the name of the second he called Ephraim" — double fruitfulness, "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction". That is most applicable to what we are saying. It indicates another side of Christ's position amongst the Gentiles, what He is rendering amongst the Gentiles.

JOS Like John 4.

JT Just so. She reinforces the testimony of Christ as the Saviour of the world. Very good.

Deuteronomy 25

- DEUTERONOMY 25 (CAC 5)
- NEARNESS TO GOD (JT 40)
- NEARNESS AND DISTANCE (JT 96)

DEUTERONOMY 25 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 25

The subject of judgment in any controversy is now introduced; such judgment is to be marked by righteousness. So long as we are here we are under grace, but we are also under government. The joy of the house of Jehovah, and the peace of Jerusalem, are secured by the presence there, according to Psalm 122, of "thrones for judgment, the thrones of the house of David". It would be a mistake to suppose that Israel was, or will be, better furnished with "thrones of judgment" than the saints are today.

But all must be judged now according to the principles of the kingdom — the new kind of righteousness introduced by the reign of grace. "They shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked" (verse 1). A man is "wicked" now who does not judge himself, and act in grace towards his brother. The principles of grace which God has set up in His kingdom become the standard by which everything must be judged. That which is inconsistent with the present ways of God, and the character of the dispensation, is unrighteous.

There is a tendency to become legal in our thoughts of righteousness. The man in Matthew 18 had a righteous claim, but he exacted it in such a way as to constitute himself "wicked". The Lord acts retributively in regard of anything ungracious in our spirits or ways; there is still such a thing as beating with stripes, and this for one who is "thy brother". There are three different classes of bondmen in Luke 12: 42 - 48. There is a "faithful and prudent steward" who, in result, is set over all that his lord has. There is a wicked bondman who has his portion appointed with the unbelievers. But there are others who are beaten with either many or few stripes according to their deserts. The latter represent true believers who come under the Lord's chastisement as members of His household, and that is in keeping with Deuteronomy 25. The Lord's retributive ways are very equitable; *many* stripes for one who knew his lord's will, and did not prepare himself nor do it; *few* stripes for one who knew not that will, and did ignorantly things worthy of stripes. The fact that in "the land" there may arise necessity for "judgment" and "stripes" shews that responsibility continues. That being so, there is always the possibility of wrong-doing which will, in the divine government, meet with its just deserts. "For he that does a wrong shall receive the wrong he has done, and there is no respect of persons" (Colossians 3:25).

Paul contrasts the "rod" with "love and a spirit of meekness" (1 Corinthians 4: 21). He preferred not to "use severity", but he had authority which might have to take this form. He said to the Corinthians, "If I come again I will not spare"

(2 Corinthians 13: 2, 10). He did not say exactly what he would do, nor did John as to Diotrephes, but the "rod" was there, and, in case of necessity, would be used. The brethren have not the rod of apostolic authority, but there is with them ability to judge in a way that corresponds with Deuteronomy 25: 1 - 3. If the brethren have to administer stripes it is well to receive them in the spirit of the psalmist who said, "Let the righteous smite me, it is kindness; and let him reprove me, it is an excellent oil which my head shall not refuse" (Psalm 141: 5). Any such rebuke is the Lord's, though it may be inflicted by the brethren. A sense of disapproval has sometimes to be brought home, "according to the measure" of culpability.

But "stripes", as administered by the brethren, are restricted in number; there is a point beyond which we are not to go. And the reason for this is not lest he should be killed, or have more than he deserves, but lest "thy brother become despicable in thine eyes". What is to be avoided is the effect *upon our own spirits* of undue severity; we are not to lose brotherly respect. A disobedient man is to be marked and shunned, but he is still to be admonished "as a brother" (2 Thessalonians 3: 14, 15). There is to be a brotherly spirit even in what is a righteous discipline. To withdraw, or shrink from, a disorderly brother is right, and with the object in view "that he may be ashamed of himself", but it is done for his good, and in a spirit that holds him in brotherly respect. John speaks of one seeing "his brother sinning a sin not unto death". Even his sin is to bring out the true character of righteousness and love in the brethren; they are to pray for him in view of his having life given to him. So that for one under rebuke there continues earnest desire that self-judgment and restoration should come about.

The principle of recompense runs through this chapter. If we do what is inconsistent with the principles of the kingdom we shall get stripes (Colossians 3: 25); if we engage in the patient labour of love, like the ox treading out the corn (verse 4) we shall not go unrecompensed. Every bit of true labour for the saints has its present recompense, and the one who renders it is a comfort to the brethren instead of a trial like the one who deserves stripes.

Paul uses different figures in 1 Corinthians 9 — carrying on war, planting a vineyard, herding a flock, ploughing, treading out corn, sowing — and he tells us expressly that Deuteronomy 25: 4 was written, not because God was occupied about oxen, but "altogether for our sakes". It is a divine principle that all labour is entitled to recompense from those who benefit by it. Paul had not used this right at Corinth, that he might put no hindrance in the way of the glad tidings of the Christ, but he asserted the right as an unquestionable

divine principle. In a spiritual sense there is always recompense for the ox who treads out the corn; he himself enjoys what he treads out for others.

Then Jehovah foresaw that death would come in, even in favoured Israel, and that if names were not to be blotted out from the inheritance they must be secured by one who would in unselfish love build up a house and raise up a name on behalf of the dead. It was a figure of what Christ would do for Israel, who, as being under death, could bring forth no seed for lift eternal in the inheritance. The wife would represent those in Israel who, through a divine work in their souls, felt what it was to be bereft of all hope according to the flesh, death having come in to blight all prospects of the inheritance being enjoyed or maintained on the natural line. All such had the sense that grace alone could meet the case.

The one who liked not to take his brother's wife would typify that self-centred and ungracious spirit which was found in scribes and Pharisees, who thought only of themselves and their fancied righteousness, and cared nothing for the state and sorrow of Israel, and were unwilling, as well as unable, to do anything for the godly remnant who felt it. God would cover such a spirit with disgrace and infamy; this answers to the woes pronounced by the Lord upon that class of persons.

In the book of Ruth, Boaz is seen as taking Ruth "to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his place" (Ruth 4: 10). This is connected, as we know, with the right of redemption, and it is typical of what has been taken up by Christ as the Kinsman-Redeemer. The kinsman nearer than Boaz, who declined to redeem lest he should mar his own inheritance, represents the legal principle that can do nothing to save the situation when death has come in. But Boaz, in the spirit of Christ, thinks of "our brother Elimelech". Israel's name would have perished if Christ had not taken up the remnant and secured a seed to inherit. The maintenance of the inheritance was hopeless on man's side; Israel nationally and responsibly was dead; there was no possibility of fruit for God, or of the inheritance being held according to God's thoughts. But Christ was not careful as to marring His own inheritance, for He was cut off and had nothing, but at all cost to Himself He exercised the right of redemption. He secured the inheritance, and brought in a generation to stand in its privileges and blessings according to God. Israel's name and house will be secured, not on the line of nature — death is on all that — but by Christ coming in as the true Kinsman, and in principle it is thus that all is secured for the saints of the assembly.

The spirit of all this is intended to influence us in our brotherly relations. Our brother's name in Israel is to be maintained even at some personal sacrifice; his house is to be built up. Even if he has come under some governmental dealing of God we are to be concerned that his name shall not be blotted out. We are not to be like the Pharisees, scribes, and doctors of the law who taught in Israel, but who had no brotherly spirit. They were not prepared to make any sacrifices for their poor, afflicted, distressed and sinful brethren suffering under the government of God. But Christ came in to do a true Kinsman's part for those who were resourceless, and who needed Him. Boaz made himself a name in Bethlehem by acting as a kinsman. This honour belongs in a superlative degree to Christ as the true Boaz, but it will surely rest in measure on those who act in the Spirit of Christ towards their brethren.

Verses 13 - 16 remind us that God Himself has balances and weights; He weighs persons (Daniel 5: 27), and actions (1 Samuel 2: 3), and spirits (Proverbs 16: 2). And He is "the God of measure" (2 Corinthians 10: 13). He looks also that His people should weigh and measure things in a "perfect and just" way. He would not have us to judge by appearances. Some matters are weightier than others, and there is no more serious symptom of moral perversion than to attach undue importance to the small while leaving aside "weightier matters" (Matthew 23: 23).

There must be with us a divine standard of moral values if days in the land are to be prolonged, and this does not admit of variation. No "divers weights" are permissible; they are not to be "a great and a small" according to circumstances. Our brethren are to have all that is due to them, and no unjust self-advantage is to have any place in our dealings with them. Thus every one is assured that his interests are carefully safe-guarded by his brethren! "We are members one of another"; then why should I deceive my brother, or wrong him in any way?: He is part of myself.

Personal feelings, either favourable or unfavourable, are very apt to lead to our weights being tampered with, and this has to be guarded against. Perfectly equitable dealings are essential to mutual confidence, and without this there can be no enjoyment of the land. Righteousness has a great place in John's epistle, and it is largely a matter of weight and measure; that is, of each receiving what is due to him.

The man who was concerned about the mote in his brother's eye, while ignoring the beam in his own, had evidently a different standard for his brother than he had for himself. He had "divers weights". The Lord calls him a hypocrite. And in this connection He says, "With what measure ye mete, it

shall be measured to you" (Matthew 7: 1 - 5); the government of God will certainly recompense any unequal or unrighteous dealing.

The chapter closes by speaking of retribution on Amalek, the first wilderness enemy of the people of God. There was peculiar audacity in an attack upon them at such a time; it was, as seen in Exodus 17, the hand of the adversary on the throne of Jah. But as referred to in Deuteronomy 25 what marked Amalek was smiting without fear of God the hindmost and feeble of the people when they were faint and weary. The flesh instigated by Satan would seek to destroy at the very outset what is of God in feebleness here. This brings out the true and pitiless character of what is opposed to God and to His people. It is to be remembered; there is to be no weakening in our souls of the sense of the deadly character of the opposition that has had to be encountered. There is to be no thought of any truce in this war, or of any terms with a relentless and unchanging foe. The power of evil which first assailed us as redeemed is ever to be in our thoughts as an enemy to be utterly destroyed. The saints are ever to hold themselves in this attitude of mind. The blotting out of the remembrance of Amalek is looked at in Exodus 17 as done by Jehovah, whose throne had been assailed, but it is viewed in Deuteronomy 25 as done by His people who had suffered. Their time of rest and full blessing will be the time when the remembrance of Amalek will be blotted out from under the heaven.

NEARNESS TO GOD (JT 40)

Exodus 19:1 - 6; Numbers 11:1 - 3; Deuteronomy 25:17 - 19

In reading these passages I desire to point out the advantages there are in being near to God, and the disaster which overtakes those who hold themselves at a distance. In Psalm 148:14 it says, "He hath lifted up the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints, even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Hallelujah!" This verse is calculated to make us appreciate nearness to God, to make it attractive to us; "a people near unto him. Hallelujah!" This is what Jehovah had in view when He brought Israel out of Egypt; He said to them, "I have borne you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself", Exodus 19:4. He had not yet brought them into Canaan, but to Himself. He then indicates to them what they were to be, "Then shall ye be my own possession out of all the peoples — and ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation".

It may be beneficial and exercising to speak for a moment to those who are holding themselves at a distance. We find in this passage in Numbers 11, that there were murmurings from those who were in the extremity of the camp; those who were choosing to occupy a position as far as possible from the divine dwelling. Outwardly they belonged to the camp, but they kept at the extremity of it. This reminds us, dear brethren, that if in our souls we keep at a distance from God and from His dwelling place we shall be inclined to complain. This spirit of complaint is found in such brothers and sisters; whilst those who are near to God and who enjoy assembly privileges do not complain. Those keeping near to God have no reason to complain; there will be no complaints in heaven. Complaints will only arise in our hearts if we keep at a distance from God and from His dwelling place, such as at the extremity of the camp, at the border of the world, whence our eyes begin to turn towards the world.

God desires that we be near to Himself, and all those who love Him and who are still in the wilderness will keep near Him. When bringing His people out of Egypt, He speaks of those who love Him, He says that He shows "mercy unto thousands of them that love me", Exodus 20:6. There are still lovers of God on the earth, and such will seek to keep themselves near Him, because love hates the distance which separates it from its object. In like manner God hated the distance that existed between Himself and His people in Egypt, so He bore them on eagles' wings and brought them to Himself, desiring to dwell in their midst, and that they should make Him a dwelling place. The cloud covered the tent of meeting and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle; in other words

He came to dwell in the habitation that the people had prepared for Him, and from it He spoke to His people and invited them to draw near to Him. They must come with their offerings; that is to say we must approach God having Christ in our hearts; it is through Him we have access by one Spirit to the Father. Thus dwelling with His people in the wilderness, God is sought after by those who love Him; those remaining in the extremity of the camp show no sign of love for God. It may be that we are the Lord's; the saints at Corinth certainly belonged to the Lord, they had the Spirit, but were in danger of being judged with the world, so God had to act towards them as He does towards unconverted people. Likewise we see Eutychus who also was in the upper room, seated at the window, whence he could look outside, to the world, instead of seeing all that was happening inside. God had placed His dwelling in the midst of His people whom He loved, and the love He had for Eutychus should have led him to draw near to Him, and not to look outside towards the world. In this position that he was occupying by the window, Eutychus was overpowered by deep sleep, and fell from the third storey down to the bottom. This is an example of the danger to which one is exposed who keeps at a distance. Eutychus was not complaining, but he was overpowered by sleep and he fell. In our chapter in Numbers certain ones complained; they were not overcome by sleep, but they were complaining against God, "and the fire of Jehovah burned among them, and consumed some in the extremity of the camp".

It is possible, alas, dear brethren, to be only outwardly near to God, like Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, who offered strange fire. It is the activity of the will in one ministering in the assembly, like it was at Corinth, where believers were behaving wrongly even at the Lord's supper. This is a solemn matter, for the activity of self-will in the assembly is still more serious than it is outside, and may result in one coming under judgment for his wrong conduct in the assembly. However, I am speaking now of persons keeping in the extremity of the camp; they do not typify those who are active in the assembly, but rather those who neglect the meetings, preferring to remain at home rather than make the short journey necessary to be found amongst the saints; remaining at home they pass their time perhaps in worthless reading or in pleasure, or even in bad company. It is almost certain that such persons will be murmurers, and as such will come under the governmental ways of God. Their place in the meeting is empty. God takes account of seats that are empty instead of being filled by those who love Him, and the saints feel these absences too. So we find here that "the fire of Jehovah burned among them, and consumed some in the extremity of the camp". Take care of this, dear young friends, for although we are in the dispensation of grace, it says, "Our

God is a consuming fire", Hebrews 12:29. It is not the God of Israel but "our God", the God of those who love Him. It is quite a normal thing for God to be a consuming fire; nothing purifies better than fire, and those who love God in reality, are thankful for that which purifies. We certainly do not wish that anyone amongst us should be destroyed — far be the thought! but God is a consuming fire, and we are glad that corruption should be destroyed. The apostle says, "If any one love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema Maranatha", 1 Corinthians 16:22. There is no compromise with the flesh in the house of God. In the case of Nadab and Abihu there went out fire from before Jehovah and devoured them, because they had offered strange fire, this strange fire being evidence of self-will, and of the work of the enemy behind it. As I have already said, the Corinthians were in danger, through their evil conduct, of being judged with the world. "On this account", Paul says, "many among you are weak and infirm, and a good many are fallen asleep", 1 Corinthians 11:30. He tells them also, "If any one corrupt the temple of God, him shall God destroy", 1 Corinthians 3:17. It can be seen therefore how serious a matter it is that anyone amongst us should remain in the extremity of the camp.

Before returning to Exodus, I would like to speak about those who lagged behind through weakness (Deuteronomy 25:17,18). It says, "Remember what Amalek did unto thee on the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; how he met thee on the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, all the feeble that lagged behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary, and he feared not God". It is not there a question of self-will showing itself in murmuring, but a state of feebleness in those that lagged behind. We are exhorted to sustain the weak, and to "make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned aside; but that rather it may be healed", Hebrews 12:13. This is the responsibility of those who are strong, who should sustain the weak and not please themselves. However, it is not this side which is occupying us for the moment; I ought to ask myself, why I am weak, why have I to lag behind? Is there not sufficient good food at my disposal? Or am I in a poor spiritual state of health which does not allow me to assimilate my food and develop a good constitution? Maybe I do not read the Scriptures, or do not meditate, or do not pray, or read the ministry that God places within my reach. In that case the remedy is in my own hands; it is for me then to judge my neglect, to turn to God about it, and to take advantage of the great amount of food that He has put at my disposal. If, on the other hand, I am not well, and I am ill, there is the Great Physician to turn to. The apostles had received power to cure diseases.

I believe the Spirit of God contemplates the possibility of an epidemic spreading amongst the saints; a contagious disease can spread in various localities. There are also instances of disease which is not contagious; but whether one or the other, there is the Great Physician; why not turn to Him? "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?" Jeremiah 8:22. Yes, both are there, and this Physician can cure all the various diseases we have just spoken of. The apostle Peter speaks of desiring earnestly "the pure mental milk of the word, that by it ye may grow", 1 Peter 2:2. It is a matter of the mental milk of the word, so that by means of such nourishment I should no longer remain in a state of infancy: instead of weakness, strength would be developed, such as would enable me to contend with the horses and face the Jordan in flood (Jeremiah 12:5). In David's time there were those who crossed the Jordan when it was overflowing its banks, a feat requiring both energy and strength. Why then, dear brethren, are there so many amongst us who lag behind because of weakness? The divine thought is that there should not be a single weak one amongst us. It says here that Amalek "smote the hindmost of thee, all the feeble that lagged behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary". You can see the danger they were exposed to; Amalek smote them. You are so weak in such a case through lack of food, that the enemy works through the flesh in you and stumbles you; possibly you even cease to be in fellowship with your brethren.

Having looked at the danger there is in keeping at a distance, let us now speak for a moment of the blessings resulting from nearness. It says, "In the third month after the departure of the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, the same day they came into the wilderness of Sinai ... and encamped in the wilderness", Exodus 19:1,2. The Spirit of God is thus taking account of the time that has passed, so to speak, from your conversion until now. The children of Israel were so attracted that they entered upon the wilderness. Later on God could say, "I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land not sown", Jeremiah 2:2. The word says, "they departed from Rephidim". Having engaged in the great battle of Rephidim, they are now considered to be warriors of God, and Amalek is powerless. This represents a believer who has discovered that the Holy Spirit has been given through the death of Christ, through His sufferings; not even by His ascension, but by the sufferings of Christ. The Israelites had thirsted, and had murmured, so God commanded Moses to come before Him with the elders of Israel, and with the staff with which he had smitten the river, and said to him, "Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock on Horeb; and thou shalt strike the rock, and there shall come water out of it", Exodus 17:6. That refers to the sufferings of Christ

in a way calculated to touch us. Jesus has been smitten; the water came out; that is to say, the Spirit was there. So we learn that we can only receive the Spirit through the sufferings of Jesus. In John 7:39 we learn that Jesus must be glorified before the Spirit would come; however, before being glorified He had to suffer. If He had entered into glory without these sufferings, we could not have received the Spirit. It is as we recognise what we are according to flesh that the Spirit comes, so that the flesh in us might be kept in check. It is thus that the Spirit's coming is presented in this chapter, and so it is possible to obey and do what Jehovah requires in Exodus 19:5,6. Satan working in the flesh was overcome at the battle of Rephidim and the people are now in a normal position. They have departed from Rephidim, Moses having built an altar there; "Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi" (Exodus 17:15), meaning 'Jehovah my banner'. God Himself is our banner. It is a matter of the power of the Spirit of God in us, dear brethren, as we learn in the epistle to the Romans. So we have the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt; their departure from Rephidim, and their arrival in the wilderness of Sinai; they encamped in the wilderness before the mountain. All this is in type for the help of the saints, for God desires to give us as much as possible, so in verses 4 - 6 He makes a proposal to them. Does this not attract us? Can we be content to remain in the extremity of the camp, exposed to Amalek who falls on the hindmost of the people, on the feeble that lag behind? In spite of such a proposal on the part of God, can we do that, we, whom He calls His "own possession" or His "inheritance"? God says, "Jehovah's portion is his people; Jacob the lot of his inheritance", Deuteronomy 32:9. We need the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him, so that we should know "what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints", Ephesians 1:18. God is stressing His eternal thoughts concerning us, that we should be near to Him, and responsive to the love that He has manifested in the power of the Spirit whom we have received. In view of all this, He says, "All the earth is mine".

God is bringing out that we are *for* Him, and therefore He is pleased to take up certain ones to form them so that they may render to Him intelligently the response that He expects. He is saying, so to speak, "I do not seek yours, but you" (2 Corinthians 12:14); for "Every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle upon a thousand hills", Psalm 50:10. Not only does He want a treasure, but He also wants priests. "You shall be to me a kingdom of priests"; it is here not a matter of the family of one man, but of the whole company of priests, as the New Testament refers to it, "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: to him be the glory and the might to the ages of ages", Revelation 1:5,6. That

is the divine thought, dear brethren: we are a holy priesthood and finally a holy nation. National feeling is very active at the present time; there are great nations and small nations, and the great ones are not backward in asserting their greatness, but what is referred to here cannot be found on earth, a holy nation. For us it is more than a holy nation, for we belong to the assembly, and God has made us His sons. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, come of woman, come under law, that he might redeem those under law, that we might receive sonship. But because ye are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father", Galatians 4:4 - 6. Thus it is not a question only of a nation, but of a company of sons in the enjoyment of the nearness of this relationship, who are saying, "Abba, Father". Such are the great, blessed and dignified privileges, dear brethren, of those who are in relation with God through redemption, and who in this relationship address Him with the same liberty as He to them. Jesus in Gethsemane said to His Father, "Abba, Father"; so we also in this holy nearness, have the privilege of saying, "Abba, Father".

NEARNESS AND DISTANCE (JT 96)

Numbers 2:1 - 3; Deuteronomy 25:17 - 19; Exodus 19:1 - 6; Psalm 148:14

You will perhaps have discerned that these verses contain the idea of nearness to God and its blessed consequences; and, on the other hand, the idea of distance, and its sorrowful consequences. My remarks will cover these points in dealing with the latter first so as to lead up to this remarkable psalm — the remarkable statement, rather, in the psalm that I read, "A people near unto him", coming in at the end of the psalm into which the Spirit of God compresses the great idea of praise to God. And the position of those who praise is "a people near unto him". This is very attractive to us if we love God. We know He is love, and correspondingly love Him. The suggestion of a people near unto Him is extremely affecting and alluring. We cannot afford, as the people of God, to miss not only the experience and the atmosphere of the place, but the dignity attached to the position of a people near unto Him. "Praise ye the Lord". It is those who, as knowing God, love God. The psalms are poorly understood by us, and not the least by oneself. There are a great many psalms — one hundred and fifty — and God has graciously divided them up into five books, so as to aid us in reading and in understanding them; foreseeing, as He did, our measure and the smallness of our receptive and retentive powers, God graciously arranged His thoughts in poetic form, which is the easiest form to retain, and in the division of books. More than that, there is not merely an arbitrary division into chapters, but each psalm had its own setting: the division is inspired, and some of the psalms are subdivided. For instance, some are arranged alphabetically so that we might learn under the letters of the alphabet, so that we might learn and retain the whole thoughts of God, the thoughts wrought out in those who love Him. They are the product of experience with God, and experiences with God are sure to issue in love to God, we cannot be near to God without loving Him. The psalms are a sort of finishing education, at least in the Old Testament, and the closing psalms especially are pregnant with the exalted idea of praise, Jehovah occupying supremely the intelligence and affections of His people. Well now, we cannot afford to be outside that realm; we cannot afford to be outside the realm of "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs". We are to be maintained in heavenly and happy, holy, victorious relations.

Now the converse of all that is indicated in the scriptures in Numbers and Deuteronomy. The scripture in Numbers begins the wilderness journey. That is, it begins with the effect of the wilderness journey on the people. Chapter 10 is the great start and there is no complaint in that chapter; everything is according to divine order, and the chapter culminates in triumph. The ark was

moving out, and the word was, "Rise up, Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered"; and when it rested he said, "Return, Jehovah, unto the myriads of the thousands of Israel". What a glorious setting even if it lasted only for a day! If God can preserve His people for one day, He can do it for a week, or for a month or for a year, for eternity! It is a question of what *He* can do, but if He is minded to show what *we* can do, if God withdraws His hand, then it is a sad matter, and the first thing is complaint. There is hardly anything more ready to show itself in us, beloved brethren, than complaint, unless we are self-judged. The last person we complain against is ourselves; it would be well if we began with ourselves, but we do not. This chapter and the following ones are just full of this distressing condition, complaint, even extending to the great mediator Moses. He complains, too; he said to Jehovah, You have given me too much to do. As if God were not the God of measure! But I am not here to speak about Moses but to speak about the mass of us, and how the idea of distance manifests itself as soon as the complaint is expressed; and the judgment reaches those at a distance, so that instead of the happy enjoyment which we see at the end of the Psalms, a people near to Jehovah, we have some in the extremity of the camp burned, burned with the fire of God. You may say, That is the Old Testament; it is, but we must never forget that the Old Testament is always the New Testament. If the Holy Spirit uses it to your soul tonight it is as new as if it were spoken for the first time by God; indeed it is written for us, as we are told. If we say, That is the Old Testament, we cannot apply the fire today, we cannot think of God burning people today, let us not forget that the scripture says, "Our God is a consuming fire", not *their* God, but *ours*. To us there is one God, He is our God, He is God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He is our Father and our God, and our God is a consuming fire. It may not appear kind or gracious to press this upon us, but it is imperative *our* God is a consuming fire. If there be corruption, what can be more blessed than that fact to those who have to do with it, fire is the most drastic remedy for corruption?

So we are warned here of being in the extremity of the camp, it was those in the extremity of the camp that came in for the fire of the judgment of God. One would speak to the young ones here as to where you are in the march. Chapter 10 of this book shows the order of the march in the wilderness. It was not a mob, every person's place was assigned to him in the march, as well as in the encampments. The order of the march was: Judah with two tribes, and then Reuben with two tribes, Ephraim with two tribes, and then Dan; four sets of three tribes each. After Judah came the tabernacle, taken down and carried by the Gershonites and Merarites, and after Reuben came the sanctuary, borne by the Kohathites; the position of each was assigned, and what an

honour to be marching in such a company! God was in the centre of that array; the dwelling-place of God was there. Anyone using his own will and saying, I know some people in the camp of Ephraim who are congenial to me, I will march with them, I will take my place with those people, would be simply lawless. If you choose your own will, if you are governed by your own will instead of by the will of God, you will never prove that will of yours good and perfect, you will prove it to be bad and imperfect. Whereas the place assigned to you is according to the will of God, you will prove that position to be good and perfect, and you will prove the will of God in it. You may not know the place you have in divine counsel, young christians scarcely do to begin with, their business is to be subject, and in due course they will learn they have a place far beyond their expectations. It is a question not only of the love of God but of the *great* love of God. If you go back to the rear of the camp, when it is pitched next time you will find yourself on the outside of the camp; if you are indifferent to what is going on in the prayer meeting, or in the general work of God, if it is a matter of little or no consequence to you, you are on the edge of the camp, and the judgment finds you in that place of distance. That is what happens, the spirit of complaint is certain to lead us further and further away, and the judgment of God, whatever form it may take, is sure to find us there on the outskirts of the camp. The will of God has assigned a place to you and if you leave it deliberately, governed by some selfish motive, you will fall behind and Amalek will cut you off; you will die away into the world and lose all that is spiritual. Moses says in Deuteronomy, 'Remember Amalek, remember how he cut off the hindmost of you, the weak ones'.

In Exodus 19 we have the heart of God disclosed, at least we can understand it in that way, and you will observe that the time is given. "In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai"; three months is a considerable experience. God takes into account where we are, and what He has in mind to disclose, He waited for the children of Israel for these three months. You will notice that it is not simply three months, but where they pitched — in the wilderness of Sinai — for they were departed from Rephidim, that is to say, from the conflict with Amalek. They had passed that point; I wonder how many of us have passed that point? Deuteronomy speaks of it as affecting the weak ones; they were actually cut off, but Israel as a whole was not cut off, they fought valiantly and triumphantly; it was a pitched battle. The experiences of a believer in himself are the greatest kind of a pitched battle; very few understand it, but it has to be gone through before we come to the

wilderness of Sinai and pitch before Horeb. How many of us have passed it? It says here that they were departed from Rephidim and were come to the desert of Sinai and had pitched in the wilderness, and there Israel encamped before the mount. Now, beloved brethren, this is the most important bit of instruction that we can take in. It is a question of our beginnings, and our beginnings are the times of the greatest and most durable impressions; what you learn in those three months will stay with you. One would challenge those here as to this passage by Rephidim: how have we behaved in it? What part have we had in it? Have we been one of the stragglers behind or have we followed in the wake of Joshua? This is like Romans 7, a chapter less understood than any chapter in Scripture, and consequently there is a weakness among the saints in practical righteousness, in practical holiness and in practical deliverance. The battle is worse in a way than that by one of David's mighty men who slew a lion in a pit on a snowy day. It is close quarters, and quarters in which one has to exercise one's analytical powers, one's spiritual analytical powers to understand the ground occupied and the difficulties to be met in the conflict, and the forces that are in action; so that the writer of the chapter triumphantly says, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" — He is our Joshua. A great pitched battle having taken place at Rephidim, the people were able to pass on, having disposed of this great enemy. Amalek is left behind a conquered foe, and the people can say by the Spirit of God, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord"; "With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin". The analysis is perfect, I have done with sin in the flesh, I have settled the matter. The next chapter brings out that there are lovers of God, not only that He loves us but that we love Him, we are lovers of God. Deuteronomy is full of lovers of God, and it is there that the mediator brings out this about Amalek, but here it says they had passed that point and had pitched before the mount. What a position for the people to be set up and encamped in having passed Rephidim! They are in the presence of these inexhaustible resources of God. God says at this point, Now I can say something about Myself. It is a great deal more blessed to hear God speak about Himself than to hear Him speak about us; He can speak of nothing greater than Himself, and He only can speak rightly of Himself. Logos means that only God can speak of God. So we are told here that Moses went up unto God, the mediator is liberated; how simple and how full God is never on our level, He comes down to lift us up, Moses went up unto God. In Hebrews it says, "Let us draw near". The nearer we get the more liberty we have, let us draw near, the way is open. Moses went up into the mount and God says to him, "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself". God is

reviewing the history, but it is history about Himself, it is what He has done. God would have every one of us here to follow this; it is a wholesome custom to review your history even every day, your beginning, extending back even to your unconverted days. It is salutary and humbling; you come to the days of your conversion when God came into your vision, and you began to think of God. You are reviewing now the history of God with you, and He is pleased with that, because it brings you to when He came into your vision and filled your heart with His love and gave you His Spirit. Now, He says, I have something more to say, it is never finished, the idea of Logos is constant disclosure, not in the sense of revelation, but in the sense of what is in the Scriptures that I have never seen. The Lord Jesus carries on that service, and He would come in with an additional thought. So God says to Moses here, "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself". Can anything be more blessed than to know that God has brought us to Him? We are not yet in the land, but He has got us with Him — "I ... brought you unto myself". And then He proposes what is to be done. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel". One could dwell on these words at length, the position and the proposal — "all the earth is mine" — I have plenty of scope, if it is in other hands for the moment, that is nothing, you are to be Mine, and it is all to be yours. How are we to be with Him? A kingdom of priests; we are to be with Him on His terms and not on ours. This leads me to the psalm we read. The Psalms contemplate the terms on which the people are with God, they contemplate that the people are to be with God according to His ordering. We are not to be with Him as a promiscuous crowd, we are not to be with Him in any position that may suit us. The Psalms contemplate David and Solomon, the first book of Psalms is occupied with David almost exclusively, the second book finishes with "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended".

Why are they ended? Because Christ has come in, and in Christ every thought of God is set out; one great thought is the priesthood and the singers, it is a question of the order of the service that God has set up. The Psalms contemplate us not as a set of labourers, but a people set in holy nearness to God and occupied with His praises eternally. "From eternity to eternity thou art God". What a thought it is! What an incentive to come into nearness to God! We have that holy dignity, there are no forced expressions of praise, our hearts are full, inditing a good matter. Then in verse 14 we read, "He also

exalteth the horn of his people" — the power of His people; you come out and worship God, and God comes in, it is not simply the power we have but what He does with it, He exalts the horn of His people,

the praise of all His saints. The meeting ends in triumph, it begins very weak, but it is what God does, "He exalteth the horn of his people ... a people near unto him". O beloved brethren, one would love to go in for that, in the place of nearness, and the occupation we have in it of praising Jehovah, praising God and the Father, and the exaltation that belongs to it, the dignity that belongs to it, in this holy nearness. So we are regarded as a people near unto Him, that is our privilege and our dignity, to be near unto Him.

Deuteronomy 26

- (Deuteronomy 1)
  THE BASKET OF FIRSTFRUITS (JT 2)
- DEUTERONOMY 26 (CAC 5)
- POSSESSION (JBS 2)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 26 (JND 36)
- FULFILLED RESPONSIBILITY (JR 2)
- NOTES OF READINGS ON DEUTERONOMY (6) (JT 7)
- "LET US GO ON UNTO PERFECTION" (JT 12)
- SPIRITUAL WEALTH (JT 27)

DEUTERONOMY 26 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 26

This is the only chapter in the book which speaks of the people as worshipping Jehovah, and it is the only chapter in which there is any priestly service Godward.

In verse 4 of this chapter the priest serves Godward in presenting the basket of first-fruits before the altar. It is not placed on the altar; the service here is not sacrificial, as so often in Leviticus; it has not to do with sin or acceptance, but it is the presentation of that which bears witness that the brethren are in the possession and enjoyment of the inheritance which God has given them. It thus throws light on the character of assembly worship which is proper to saints as in "the land".

Man after the flesh — the man that Satan can work by — is known typically as the subject of divine judgment in the destruction pronounced on Amalek at the end of the previous chapter, for Amalek represents the flesh as the vessel and tool of Satan's inveterate antagonism to what is of God. But those begotten of God come into the land as their divinely given inheritance, and as they come into possession and cultivate their lots the fruits begin to be gathered (verses 1, 2). When this comes to pass we are not to settle down as if they were given entirely for individual enjoyment, or to be shared with friends of our own selection. They are given to put us in motion towards God in the place of His selection, that common centre of service and worship for all His people where He causes His Name to dwell.

It is God's thought that all the fruit of the land should minister in the first place to assembly service. He claims priority in this matter. How can we be content, in the light of this chapter, to enjoy spiritual good in an individual or sectarian way? "The *first* of all the fruit" must be carried to "the place" that God has chosen to cause His Name to dwell there. This character of service is to mark the assembly in addition to the features we have considered in looking at chapters 12, 14, 15, 16. In this way continued freshness in the service and worship of the assembly is maintained,

so that it truly ministers to the pleasure of God. According to the mind of God, full provision was made for the worship of the assembly to be maintained in living freshness right through its history from Pentecost to the rapture. This would be secured by the *first* of the fruits of the land being continually presented as fresh crops matured through God's blessing and the spiritual diligence of His saints in the land. It suggests that fresh elements will be

continually forthcoming to impart their peculiar grace and value to the worship of the assembly.

How different is this from the formal order of the religious world, or from the routine into which we are all apt to fall! When the headship of Christ and the presence of the Spirit were lost sight of, men cast the public service of God into fixed liturgical moulds to preserve order, but there is no spiritual freshness in that. However many first-fruits may have been given there is no room for them; the service still retains the form into which men cast it centuries ago! The truth of God's assembly and its service, as set forth typically in this scripture, sets free from all such human restrictions upon spiritual liberty in the service of God. They are indeed a trespass upon His rights, as well as a restraint upon the affections of His people.

"The first of the fruits" would suggest a new spiritual acquisition that has not been known in the soul in quite the same way before. It has not only been in the purpose of God to give it to us, but we have now got it, by His favour, in our hearts. It is in our affections and intelligence in such a way that we can bring it to His assembly for His pleasure, and we can speak to Him about it in the fresh joy of it, and not as something we have had in store a long time. We can speak, too, of the sovereign love that has wrought so wondrously to secure it to us, and to secure us for it. The instruction here is for each individual, but it is to be carried out by all, so that a coming to one centre the service and worship has united assembly character. The spiritual accessions of the individual lead him in the first place, according to this scripture, to the assembly as a contributor to its worship and joy.

"I profess this day unto Jehovah thy God, that I am come unto the land that Jehovah swore unto our fathers to give us". The Yea and Amen of every promise is in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and nothing can be more acceptable to God than that we should be able to profess to Him that we have come into this "good land". It is all His gift, and He gets the glory of it "by us" (2 Corinthians 1: 20); He claims the "first" of its fruit for His own delight, so that we may know how pleased He is that we have come into what was in His heart for us. Our first acquisition of its fruit qualifies us to approach Him with joy as those who can say, "For all is of thee, and of that which is from thy hand have we given thee" (1 Chronicles 29: 14). What a blessed thought this gives of the service of God in His assembly! No false humility that thinks to please God by asserting its own unworthiness and emptiness. No efforts to bring what we have not got. But the simplicity of hearts that have come, by divine grace and power, into that which God has given in Christ, and can "profess" this to Him in the consciousness of its reality. We can bring "fruits" of

spiritual exercise in deep joy, as owning that it is God's due to have the first since He has given all. It is a wondrous thought that the blessed God should find His happiness in seeing us happy before Him in conscious possession of what His love has given. And the divine thought is that all should be intensified by being brought and presented before His altar in that common centre of which His assembly is the antitype.

Then what is to be said before Jehovah is such as He will delight to hear. "A perishing Aramaean was my father". This does not go back to Abraham or Isaac, but to Jacob. Abraham would remind us of the sovereignty of divine purpose and calling. Isaac would, in figure, express the resurrection power by which God will give effect to His purpose. But in Jacob and his sons we see men in danger of perishing, taken up in grace by God, protected, cared for, disciplined, exercised under oppression, but delivered from the world, and brought into a rich land of purposed and promised blessing. There is nothing said here of the exercises of the wilderness. In chapter 8: 2 - 6 wilderness leadings and experiences are the great subject, but the exercises dwelt upon here are such as bring us into the knowledge of the greatness of God's saving power, His complete deliverance in bringing us out and bringing us in.

There is a wondrous history behind the fact that saints are found together in God's assembly, and it is not to be out of mind. But it is viewed from the standpoint of present blessedness in "a land flowing with milk and honey". It is what God has done in grace and faithfulness for "sons of Jacob". In Ephesians 1 our history is traced back to eternal purpose in Christ, and God's resurrection power in Christ is seen as towards us for the effectuation of His purpose. But in Ephesians 2 our history goes back to how we once walked, and what we were by nature, and we see what the work and grace of God has effected for such. This latter is in correspondence with the worshipper's utterance in Deuteronomy 26. From the low depth of "perishing" to the height of blessing in the land all has been of God. "Ye are saved by grace". We often delight to sing together:

"Father, Thy sovereign love has sought
Captives to sin, gone far from Thee;
The work that Thine own Son hath wrought
Has brought us back in peace and free",

This gives its own peculiar note to Deuteronomic worship; and there cannot be joy in all the good that God has given to us apart from the recognition and consciousness of how all has been brought about by grace and sovereign love. It is good to retrace before God His spiritual dealings; He has completely

delivered us, and brought us to "a land flowing with milk and honey". Nothing is more nourishing than milk; it speaks of that which ministers to growth, and of the love in which Christ nourishes the assembly. While honey would suggest the activity of divine love in the saints promoting mutual and collective labour to secure what is sweet and refreshing so that it may be available for all. And all contributes, as is typically set before us here, to the worship and joy of the assembly. Christ as our blessed Instructor would impress our hearts with all this as proper to "the land".

Then "the year of tithing", like the bringing of the basket of first-fruits, is an occasion of speaking before Jehovah, the only two instances of this in the book. The one is saying before God what *He* has done for us, and the other is saying what *we* have done according to His commandment. It is as much His will that we should say the one as the other, and the one is as essential to our true happiness and blessing as the other. The former is said when the first-fruits of the land are gathered, and the latter is said at the end of the third year. So that the one represents an early, and the other a more mature, experience in the land. After three years' occupation of the land, and acquisition of its wealth, a special "year of tithing", peculiarly imbued with a spirit of grace, can be observed. The first of the fruits are for God in His assembly, but His complete thought according to this chapter is not realised until His people become expressive of Himself in activities of grace "to the Levite, and to the stranger, to the fatherless,

and to the widow". He designs that our "gates" shall be so filled with plenty that there is an abundant supply to be administered unselfishly according to His good pleasure. We think from the very first of what *He* has given, and bring the fruit of it to Him in a spirit of worship. Then after three years' experience of His bounty we become qualified to give in a way and spirit that is the fruit of His giving, and that corresponds with it.

This is the climax of the instruction as to "the land". Not only is God known and responded to as the Giver, but His sons, enriched by matured experience of His bounty, become givers also. They are formed in His blessed nature, and express it in gracious ways which are the reflex of His own. This requires a certain spiritual development; it is hardly what Paul would look to find in those whom he calls babes; it is a privilege for which we are fitted by being established and enriched in the land. There is no higher point of experience contemplated in this book; it is the crown and climax of the work of grace — the character of the blessed God reproduced in His children according to Ephesians 5: 1; 1 John 4:7,8; 1 John 4:11,12.

As walking in love, in deed and in truth, we can say before God that we are doing so; He loves that we should be able to say it. It is, in a typical form, what John says; "Children, let us not love with word, nor with tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we shall know that we are of the truth, and shall persuade our hearts before him — that if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness towards God, and whatsoever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments, and practise the things which are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3: 18 - 22). We not only walk in love, according to God's commandments, but we can *say* before Him that we are doing so, and count upon Him for blessing. "I have brought ... and also have given ... . I have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. Look down from thy holy habitation, from the heavens, and bless thy people Israel, and the land that thou hast given us as thou didst sware unto our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey". This is blessing conditional upon the obedience of love.

Nothing is to be allowed to interfere with this gracious activity; neither sorrow, nor uncleanness, nor any claim of the dead (verse 14). The mention of such things shews that this has its application at the present time, while there is the possibility of forgetfulness, sorrow, or uncleanness interfering with the unselfish activities of grace. It is the *same kind* of administration as will mark the holy city when she comes down out of the heaven to bring the glory of God into the world where every kind of need has been. Those who are seen worshipping within the heavenly courts in Revelation 4, Revelation 5 come out in divine administration in Revelation 21. This is in keeping with what we see in type in Deuteronomy 26, but the latter scripture typifies it as carried out, in the spirit of it, before the day of manifested glory. It is while the effects of sorrow, uncleanness, or death are yet present, and may have an effect in diminishing the activities of grace, that the saints, as answering to this beautiful scripture, are privileged to say before God that they have not done so.

The Lord had deep sorrows, but His ministry of grace went on in undiminished fulness; no circumstance of sorrow ever checked its outflow. He felt His rejection by the cities where His mighty works had been done, but His heart still found expression in the words, "Come to me, all ye who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11). Passing on as One whom the people would have stoned He saw a man blind from his birth, and wrought the works of God by giving him sight (John 8: 59; John 9: 1). Amid the unfathomable sorrows of the cross He answered the petition of the penitent

thief by saying, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise". He allowed nothing to diminish the activities of grace.

"A holy priesthood" ministers to God, and "a kingly priesthood" sets forth to men His excellencies as known in grace. He secures worshippers for Himself, and then He constitutes them administrators of His gracious bounty. In the sphere where God's will operates He would not have any need unsatisfied. "That they may eat in thy gates, and be filled". But He does this mediately through His people; they reflect His glory as known in grace.

Nothing could be more beautiful than the closing section of this chapter, "Thou hast this day accepted Jehovah to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his ordinances, and to hearken unto his voice; and Jehovah hath accepted thee this day to be a people of possession to him, as he hath told thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments, so that he should make thee high above all the nations which he hath made, in praise and in name and in honour; and that thou shouldest be a holy people to Jehovah thy God, as he hath said" (verses 17 - 19).

If when they went after Him in the wilderness it was the time of espousals (Jeremiah 2: 2), surely the scripture before us would indicate the consummation of the marriage bond between Jehovah and His people which is so often referred to by the prophets. "Thou hast this day accepted Jehovah to be thy God ... and Jehovah hath accepted thee this day to be a people of possession to him". It is the blessed place of Israel as married to Jehovah, to be fully realised in that coming day when the words of Isaiah 62 shall be fulfilled: "Thou shalt no more be termed, Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed, Desolate; but thou shalt be called, My delight is in her, and thy land, Married, for Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, shall thy sons marry thee; and with the joy of the bridegroom over the bride shall thy God rejoice over thee". This is for Israel the consummation of what love has purposed. A people marked by such features as we have been considering in this book are "a people of possession" to God. Saints of the assembly can take it all up spiritually as the instruction of Christ to us, and thus in a higher and more blessed way than Israel ever will. Deuteronomy is, for us, a book of heavenly instruction.

POSSESSION (JBS 2)

Deuteronomy 26: 1 - 15

This chapter describes the action that was to take place consequent upon the people reaching what was the purpose of God. I turn back to the third of Exodus to see what that purpose was, and read at the seventh verse: "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey". That is the purpose of God.

Now this purpose, beloved friends, we cannot keep it too simply before our hearts. I find that He has a purpose about me, and that it is this: to bring me out of one place into another place. The prodigal's place is in the Father's house though, as to himself, he may not have come upstairs yet; and that is the case with many saints. I may not have reached it yet, but I know the desire in my Father's heart about me.

Saints make their necessity the measure of God's action for them. It is true that my necessity is met; but it is never the measure of God's action for me. If we make our necessity the measure, we never get beyond it. God never gives us anything that we do not value. Everyone in this room has what he values. He may think that he has not; he may think that he values more than he has; but the fact that he does not is shown by his not possessing it. God says you do not value more, therefore I do not give you more. He does not cast His pearls before swine; it is according to the amount of interest that you take in it that you have it; according to your appreciation of the truth is the measure of it that you have: "unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance".

Nothing is more manifest than that God's purpose is to have me in this spot. Your Father in heaven has a spot for you; a spot that it is His desire you should occupy; and your occupying it will alone satisfy His heart. Your Father wishes you to be there: the love of the parent wants the child to be brought into the sphere where he himself is. You may occupy it or not, but, if you do not, you have never fulfilled His purpose.

The idea is beyond all human conception! My Father desires that I should occupy this place of nearness to Him. That such a thing as this should be made known to a poor heart like mine, is to me the climax of everything! it is irresistible! I may be below the mark, I may lose the idea, but that is what is

in His heart; it is His ideal; and I wonder at myself, that I am so little moved by it. My Father has a spot for me, and the only question is whether I will occupy it.

Well, beloved, there is only One who ever could occupy the place of standing between God and me. Only One knew what the extent of my offence was, and only One knew what the love of the Father's heart was to me, a poor prodigal. Only One knew the extent of my offence against God, for I must be equal to a person to know how he feels about a thing; and none knows the love of the Father to me but that One; and He says, I bear the one, I declare the other; from sin and Satan I bear them every one, and I declare Thy name unto My brethren. He encounters everything in the twenty-second Psalm, and comes in after it all like the sun shining in his glory upon the scene.

It is not only that there is a purpose in my Father's heart about me, but His only beloved Son has accomplished that purpose for me. He has come forth to do all God's will, and, having done it, He has returned up there, and is set down at God's right hand, far above all principality, and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, and has been made Head over all things to the church. It is not, as people often put it, a ladder that goes up to heaven, but a ladder that comes down from heaven; therefore the moment I put my foot upon it I am connected with heaven. The One who measures my distance is the One who is the measure of my nearness.

Yes, says the Lord Jesus, I have prepared it for you; there is a spot in the Father's house that is yours; you have title - indefeasible title to it; and, if you do not occupy it, nobody will; it will be unoccupied, that is all.

You are not true to your life if you are not in the place where your life is. The "great supper", is not *salvation*, as the commentators say. Ask any child what a supper is; and he will tell you it is an entertainment. But no one knows anything about *entertainment*; they have no sense of anything of the kind. People talk of *deliverance*, but that is not *riches*. John's gospel comes in to supply that. There He talks about "the gift". He says, I will tell your poor heart what will satisfy you. He brings in the fourth chapter as a contrast to the second, and the saint who is not in the fourth has gone back to the second - to earthly joys, and earthly religion. In the second the wine is out, but in the fourth the Spirit is in. In the third, He died because of me that I might have life because of Him; and in the fourth there is a sufficiency of everything; you will never thirst, the Spirit is *in* you; you need never go outside yourself, for the Spirit of God in you springs up into everlasting life, and leads the heart practically into the knowledge of a scene where there is perfectness of blessing outside of everything here.

I have spoken of the purpose of God, and I will just recall for a moment what I have said. God has a place, a spot for me. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him". It is *vague*, says Isaiah. Now that is the idea of many souls. I have often appealed to souls, and said, Have you any idea of what heaven will be? They have perhaps had some vague thoughts about it, and I have said, You have not got beyond Isaiah. In Corinthians we get the contrast to this: "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit"; there is the accomplishment of the purpose. One has done it, and He says, I bring you into a new condition which entirely eclipses the old one. In the fourth chapter you are superior to the man who could not get on without wine; and you have yet another thing: you have not only that which is superior to the man, but in the seventh chapter, that which is superior to the earth; rivers of living water flow from you; you minister to the earth instead of its ministering to you. How am I made superior to all here? By the Holy Spirit.

All that I am stating now is in order to show that there is a spot in God's own mind for us; that He has a purpose that He has accomplished for us. In Isaiah we get that purpose, and in Corinthians the Spirit of God shows us that it is secured to us. So that first there is the purpose; second the accomplishment; and third what remains for us but to enjoy it? He says, "The Son of man must be lifted up"; and faith is simple when I turn away from my ruin, and when my eye is occupied with Himself. I want to give you the connection of the Spirit of God. If, as a believer, you are not walking in that new condition which the Spirit of God has opened up to you, you are going back to man and earth. What we have to learn is, that we have to do with a Man in heaven, and that we have to do with *the place where He is*. For, though we are united by the Spirit to that Man that is in heaven, yet you have to go to heaven to enjoy the Man that is in heaven. I say that because I see practically how it works.

It is the purpose of God first that He has that place for me, chosen by His love. I cannot tell how it draws me, that love! The Lord says, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of", "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work". I used to read it, "finish *her* work", but it was *His* work. He says I have answered to the heart of the living God in what I have communicated to that poor woman. I heard a benefactor say once: "It is a nice thing to make anyone happy by giving them two pence!" Now that is a *benefactor* and nothing more. Christ was happy because He had done *God's* work.

The third thing is the enjoyment of this purpose, which can only be by the Spirit of God. Now I notice that people practise all sorts of deceptions upon

themselves. I will just mention one of them. I hear a person say, "I have such sweet communion with Jesus"; and I am quite astonished when I come to talk with him, and inquire a little closer into what this sweet communion is, I find it is his sense of the compassion and interest that the Lord has shown to him in the trial he has been passing through. In fact it is Jesus sympathising with him - coming down in grace into his circumstances - it is sympathy, not communion. I do not know anything more injurious than calling low things by high names. For instance, people call prayer meetings worship meetings. A person coming to a meeting and getting his feet washed at it, will say, Oh, what a blessed season we have had! Well, it *is* a blessed season when you have the Lord dealing with you, but, if you have really met Himself, you will scarcely speak of it in that way. We use too many figurative expressions about our experiences, and lose an immense deal by not allowing the truth to come out in its reality to us.

Though united to Christ in heaven, there as your Head, yet you must also know what it is to be in the *place* where He is. What many want is to get the Lord down into their own circumstances; but you *must* find the Lord in the place where He is. Many want Him down here; and He does minister to my wants; He came down here purposely to meet death in a double way, therefore all the sympathy that I need I meet with from Him in my circumstances here. But besides that He says, "I go to prepare a *place* for you". The only thing that will satisfy my heart is being in company with the One who has won my heart; in order to enjoy a person you must be in the place where that person is. Now that is what this chapter in Deuteronomy is. You are come into the place, you are dwelling in it, and then you find out what a wonderful thing it is to be occupied with the Person who dwells there.

Now let me turn for a moment to the epistle to the Ephesians. In this epistle the whole thing turns upon the fact that Christ Himself has gone up; therefore the first chapter opens at what I will call the oracle. Everything is accomplished, we are in unqualified possession. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ". The apostle is not expecting anything; he is expressing what comes out in this chapter in Deuteronomy: worship - the outflow of a heart that is fully satisfied with the portion it has got. What is worship? Why a heart that you can not put any more in. A person in a certain sense is ecstatic when he is in worship, though he may have only just been converted; worship comes out; he is occupied with the One from whom he has received the blessing; he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"; that is worship. Worship is not occupation with the gift, it is

occupation with the Giver. Worship is the heart detained by the object that controls it. A heart looking for blessing is not really worshipping.

So here you get, as I say, the oracle. Now in olden times if you had gone to consult an oracle, as people were in the habit of doing, you would have had nothing to say, you would have only had to listen. Thus here it goes into our portion, telling us seven blessed things that God has given us in Christ; our calling comes out. But, at the seventeenth verse, there is a change; the oracle turns round and takes part with the listeners; the apostle turns round and begins to pray. This servant, who has been so wonderfully used of God to open up to us our calling, turns to pray - joins, as it were, us who were the listeners, and says, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints". The moment I get the prayer, I get the divine energy; and I must have this divine energy, to carry me into the thing that is already mine.

I feel as I read this prayer that I must say Amen to it; and, according as I say Amen, so is my heart rising up in intelligence as to the fact of the place that is already mine. Really, I *am* there through grace; I am quickened together with Christ; that is my possession in life. But, mind you, I have another thing; now comes my possession in practice. I am rising up to what, as I say Amen? I am rising up to the place where God has put me in Christ, and God has set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places. It is just as much the grace of God to put me into heaven as to take me out of hell.

People think that because they have this place in gift that they therefore have it in practice; but many a man has a property who does not know how to use it; it is not the fact of having possession of it that ensures your enjoyment of it. Scripture warns us against this; "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting". Oh, but he has it! say you; and has he not had a great deal of trouble in hunting it? Yes, but he has not used it; he has not turned it to account. Everybody knows an artisan of first-rate energy and ability by the way in which he finishes his work; he shows his want of energy when he cannot give a thing the right finish. The finishing is most important; and, I say it with grief in my heart, that where I find a great deal of intelligence about the truth brought out in the Ephesians, there is often very little heart about it.

I have sometimes said to people, Did you ever lose a night's rest trying to get hold of your heavenly place? There is nothing to me more sad than the way in which people will allow that they have not got it, and yet the little earnestness

they show in seeking to get it. The saying of a man who had travelled all over the world often comes to my mind; he said, "The people who care least about their religion, and are least interested in it, are the Christians". I am sure we ought to lie upon the ground and ask our God to do with us what He will, so that only we may be in the spot our Father has chosen for us. Can you not say, Oh, I know what I am! but take that thing out of me that hinders me from rising up to that only spot that will ever satisfy my heart?

I often wonder whether I am ever in an agony about those I know. Here the apostle is for those he had never seen. He does not mind losing an hour's rest that he may pray for them that they may reach that spot. Yet that poor creature there will not stir a finger, would not lose an hour's rest himself, that he might get it. The apostle was in an agony about people whose faces he had never seen in the flesh. What for? That they might live correct lives? No,

but that their hearts might be comforted by being brought into the consciousness of their being united to a heavenly Christ. I am united to Christ. You are brought into association with Him in the spot where He is, and then you are made acquainted with the fulness that is in Him. If you do not know that sphere where He is, you cannot come down and be connected with what is of Him here.

Now just another point to show you how it is that things begin to decline among us. It is the way in which people hold the truth of the unity of the body. I will tell you how this truth was revived; it was in this way. A brother well known among us awoke up one morning with the thought: I have a Head in heaven, and, if so, there are many others on earth who have got a Head in heaven; and therefore we are members of one another. You are united to Christ as Head over His body, and you are brought into association with each other because of your union to Himself. It is a question of *holding the Head*. I must have to do with the One who is the *source* of it all. I have to do with *Him*. I have to do with the *Head*, and not with the *members*.

In one moment we may be introduced into a region of unspeakable delights, as the apostle Paul was when he was caught up into the third heaven, but it takes a long time before we are fit to live that out down here - before we are fit to be instruments of the truth we have learned. I am sure I was fourteen years after I knew what the heavenly calling was before I was able to match it in my life. We have to be put in circumstances to test us. Instead of Paul finding that he was going to be something wonderfully great when he came down from being in such a region, he found that he had a thorn in the flesh to buffet him. If I get up higher in heaven I am only all the lower on earth; higher in the new order, but lower in the old. But I am content to be nothing if

only the power of Christ may rest upon me. It was a terrible thing that Satan could thus take hold of Paul and make a lodgment in the man. But so it was; and Paul found himself a crippled thing - not able to turn his talents to any use at all. I am made conscious of my own cripplement, so that it may be a new power altogether that is working in me. I have to do with that blessed One where He is; and I believe, when you are a few minutes there, you cannot but get a sense of what a contrast this place is to everything else.

But have I to come down into this rude world again? Yes, like an exotic from the equator in a northern clime, by some unseen power I am maintained here in a scene that is contrary to me - I am sustained here by the divine energy of the Spirit of God. Christ's body is here, and it is as we draw upon the Head, we find what it is to represent Him here. Angels look on at the wonderful fact, that the Man the world refused is now represented by His people on the earth. As we draw from the Head we become useful members. It is not that Christ's body is only forming now, but that it is here to represent Him; and we drop into Christ's first interest here in the measure in which we come from Him in heaven. My first interest here becomes His body.

An evangelist perhaps will say, My business is to go out to preach the gospel to the world. Yes, so it is; but your business is to go out *from the church* to gather sinners, and to bring them in as a recruiting sergeant brings his men to the doctor to pass; otherwise you are a detached person. The Lord always keeps up the complement of the body; you have to recruit the ranks, and, if you do not go out from the body you do not know your business at all. Every member is necessary, but every member is not acting. The evangelist says, There are empty places in the heart of Christ, and I am going from the heart of Christ to bring those in who will fill them.

Well, to go on with our chapter. As I have been saying, I make this distinction between possession in life and possession in practice. In the first chapter of Ephesians I am in possession of life of the place; and the apostle's first prayer is that I may practically get hold of that place, where, he winds up with telling me, Christ is seated as Head over the body. And now I go on to the second prayer which is the fulfilment of Deuteronomy 26. I am in possession, and what is going to occupy my heart? Why the Person who brought me there. When I reach heaven what will occupy my heart but the Christ who has brought me there? As one has said, the apostle, having got his first prayer answered, makes the second - that your heart may be a basket for Christ. Christ is to dwell in your hearts by faith - for what purpose? It is that you "may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and depth, and length, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge,

that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God". You have come now to ecstasy.

I will seek to explain what I mean by ecstasy. The apostle uses the word, and I cannot find a better; he says that to God he is *beside himself*. It is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, and you cannot take it in; it is like trying to put an ostrich egg into a small egg-cup; it cannot get in. You are ecstatic, and the result is, you worship. You cannot but say, "unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end". You are entranced - in the glory will be the climax of it - but even *now* you are entranced with the blessedness like the queen of Sheba.

People think it will make them so melancholy; they talk of the things they will have to give up. Why do they talk of being melancholy? It is because they have not taken in what is the "great supper" - that wonderful entertainment - that wonderful scene of divine festivity - "the riches of his glory". And the heart gets the full blessing of it by looking at the thing? No, but by looking at the accomplisher of it.

And now it is: "That Christ may dwell in my heart by faith". I grow in the knowledge, in the certainty of it all, "that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge". It is the cube - the whole area. I feel one is feeble in speaking of it, and I know why; in one way I am thankful for it - for one cannot take a person farther than one has been oneself.

Christ wins my heart in humiliation; He satisfies it in glory. My heart is first won; second, united; third, I am in ecstasy; fourth, I worship; fifth, I am made suitable; sixth, I go out in service. It is the heart that has been made suitable to Himself of which alone it can be said, "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her". Service comes in after the rest; the tithing comes in after the worship. I lay my basket down before the Lord, and then I go out in service for Him.

But how can I be the servant of a heavenly Christ if I have not been in company with a heavenly Christ? It is in *glory* that He satisfies my heart. He has won my heart by the way in which He has extricated me from the things in which I had involved myself down here, but it is up there that He satisfies it. Often in your service you have allowed things here to dictate to you. One's friends often study themselves, not you, when they wish to minister to you. That is not real manners. Most heavenly people have learned their manners from *books*. Now "book manners" never count for anything; it is only *company*

that teaches manners. You must be in company with a heavenly Christ if you want to learn heavenly manners.

Tell me what your difficulty in service is. My difficulty is to know what I ought to say. Sometimes in going to a place to speak, I have such difficulty to know what the Lord would have me say. It would be easy enough to choose a chapter and to speak on it, but the question is, is it the one the Lord would have? I really do not know sometimes what I am to say; that is my difficulty; it is not what the people would like, it is what the Lord would like. All I can do is to look to the Lord and rest in His selection.

Well, I must end where I began. It is a thing that should stir your heart, the knowledge that there is a spot that your Father in heaven has assigned for you. You cannot say, Well, now I am filled with all the fulness of God by being in Christ; there is nothing farther than that. You cannot bring your basket and lay it down before the Lord until you are practically in all the blessing and glory of that place - that wonderful place that throws everything else into the shade.

There were things that I thought I never *could* give up. Sometimes even now I almost wish I could take interest in some of them. When I sit in a corner of a railway carriage and hear people talking about politics, and know that I could talk as well as any of them, and sit by silent; or when they offer me a newspaper and I refuse it - a fool for Christ's sake. I have got more than communion about these things; I have got taste - divine *taste*. One look at that wonderful light has made me give them all up; I have got taste. And what now? I feel this scene irksome.

I cannot understand how people who do not take a heavenly place ever can get on here. I wonder people do not break their hearts at the oppression that goes on all around them, at the cruelty to animals that they see. I am sure I would if I did not know what it was to belong to another scene. If I did not know what it was to belong to heaven I could never go past a man beating a horse, or see any injustice done; I should have broken my heart, and spent my life in trying to set things to rights, if I did not know that I do not belong to this scene at all.

Well, may the Lord lead your hearts into that bright scene. Let it be the place that you seek for - seek as hid treasure. May it be a real thing both to your hearts and mine. Will you not be ashamed that a little thing here should so occupy your heart, when you have such a wonderful portion up there? My heart *must* get into it! I do not put your own benefit before you, because that is not the thing; but I say, nothing should satisfy *your* heart, because nothing will satisfy your *Father's* heart, but your being able to come in before the Lord

as in Deuteronomy 26, and saying: I *am* come into the place which the Lord my God has given me; the Lord Jesus Christ is the One who has brought me in; I delight in the One who has brought me in; I lay my basket down before *Him*, and worship the Lord my God.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 26 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 26

The main points are noticed in the Synopsis, but I note the whole here as important. The worship is characterised by the open declaration, and founded in its nature and character of the present possession of and standing in the blessing which grace and redemption had brought the people into, and this it is I note as important. They are in the land, as we "in Christ" in heavenly places, "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ", and we come with the joy, thanksgiving and praise, the worship that is, the first-fruits of that. It is the rising up by the Spirit of the return and effect of being in and enjoying the fulness of God's blessing. Then it is in the place where God is fully revealed, and where He dwells — the place in which He has put His name, which He has chosen to this end. He gathers the people, and so the soul with its first-fruits — the first-fruits of its privileged blessings — into the place which He has chosen to dwell in, and where He fully reveals Himself; we know where and the way. For us it is the Father's house, "My Father and your Father, my God and your God". Then not as without, hoping to get it, but as within, in the enjoyment of all spiritual blessings, as that in which we are, we offer our first-fruits to God. What we were surely comes in and greatly enhances the blessing, as redemption necessarily does, and such a redemption! But it enhances it, not alters or diminishes it, "A Syrian ready to perish was" — not "is". The first principle is the present full enjoyment of the blessing itself, and that is sufficient — characterises it — only we do remember how grace has given us such a place.

Next, thanksgiving to the Giver goes before enjoyment of the gift; so ever.

Then, we rejoice in every good thing.

Next, there is not only blessing, but an estimate of what heaven — the Land — is, as God estimates it in itself, not merely its fruits for us, but what is the glory of all lands — what makes it precious; this is a blessed privilege.

Then grace flows out, the necessary effect of enjoying the love of God.

Note too, that while the personal consciousness of being in the place of blessing is the first and personal feeling, yet in the worship the whole people of God are taken in verse 9, "He hath brought us"; so, ever the Holy Ghost says "loved us, washed us, saved us"; though I know it for myself and say "we", yet, as often noted, I comprehend "with all saints".

Then comes obedience, "I have not transgressed ... have not forgotten"; the last a special test of the spirit of obedience. Then diligent care to avoid

defilement or turning anything away from God to self — purity and consecration to God.

Then blessing is prayed for on the whole people of God and on the land; i.e., as for us, as belonging to heaven itself, and the sense of its nature and excellency is repeated. In all, in and by this worship, and all brought out in it, we belong to God, and have God as our God.

FULFILLED RESPONSIBILITY (JR 2)

Deuteronomy 26:12-15

This scripture supposes fulfilled responsibility. There was some conflict over this matter a good many years ago, some thinking it desirable but impossible, but there is no doubt that the scripture supposes that it is within our reach to fulfil responsibility. Having the Holy Spirit, the power for such, "the righteous requirement of the law" is fulfilled in those who walk according to the Spirit, Romans 8: 4. That would be fulfilled responsibility. "He that has my commandments and keeps them" (John 14: 21) would suggest fulfilled responsibility. It is a matter we ought to be concerned about both individually and maybe especially as a company, that we fulfil our responsibilities.

That is what Moses presents attractively to the people here. He puts the words in their mouth: telling them that, having fulfilled the requirement, he says, "and thou shalt say before Jehovah thy God" I have done certain things and not done certain things. They had fulfilled the commandments. The commandment, of course, is simply the expression of the will of God. The will of God covers the commandment and the commandments and the statutes and ordinances, details; all these matters are really the expression of the will of God. And Moses puts this attractively before the people. He says, having done this, you can say to the Lord, "Look down from thy holy habitation, from the heavens, and bless thy people Israel". Of course, the Lord looks down in any case, but it is a good thing to have a sense of fulfilling the requirement and, you might say, inviting the Lord to look down from the heavens, "Look down from thy holy habitation" and find conditions here in agreement with His holy habitation up there. That is not impossible. That is what fulfilled responsibility has in mind: "Look down from thy holy habitation, from the heavens". Later on the heavens are spoken of as the settled place of God's dwelling but then when Solomon built the temple, that also was a settled place of God's dwelling. We have a settled place in heaven — nothing can shake or alter that — but there is a settled place on the earth and that is what this supposes: "Look down from thy holy habitation, from the heavens" and find conditions in agreement with what is up there, conditions of separation, conditions of sanctification, "thy holy habitation, from the heavens" and find on the earth what is suitable, what is in concert with what is up there. How attractive that idea is! How attractive to the Lord to be able to look down and see these conditions.

Well, we have much to be thankful for, I am sure of that, in our city and in many other localities, but if the Lord looks down on a locality and sees

brethren at sixes and sevens, what do you think about that? When he looked down on Corinth and the confusion that was there, it must have grieved the heart of the Lord Jesus; it must have grieved the Holy Spirit to see such conditions. Instead of being in concert with His holy habitation up there, there was confusion down here, party attitude, brethren divided, different views. How sad that is! We need to be concerned that that kind of thing does not come into our locality, that we are able to help one another and consider for the Lord first in every matter. It is very attractive, is it not, saying to the Lord, "Look down from thy holy habitation, from the heavens, and bless thy people Israel, and the land that thou hast given us as thou didst swear unto our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey!" That suggests the Lord's faithfulness, swearing to their fathers, and finding a resting-place, finding a settled place, finding conditions with which He is pleased down here.

The Lord told His disciples to pray "let thy will be done as in heaven so upon the earth" (Matthew 6: 10), heaven and earth in concert, heaven and earth in accord. What an attractive situation that is! It ought to be attractive to every one of us. It is worthwhile going through exercise. It is worthwhile being concerned and to see to all matters that we need to see to that such conditions should exist, eternal life for our enjoyment but also what is pleasing to God. The psalmist says, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Psalm 133: 1. It is "pleasant" for the brethren; it is "pleasant" for the Lord too as He looks down from His holy habitation and finds conditions of sanctification and of unity down here in our localities. It ought to be so. We have had so much ministry and get so much ministry, so many exhortations we get, so many reminders as to the level at which we ought to be. We need to answer to these things.

The next section is very beautiful. It says, "This day Jehovah thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and ordinances; and thou hast keep and do them with all thy heart and with all thy soul. Thou hast this day accepted Jehovah to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and keep his statutes, and his commandments and his ordinances, and to hearken unto his voice", v 16, 17. Is that our attitude? Is that our committal? Then it says, "and Jehovah hath accepted thee this day to be a people of possession to him, as he hath told thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments". It is a thing we are to be committed to. That is, He can look down from His holy habitation; the idea is so interesting and so encouraging. Along with that we need to commit ourselves and if we commit ourselves to the Lord, He will commit Himself to us. It is like a covenant made, the covenant established here. Moses is not going into the land. He would have loved to have gone into the land. He is trying to impart to those who are going in his own feelings, his

own appreciation of the land. He was disqualified but he tries to impart to the people his own keenness, his own desire, if only he could have. Well, may the Lord encourage us! It says, "that thou shouldest be a holy people to Jehovah thy God, as he hath said", v 19. Well, holy is a very elevated word, but I think sanctification comes very near to holiness. Sometimes in the New Testament Mr Darby translates sanctification where it could be holiness, a sanctified people, sanctified persons, a sanctified company, practically in our localities. Well, may the Lord encourage us for our own pleasure and for the satisfaction of the Lord Himself, for His Name's sake!

NOTES OF READINGS ON DEUTERONOMY (6) (JT 7)

Deuteronomy 26

JT This chapter clearly supposes that the people had fully arrived at the divine purpose for them; typically they are in their heavenly position; they are in the enjoyment, intelligently, of the land, and reaping the good, the fruit of it; and fully owning God as having brought them into it. So it answers, I think, in a peculiar way to the epistle to the Ephesians.

TMG What Canaan is to us now.

JT Yes, at the present time. Still bearing in mind what we were, our father a Syrian, ready to perish at one time. Ephesians 2 contemplates what we were, and what we are, and the place we are in. But there are one or two principles that appear after chapter 21 that are important; that is, there is to be no admixture of two kinds, and the careful avoidance of all unlawful alliances and relationships, showing the danger to which we are exposed. Even in a right state we are exposed to intermingling with that which is foreign to us viewed as God's people. It says in Deuteronomy 22:9 "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds, lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard be defiled. Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together". These are principles of the very last importance to us, because we may be in the Christian state, in the full recognition of what is due to God in the assembly, and yet be in danger of mixing with what is foreign to us. The point is not so much what is evil, in these passages, but that it is *foreign*; it is not the same. Scripture insists on things and species abiding in their kind; there is to be no admixture.

WH How is it applied practically now?

JT Well, it works out in the way in which we are to form alliances, and enter into relationships with those who are really not God's people; they are of a different kind; the persons may not be wicked in a sense, but they are of a different kind and order. We get in the same chapter that which is openly lawless; but this is not that. You might not enter into that which is openly lawless; but yet form alliances with another kind; for the believer is heavenly, and he is not to form an alliance with what is distinctly earthly.

Ques What is the distinction between possessing the land, and dwelling in it?

JT Well, I was thinking that the chapter contemplates what we call Ephesian truth. We possess the land as a matter of title; we have title to heaven, and possess it in that sense; but then we are to dwell there also. One may have a

title to a house, and yet not live in it. We all hold our title to heaven, and of course that is quite right; but then, alas, we do not seem to appropriate our title to heaven; we dwell on earth. It says: "When thou art come in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein", and so on. Deuteronomy 26:1.

Rem That would be our side, in response.

JT Yes. The chapter sets out with the portion that God receives from a heavenly people, as in the enjoyment of their inheritance, and reaping the good of the land.

WK Is there not another thing, the cultivation of the land? They cultivated it and brought the fruit; and that showed they had not only taken possession of it and dwelt in it, but also that they had practical evidence of the value of the land and therefore they had something to present.

TMG I was thinking that what follows in this chapter is really the proof of their possessing the land and dwelling in it.

JT Quite so. It says, "Thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there". Deuteronomy 26:2. The land is viewed as yielding fruit; and it is viewed as theirs. Now, I believe that the present is a moment when the Lord would speak to His people as to their proper heavenly portion. I would be far from discouraging anyone from exercise as to prophecy or prophetic lines, but it must be borne in mind that it has relation to the earth; it is the testimony of Jesus, but it is Jesus in relation to the earth; and I am sure everyone would like to have the mind of God in relation to the earth; but we ought to take that up in heaven. John is very suggestive as to that; all that appertains to and is in relation to the earth is given to John as in heaven; he is called to "Come up hither", Revelation 4:1 and he receives in heaven light about the earth; whereas, what appertains to the history of the assembly here is given to him here on earth.

WK I consider that of great importance. I am glad you do not discourage the study of prophecy.

TMG It is a good lamp.

JT Yes, if it is taken up from heaven. It is our privilege. The Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret to His servants the prophets. Now, we have that privilege; but surely we are right to lay hold of our own place *first*. So that Ephesians is really the great scripture for us; it is, you might say, our

charter. Ephesians is our title-book as regards our inheritance. The Lord Jesus will come down from heaven, and place His right foot on the sea, and His left foot on the land; that is taking possession of the earth; but He has not done that yet. He has taken up a place in heaven, and has given us a place *there*; and the epistle to the Ephesians is really the section of Scripture, above all others, that gives us our title. Deuteronomy, and the end of Numbers, give us in type heavenly territory. It is not the prophetic earth; the prophetic earth is clearly outlined in Scripture; the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness of it; and we, as here on earth get the benefit of it, and give thanks for it; but the geography of heaven is given to us also in Scripture, and our distinctive place in it.

EM Is not salvation in view of entering the inheritance?

JT Yes; and more than that, one is not really saved unless one is in the land; and it is very striking as has been pointed out, that in Ephesians 2, where the great place and privilege of the Christian is set out, we get "By grace are ye saved". Ephesians 2:5. There it is salvation from place. There is salvation from Egypt, and from the wilderness difficulties, but there is salvation from place. Where one settles down in Moab, you need salvation from earth; your living associations are in heaven. The professor here says, as he comes up to the priest with the basket, that he has kept the commandments; he is suited to the place.

WK With regard to what you say, there are some here who are only on the way, and at an early stage on it; and you are not referring to anything of the question of sins, or anything of that kind. Everybody has to start; and you begin at the bottom; and the Lord helps us, and ministers to us; and so there is food for every state of soul, from the very feeblest to the highest. But it is the Christian you are considering now.

JT I am sure I am fully with you in that the young people ought to be attended to. The attractions of the world are very great, and insidious; and they often do not get the food and shelter that their souls might look for amongst us.

WK I think it is a great thing for the youngest to see that there are great things to be had, not simply coppers, but gold and silver.

WH The youngest soul will not miss his portion if he is exercised.

JT No. It is remarkable that in Ephesians it is the glad tidings of the unsearchable riches of the Christ; and this book suggests that; it is the wealth and blessedness of the land.

JM Would the thought of God getting His portion in the assembly be suggested in this chapter?

JT If each person in the assembly has his basket full, there is a true testimony to the wealth and blessedness of Canaan.

PL The basket is filled outside, as it were, and brought to the assembly.

JT I think that is an important point. You do not expect to find it in the meeting. Of course it is quite true that if there are full baskets there will be a portion for all.

RL Every Christian may not be full, exactly, but every Christian ought to be so according to this; the basket was individual.

JT Yes; you see in Deuteronomy 16, that they are also supposed to be filled, but there it is that they have appropriated Christ as He is seen in the passover, and as He is seen in the feast of Pentecost, and also as He is seen in the feast of tabernacles. This chapter includes all that, but it goes beyond it, because it is the fruit of the land that is in view here.

RL I was wondering when you referred to Ephesians, if chapter 1: 3, applies here "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"? Ephesians 1:3.

JT Yes, in heavenly places; and the basket of firstfruits has reference to what our souls gather in that connection.

TMG Is not that the force of "dwelling therein"? Deuteronomy 26:1.

PL You mean they could not get the fruit outside the land?

JT Yes. I think that is a remarkable scripture. He hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. Now, this chapter supposes that the soul is there, and he is reaping the good of it. Earlier than this you get spiritual power in connection with the exercises of the soul in coming out of Egypt, and also in connection with the feast of Pentecost, but this chapter is what you get in the land.

WK And of the land.

JT Yes, it is the fruit of it. It is not what you get in the wilderness, nor as coming out of Egypt of course those things underlie it; but here it is the abundance of the fruit of the land.

Rem The basket is the person; and the more you gather, the larger the basket you have.

JT Yes, you become enlarged; the apostle says, "Be ye also enlarged", 2 Corinthians 6:13.

JM Is the basket the new being that is formed by the Holy Spirit?

JT Yes, I would say that; and including your body; you could not be the basket without a body.

JM But it does take in the thought of a subjective work in the soul?

JT Certainly; Ephesians takes all that into account.

RL They were to be filled with the Spirit.

JM Well, as to dwelling in the land, is it the position that your soul takes up, and lives in? You recognise the position that divine love has given you?

WK In a settled way. You are not a sojourner; you are a dweller.

SL Does not Colossian truth help you?

JT Certainly. Colossians is what one might call the boundaries of the land. You are to set your mind on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. All is clearly defined. But then when you come to Ephesians you have not only the boundaries of the land, you have the land itself; the breadth and the length and the depth and the height. In Moses you have a heavenly minded man typically; he not only knew the boundaries, but he knew the land itself, he had it in his heart.

SL You spoke of prophecy. If we are in right relation to Christ, we are fitted to look at prophecy.

JT I think so; prophecy brings Christ into the earth again; whereas Colossians and Ephesians bring the saints into heaven. I believe it is of great importance to get the idea of the boundary.

WK In connection with what you were saying about the extent of the land, is there also the idea here not merely of the quantity, but of the character of the thing? You have it, you have entered in, and you have taken conscious possession. You are not going out of it; you are dwelling there, you have cultivated that land, and the fruit of that land you bring to God with acceptance. That is what I mean by character.

JT Then when you come to the land of Canaan, the food is the "old corn". Now, the idea in that is that the corn was so plentiful that they did not eat it the year it grew; but it is corn you cannot find outside; it is indigenous to the land; it is Christ, the heavenly Man. That is the fruit God accepts now; in the future He will have fruit from Israel, and from the nations, unquestionably; but

it is not that kind of fruit God is looking for now. The fruit God is looking for is that which He saw in Christ as you find Him in the gospels. It is the heavenly Man on earth; and we are taken up in that way, and God looks for fruit. It is not simply a question of righteousness in the wilderness; it is Christ, the heavenly Man. Of course this chapter does not contemplate us as in heaven; it is what we are here in the light of heaven, and as dwelling there in our souls. It supposes that we are still down here in flesh. My father was a Syrian ready to perish.

TMG Philippians would answer to it; the heavenly Man here.

WK Our citizenship is in heaven.

EH What is the thought in bringing it to the priest?

JT Well, it is only a priest who has to say directly to the things of God. It raises the question of holiness; priesthood refers to the holiness of God. A priest recognises what is due to Him. It is the priest that will be in those days. It is always the *character* in Deuteronomy. The official side is not prominent.

EH Does not the individual seem to have a good deal to say about himself in this chapter?

JT It is because he is in accord with the place; he does not say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner". Luke 18:13. There is no disparity between you and the place you are suited to it. "Giving thanks to the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light", Colossians 1:12. That is, you axe not there as unsuited to it. The prodigal helps us as to this: in the house there was no disparity; he was perfectly *suitable* to it; because the best robe and the ring, mean state.

JM Would you say that the basket and fruit set forth state?

JT It is Christ as the heavenly Man in the heart. It may seem to be a distinction without a difference, but the fruit here is not that which you acquire through wilderness exercises; it is that which you acquire as living consciously in Canaan.

WK The sense of suitability that you have referred to is a deeply important thing, because it is impossible to be in meetings and not to realise that the conscious sense of suitability is not the possession of everybody; and is it not of all importance that we should have that sense so that we can draw near to God with holy freedom?

JT You feel perfectly restful there.

WK You have liberty of access into the immediate presence of God.

JT Yes and the more you are conscious of it the more you give thanks for it because it is the Father who has made you that.

EM Is the basket of fruit the presenting of our appreciation of Christ to God?

JT Our appreciation of the heavenly Man. You have come now to appreciate the heavenly Man.

JM What you have been saying would convey that it is more than title. Heaven is our place; we have title to that place; but this is more than that; it is the soul brought consciously into the enjoyment of that.

JT Yes; Romans 8 lays the basis in your soul; it introduces this, that we are to be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Now, that lays the basis for the heavenly position. Light as to Christ has got into your soul, and it leads to this, that you want to be like that Man; and that lays the ground for Ephesians, because that Man is to have brethren in heaven.

EM There is another question I would like to ask: What is involved in the thought of every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ; Ephesians 1. Is not every blessing in a way in Christianity?

JT Yes. We have all our blessings there. The Jews will have spiritual blessings too; only they will not have them in heaven. I think the emphasis is on the place, in heaven. You get the thought in Romans 8 of relationship with Him. The Spirit is the Spirit of God's Son. That is light, and it is the basis laid in your soul for Ephesians. You are related to that Man. You are fit for union by the Spirit of God's Son; and you want to know what it is to be with Him where He is.

PL I suppose what you were referring to in chapter 16 is fulfilled here; no one shall appear before the Lord empty.

JT It is indeed fulfilled here. In chapter 16 it is fulfilled too, but there it is in connection with the passover, and the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles; here the worshipper brings the fruit of the land, in which he is dwelling.

WK It is set down not merely before God, but before the altar. You have the thought of worship there.

JT Yes; it says in verse 8 "And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs and with wonders; and he hath brought us into this place, and hath

given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey". Deuteronomy 26:8,9. The land is regarded as a possession.

WK It was given to them. God had given it to them, and they were in full appreciation of His goodness. The firstfruits are what we acquire in the land.

Rem Title will not produce fruit.

JT No; for instance, Moses could never have brought this basket of firstfruits.

WK That is a very strong illustration; that surely ought to meet the case.

JT There was no wilderness Christian like him; and yet he could not have brought this.

PL It is all what "the Lord thy God giveth thee", in this chapter. Deuteronomy 26:1.

JT Yes, you are blessed with every blessing in the heavenlies. You do not bring any of them into the heavenlies; they are all there. The fruit is that your heart is filled with that heavenly Man; He controls every affection that you have.

JMcF Could you enumerate some of the spiritual blessings?

JT Well, there are so many when you have *every* spiritual blessing; the point of it is, that there is not one that we have not got. The Jews would not get them all; and certainly the nations will not get them all; they will get the blessing of everlasting life; even the nations will get that; but they do not get the blessing of sonship; nor do they get the blessing of being companions of Christ before the face of the Father; nor do they get the place in the Father's house.

EM Then you would say the assembly is one family where God gets full response to His love.

JT Full response; that is, Christ as the heavenly Man having His place in the hearts of people who are themselves heavenly. That is what this chapter presents to us. Now, Christ shall have a place in Israel, surely; but it is not this; it is below this.

JT There is another important point to notice; there is no need of manna, when you have the old corn.

JM Would you say a word as to how it works out practically in our pathway here. We do feed on the manna here; and we have wilderness experiences; and we have to do with things, and men.

JT As regards the manna, it refers to Christ, as He was here on earth, walking about as a Man amongst men in ordinary circumstances. He was here for

God's will, and never did anything else. Now, that is what the soul feeds on in the circumstances of everyday life. So the manna was on every blade of grass as it were. Now, John 6 is also food, it is food in order that we should live; not simply to carry out God's will down here, but that we should *live*; and that is Christ, not as living here, but as having died here, because the blood is separated from the body. But when you come to the "old corn", it is not simply Christ dying; it is Christ *as He is, in heaven*; "the Son of man, which is in heaven". John 3:13.

"LET US GO ON UNTO PERFECTION" (JT 12)

Numbers 15: 1 - 22; Deuteronomy 26: 1 - 11

In reading these scriptures I am thinking of a passage in the New Testament which enjoins us to "go on unto perfection". The passage is preceded by a reference to the "senses"; these being exercised mark manhood, or "full age", so that there is discernment of good and evil. Thus the groundwork is stated there for definite progress so that we may go on. That is what I had in view, that there should be, as the outcome of our meetings, a moving on. As the passage reads, "Let us go on to what belongs to full growth", Hebrews 6: 1.

I have selected Numbers to develop this subject as being the account of the experience of Israel in the wilderness. The wilderness being viewed as a scene contrary to us, brings out the worst features unless we are on our guard in self-judgment, and if we are on our guard, kept by the power of God through faith, the wilderness brings out our best features. As Scripture says: "To humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or not;" Deuteronomy 8: 2. God selects the testing circumstances Himself, but notifies us that He knows perfectly what they are. He has selected the circumstances because they are difficult. The book opens, "And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness". He spake out of the tabernacle, but *in the wilderness*; meaning that He is taking account of us in those circumstances; that He has not placed us in them without the means of going through them; that indeed He has come into them Himself. He "walked in a tent" with them; 2 Samuel 7: 6. That is the book of Numbers. Every young brother should read the book of Numbers especially noting the opening remarks of Jehovah. In the first ten wonderful chapters we have the unfolding of the provision for the wilderness according to the statement that had become proverbial in Israel, "On the mount of Jehovah will be provided". As we are in the wilderness we find this mount there. If you read Deuteronomy 33, you will find that He shines forth on His people out of the setting of mountains; Sinai, Seir, and Paran. In view of the adverse nature of the wilderness God connects with it these symbols of spiritual strength, and He shines forth upon His people according to this provision. In keeping with all this Aaron was to bless the children of Israel saying unto them, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace", Numbers 6. So you can see how God has at the very opening of these adverse circumstances made abundant provision for us as in them.

In those chapters it is a question of what God is to us in Christ as set up in testimony in this world. But we have to face in chapters 11 to 15, the sad disclosure of the flesh in the people. As I said, the circumstances bring out the worst features unless the heart is kept with all diligence, and we have noted, thirteen vicious things in Mark 7, that proceed out of the heart of man. In Numbers 10, immediately they began to move, the ark of the Lord went before to seek out a resting place for them, a touching thought. Christ in His humiliation taking the pioneer position, meeting every possible condition to seek out a resting place for them. And when the ark set forward Moses said, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel". How interesting to see the scattering of the enemy and the return of the victorious ark to the many thousands of Israel! What blessed scenes are connected in all these operations, the glory of God and the power of God entering into them!

In chapter 11 you find the murmuring of the people in spite of all that. We may think little of murmuring; it is the first evil feature here. The flesh is beginning to show itself and I speak of it so that we might learn to judge the spirit of murmuring. It may be assumed that this refers to an unregenerate people who wanted to go back to Egypt, but the solemn thing is that the next one to fail is *Moses*; so that it is not simply the rank and file who give way, but the most distinguished. We do not indeed find evidence of gross features of the flesh in Moses, he was a man who knew how to keep himself, a model man in the main indeed, but the wilderness brought out something that was distasteful. What a voice to some of us who are more prominent! The wilderness will bring out something of the flesh unless there is vigilance to keep our hearts with all diligence. Moses complains to the Lord as if the Lord had put too much upon him. After all that provision displayed in the mount, he complains of God putting too much on him. Does any one of us complain of our labour, assuming that God has not measured what He put upon us? He is "the God of measure" and so does not lay on us what we cannot bear. Moses says, "Wherefore hast thou afflicted me ... that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom". God never said that. How unreasonable the flesh becomes as allowed to show itself! Then he says, "Whence should I have flesh to give all this people?" and as Jehovah proposes to give them flesh in abundance, he replies, "The people among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen ... shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them ... or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them,

to suffice them?" Think of that coming from Moses! Who is immune therefore from fleshly eruptions? Thus the need for us all to keep our hearts with all

diligence. Moses was challenging God as to His power and resources. Not only was unbelief implied in his remarks, but open denial of God's ability to fulfil His proposal.

Next you have Aaron and Miriam, great servants; they too failed, failed worse than Moses. Miriam and Aaron envied Moses. Who can stand before envy? And the most distinguished servants are capable of it. Unless we maintain self-judgment the flesh in us is sure to show itself if another servant excels us. Are these not searching things? The most distinguished are thus exposed in wilderness circumstances. Look at the man they are envying! He is a very different man in chapter 12 from what he was in chapter 11. "The man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth". That he should be envied, made the matter more serious.

Another feature appears in the spies; twelve men were selected, one from each tribe to go up into Canaan and search it out; a very honoured mission. What will they do? Surely as going into Canaan all the flesh will be withered up by the beauty, bounty and attractiveness of that land. Returning, they all bear testimony to the fruitfulness and general goodness of the land; later ten of them belied the fact. Caleb and Joshua alone stood true. Against the testimony of these ten liars the two faithful witnesses stood. You see in this another feature of the flesh brought out by the wilderness as a result. God decrees that not one of these six hundred thousand footmen, save Caleb and Joshua, should enter the land of promise. Another generation should go in.

It is easier to unfold the evil than the good, but by the Lord's help I will now show the latter to you. Chapter 15 is this though not much understood. It begins thus, "When ye be come into the land". It is not "if". You might expect that from the previous chapters, but there is no "if" in the counsels of God. They must go through. So that in Ephesians 1 you get "the good pleasure of his will", you get "the mystery of his will", and "the counsel of his will". You see the will of God enters into all these things, and the love and power of God are behind that. Thus we have here, "When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you". First, there is the certainty of the people going in. Who the individuals are is not the point. Those in the counsels of God are going in, and as there they will serve or worship Him. Everything is in your favour now, as in a land flowing with milk and honey, watered by the rain of heaven, possessing waterbrooks, etc. The God of it is in your heart and you will bring Him an offering, but in this you are to show that you are regular in your growth. One's offering represents his thought of God. God loves that thought, however small. I would say to young people, the smallest thought of God is delightful to Him, you come before Him with it in perfect liberty. But

your meat offering, oil and drink offering must correspond; you thus do not appear to be a "young man" or a "father" when you are only a little one; 1 John 2. Some young brothers, having keen minds, take in all they hear, and speak like an old brother; but the meat and drink offerings are lacking. The kind of man you are, in everyday life is implied in these; and you cannot leave that out when appearing before God. If these things, the meat offering, oil and wine, do not accompany, in the prescribed proportions the creature presented, it will be manifest that the offerer has not developed regularly; his intelligence is out of proportion with his general practical state of soul. He speaks well, but what about his every-day life? The meat offering mingled with oil denotes that it is in keeping with his intelligence. And then the drink offering indicates the joy he affords to God, and correspondingly among the brethren. Our ability to speak or take part in the assembly may be out of keeping with our spirit and everyday life, and so the meat offering and drink offering are to be in keeping with the animal presented, as I said. The animal himself represents our conception of Christ, but the meat and drink offerings must correspond. I urge this upon all as most important, as showing how we are to be before God in the assembly. God looks upon your offering but looks also to see that everything else about you is in keeping with it.

There is an ascending scale in the passage. Thus in verse 6 a ram is mentioned. That would mean a person fully matured and possessing energy. The ram is a fully developed creature. If there be energy of mind, of soul, of voice, there must be the incense in keeping with the perfect humanity of Christ. You have one-third with the ram instead of one-fourth as with the offering mentioned previously. Then you come to the bullock, which suggests a very large conception of Christ. It is what the apostle had in mind in his prayer of Ephesians 3, that ye may "know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge". We are to go on to this. But the meat and drink offerings must be in accordance. These things are practical if we are to have a right conception. We must not be out of proportion; we must grow uniformly. God looks for *perfection*. Then there is the heave offering in verse 19, "Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough". In a cake you come to a *whole* thought. The whole thought of God is presented in Christ, who is the Word; what is in His mind. Now God looks for a corresponding effect in us, what He will have in His land. He brings us into it in this passage. First it is our entering, "When ye be *come* into the land". Then there is the thought of *God bringing* me in. God loves my coming in because I value it, but if He brings me in, that is *His power, His love*. In Ephesians the thought is that He brings us in. His primary thought was that He should bring them in and plant them in the mountain of His inheritance; Exodus 15: 17.

I commend the thought that He should bring you in, a whole person. Now it is not three-tenths of flour, but dough. The wheat is not only ground, it is kneaded, referring to the exercise of soul I have gone through in relation to the whole thought of God. I have developed the exercise in the light of the full thought of God in Christ. Philippians answers to this. How much do we know of Philippians? The epistle shows how we may be practically conformed to what God presents in Christ; this implies energy. Paul laboured to be in every way like Christ, to be found in Him and have Him for gain. At Pentecost two loaves were to be brought out of the houses of the people and presented to God. What we are to be for God is worked out in Paul's experience, seen in Philippians. The apostle was wholly given up to one thought, answering to the *cake* here. God's thought for every believer is in Christ, and this is seen in Philippians in a man of like passions as ourselves. The cake offered was to be of the first fruits. Many yield themselves partly to God, but He wants us wholly, so that in each He should have a whole idea corresponding with Christ, and this is what the cake typifies here.

I now turn to Deuteronomy 26, wishing particularly to speak of the basket of first-fruits. Deuteronomy is specially preparation for the land. The chapter contemplates Israel in the inheritance, possessing it and dwelling therein; and thus to present of *all* the first fruits unto Jehovah, not simply one part. "When thou art come into the land ... thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth". What a variety there would be in such a land! What about all the fruit of the land? Have we ever stopped to ponder what the land means? It is heaven as it is apprehended and realised now; Christ there known in the heart by faith. And it is to be entered into, possessed and dwelt in; the saint is to dwell there, taking of all of the fruit. What rich variety! The most of us have to speak more or less objectively. Like Moses, we only get a peep into it. But the grapes of Eshcol told their own tale of the fruitfulness of Canaan. Now the person of the offerer is in view as a basket; it is not a cake, but a containing vessel. One finds himself extremely leaky; we easily forget the most precious things presented to us. Divine things can only be kept securely by the Holy Spirit, as the apostle says, "Keep, by the Holy Spirit, which dwells in us, the good deposit entrusted". If I go into Canaan and get a taste, it is by the Holy Spirit I retain it. The believer is thus the basket. There is the responsible man and there is the man of purpose. "The priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of Jehovah thy God". The priest takes it out of the offerer's hand. It is a spiritual transaction. The believer is here typified in a dual sense; as having a responsible history, and as in the purpose of God. In the former connection he makes the confession as to what his father was; in the latter he is the basket full of the precious fruits of Canaan.

We must understand all this, and the spiritual transaction of which I have spoken if we are to be rightly in the assembly of God. The priest takes out of the man's hand the basket containing the first fruits of Canaan and sets it down before the altar of Jehovah.

This is a most instructive and important matter. Paul may be taken as an example. He speaks in 2 Corinthians 12 about things treasured in his heart. He had been up to heaven fourteen years before. He was there as "a man in Christ". Wonderful thought! It refers to what we shall be eternally. "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 ... and heard unspeakable things said". We may know a good deal, but there is much that we do not know; it is, however, a comfort that God knows, and believers are to be "filled to all the fulness of God". Thus we see in Paul, abstracted as a man in Christ, the idea of the basket handed over and before God, containing the first fruits of the land. Christ takes all the baskets, as it were, into His own hands and sets them before God. On the other hand, the offerer, viewed as a responsible man, makes a becoming confession. He owns his past history, and God's wonderful deliverance of himself and His people. "A Syrian ready to perish was my father ... and he went down into Egypt ... and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers ... the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt ... and he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey". We say, "God, who is rich in mercy for his great love ... hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus". There is the acknowledgment of what we were, and of what God in His great love has done for us. He has taken us out of one status and condition and set us down in another. He has set us in the heavenlies in Christ. The Israelite brought his first fruits and set them down before Jehovah and worshipped Him, rejoicing in every good thing which God gave him.

In like manner the believer today who apprehends what God has done in Christ worships the Father in spirit and in truth.

So you can see, dear brethren, what God brings us to, what these types mean for us, so that we should go on to full growth. Standing still leads to rebellion. We are urged, as I said, to go on to the things that belong to full growth; to know what it is to be in Christ, and enter on our heavenly portion. These things belong to us, but, alas! the most precious things are often most neglected. Our wisdom therefore will be seen as we go in for these things,

divine love having made them our own; we shall thus be prepared when the Lord comes and raptures us to Himself.

SPIRITUAL WEALTH (JT 27)

2 Corinthians 8:1 - 9; Titus 3:5; Deuteronomy 26:1 - 11

I have in mind to speak about wealth, that which as known in material things men of the world strain after, not indeed so much because of itself, but because of what can be acquired with it; whereas that which the Christian thinks of is spiritual. I wish to speak of the latter, mainly in its ability as qualifying us for approach to God, but I wish also to speak of it as qualifying us for divine representation in this world.

What I would desire first of all to dwell upon is the passage in 2 Corinthians, connected as it is with material giving on the part of the saints, for whilst wealth through material things has become defiled, called indeed the "mammon of unrighteousness" (Luke 16:9), yet in the hands of the Christian, as held in relation to God, it becomes sanctified, for "every creature of God is good" (1 Timothy 4:4), and there can be no wealth apart from the creatures of God. The believer regards them as from God, and what comes to him through them he holds normally in relation to God; and so they become sanctified, and may, indeed, become the very expression of divine love operative in him. Those who bore the bounty given by the saints for the relief of the poor are regarded in this epistle as messengers of assemblies, Christ's glory; 2 Corinthians 8:23.

In what I have to say, therefore, I am in no wise disparaging what may be in the hands of the saints in a material way, as held in relation to God and used for the promotion of His interests at the present time, but the riches spoken of in the verses I read are not these. Material things perish in the handling, whereas the riches which God has in His mind for us are durable, imperishable; and it is of these that I desire to speak at this time.

Whilst recognising fully the value, relatively, of material things as used for the Lord, we have always to remember the warning to those who are, or would be, rich, that whilst riches may be honourably used for God, as they were in the case of Joseph of Arimathaea, who was a rich man, yet it is to be noted that the Lord was with him in *His death* — not in His life. He was "with the rich in his death" (Isaiah 53:9) — a very solemn reminder of the relative value of riches. They were useful in that case to procure the tomb; it was the fulfilment of prophecy, and it is a very remarkable reference to the use of riches in a material sense, but nevertheless the word is that He was "with the rich in his death" Isaiah 53:9. The death of Christ, beloved, in no sense enhances the riches of this world, possessed by whomsoever; the death of Christ signifies

the end of them; they can go so far and no farther; useful at His burial, they have nothing to do with His resurrection.

As I said, therefore, I would desire to speak about the spiritual, the durable riches, those which set us up before God, and what is to be noted is that the Lord Jesus had to become poor in order that we might be rich; not surely that we might be rich in this world's goods, for thousands and millions of people had been rich in these before He died, before He became poor. There was a man who had been rich, of whom indeed He Himself speaks in a most touching manner. One came to Him saying, "Teacher, speak to my brother to divide the inheritance with me" Luke 12:13. What inheritance? Not the inheritance of God, but some property that had come down to them both from their forefathers. The Lord had nothing to do with that. He was not here in connection with that. "Who established me as a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke 12:14) the Lord replies, and then He speaks the parable about the rich man whose riches had increased, the ground having yielded plentifully for him. How much would enter into the Lord's mind as He thought of God and the earth, and as He spoke of the ground — the ground that had come up out of the waters of death, the ground which at His command brought forth fruit — the grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit; and that man had gained the profit of it. But what was all that when He had to fall into it and die? And so He speaks witheringly about the rich man; his soul should be required of him that night. He was not rich towards God. The Lord came that man might be rich towards God. We are reckoned in heaven as rich, beloved, on these lines, not according to our financial ratings in the commercial world. The question is, what are our ratings in heaven? There are ratings there; men are taken account of as rich according to their spiritual wealth Godward; and so the Lord, as it says here, became poor. I need not speak of His wealth before He became man, and even after He became man, for all that was of God came down to Him. Being the Son, everything that was of God in the creation came to Him; He was the Heir, and being also the Son of man, all that belonged to man from God came to Him — He was the Heir of all.

But He became poor. One would love to be able to depict the poverty of Christ! Can we understand it? How His bones stuck out, as He says; instead of being clothed in His own fat, He felt His leanness as in His vicarious position before God. He became poor. It is for each of us to look into the word and understand the poverty that He entered into and to feed upon the holy food which is involved in it, and to note that it was that we might be rich: "That ye by his poverty might be enriched".

Before proceeding to Deuteronomy I want to speak briefly of certain features of spiritual riches which God would have appear in us. First there is faith. I shall only touch on one or two features. James speaks of certain who were poor in "the world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom" James 2:5. "Rich in faith" involves that I take in richly the light presented to me in Christ, that I am not living according to sight, that I am not looking at seen things at all, but that I am apprehending the things of God in Christ; in other words, that I am in another world. I am laying hold of God, I am laying hold of His power, of His love, of His counsels, and I am resting in regard of everything on what has come out in Christ on the part of God. Apart from these things there is no definiteness in us at all, nor any moral power in our words, in our walk, or in our ways. We are to walk by faith, to walk in the light of the mind of God, of the power of God, of the love of God, of the counsels of God, and as knowing that I am included in the counsels of God. I am living in a divine unseen system instead of a system that is seen.

I pass on to another feature, and that is what the apostle speaks of as marking the Corinthians in what I may call a semi-objective way — they were enriched, he says, in all knowledge and word of doctrine; 1 Corinthians 1:5. 1 do not say that the Corinthians were *characterised* by these, but the presence of the Holy Spirit in them had brought all that to light — in everything, it says, they were enriched in Christ, in all knowledge and in all word of doctrine according as the testimony of the Christ was confirmed in them, so that they came behind in no gift.

Now I want to dwell for a moment on these two features — all knowledge and word of doctrine. At the present time the world is full of teaching, full of books, full of theories. What is called science is simply knowledge. It is the same word. But what you will find in it is the absence of finality, the absence of definiteness. One would wish that the Lord's people, as possessing the Spirit come down from heaven, should be marked by definiteness, by knowledge, by finality, that is to say, that they know something, and that they are not dependent upon what man has said, or upon theory, but that there may be, as the Lord says, something of "We speak that which we know" John 3:11. I do verily believe that the Lord would impress upon us the importance of definiteness in what we believe, in what we say, in what we profess to know, so that there should be the word of doctrine amongst us, and that as we come together there should be something definite. It is surely not the Lord's mind that there should be the absence of help of this kind, that there should be poverty amongst us. The apostle says to Titus that God has shed the Holy Spirit upon us richly. If the Holy Spirit has been poured out on us richly, why should there be poverty?

The saints are to be enriched in all knowledge and word of doctrine, so our Bible readings should be simple, dignified, and take on a spiritual intelligence. Nothing can ever come out of discussion. You will remember that when the Lord came down from the mount of Transfiguration the disciples were in a discussion. The scribes were discussing with them — there was a sort of controversy, but nothing in it! A poor man had come with a child who had a demon, and he says to the Lord, "I have brought to thee my son ... I spoke to thy disciples, that they might cast him out, and they could not". It is a question of being able to help. "O unbelieving generation", He says, "how long shall I bear with you?" Mark 9:17 - 20. If the Holy Spirit has been poured upon us richly, why should we be in poverty? It is a want of industry, a want of drawing from the right source, so that there should be knowledge and the word of doctrine and thus the testimony of the Christ confirmed; that is to say, we understand, we know, we are sure that what we hold is the truth. Hence it says, "If any one speak". How is he to speak? Is it a theory? There are no hypotheses at all amongst the people of God. "If any one speak — as oracles of God" 1 Peter 4:11. If the testimony of the Christ is confirmed, why not speak as the oracles of God? Now this is an important matter; for if the meetings are to be profitable and attractive, there must be that which is governed by knowledge, by spiritual intelligence and by word of doctrine, conveying the thought that the testimony of the Christ is confirmed in us.

Now I refer to another thing, namely, richness in good works. We are to be "rich in good works" 1 Timothy 6:18. The need around us is very great, and to be representative of God there must be something of this nature; if there is to be any testimony it must be according to what shone in Christ. It is said of Him that He "went through all quarters doing good ... because God was with him" Acts 10:38. I have no doubt that the good works spoken of in Ephesians which God has prepared that we should walk in them, refer to the works that shone in Christ. If the assembly is to be the fulness of Christ, the expression of Christ here, there must be something in the way of good works, and these are to be taken up as an obligation. I do not understand simply giving what may be put in the box, as we speak, as answering to good works. What I understand by good works is a reckoning as to the need, a taking account of the need and meeting it to the utmost of our ability. If thy brother hunger you must feed him; if he thirst, you must give him drink. How dwells the love of God in him who disregards a hungry or a naked brother? You must take account of his hunger and his nakedness and meet them; the divine thought in Christ is to meet the need. "Good works, which God has before prepared that we should walk in them" Ephesians 2:10. And if we are rich, we shall. We are to be rich in them; and to be rich in them, we must have riches; and God

has shed forth the Spirit richly that there should be nothing lacking of these features among His people.

I want to go on now to Deuteronomy, because what I have in mind is what is due to God. If we are to worship God and carry out the service of God in the sanctuary, the entrance to which is thrown open to us, we must go in by the priest. "We have such a one high priest who has sat down on the right hand of the throne of the greatness in the heavens" (Hebrews 8:1), and it goes on to say that, being a high priest, He must have something to offer; in other words, He must have means. The point there is not what He offered, but that He had something to offer. There were infinite riches in Christ; there was nothing lacking in Him, I need not say, as to the service of God; it was met in every way. Hence in Hebrews 9 we have what is called the "eternal inheritance" Hebrews 9:15. The way into the sanctuary is indicated, but who are to go in? We go in by the priest, by the new and living way, but then, who is to go in? Those who are possessed of the eternal inheritance. Now I wish you particularly to notice this, because the service of God in Scripture is made to depend on the wealth of the saints; not that they can be a source in themselves, surely, for whatever we have is from God. He has shed upon us abundantly the means of wealth, and so you find in the book of Exodus that the very material of the sanctuary came from the people, and then too in regard of the temple the *abundance* came from the people. All the material came from the people. Hence, in Hebrews 9, as I said, we have an "eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15), and in Ephesians 1:14 the Spirit is said to be the earnest of it, so that in possession of the inheritance we have means.

We do not appear before God empty. The possession of the inheritance furnishes us with the means. In Deuteronomy the males were to appear before God thrice in the year and in no case was any male in Israel to appear on those occasions empty. He was to come with something in his hands.

Now I believe that God looks for this in the most practical way. He looks for a state marked by a certain amount of wealth amongst His people; so that in coming to Him in the light of the sanctuary, in the light of the new and living way, we come there with *something*, we come with some measure of spiritual wealth, and hence the inheritance, the eternal inheritance, of which the Holy Spirit is the earnest. Thus the believer is enriched, he is enabled to draw near to God with something in his hands. Is it so with us? Is it so that every believer nominally in fellowship has accepted the obligation of drawing near to God with something in his hands — some wealth? This is a very searching question.

You see an Israelite, for instance, coming down from Dan, which was a long way to Jerusalem. His land may not have been so fertile as the land on the plain by the Mediterranean, but, nevertheless, he comes down all those miles to Jerusalem. He arrives at Jerusalem; his mind is to draw near to God, to worship God. He has got that in his mind all the way down and he arrives at Jerusalem. The priest is there, the temple is there, the way in is plain, but what has he got? He goes in by the gate of the temple, but if he has got nothing in his hands, there is no place for him! The priest is not there to look after an empty-handed worshipper, he is there to take what he has got in his hands. He may as well have stayed at home, he has added nothing to Jerusalem, he has brought nothing. The command was that he was not to go empty. Have we ever taken that home to ourselves? It is a command to us, that we are not to appear before God empty. Another man comes from Beersheba; he has a good farm, he has been prosperous; he may drive some cattle before him, or he may take money in his bag — sell his cattle at Beersheba and buy others at Jerusalem. He has got means, he arrives at Jerusalem, he buys his sacrifice — his bullock or his sheep, or his goat, or whatever it may be; he draws near to the priest; he is accepted. He has added to what is there. There is food for God there and there is food for the priest.

Do you see how the thing stands? God has not changed. These things were written for us, and if we draw near to God we must have something to offer. This man contemplated in Deuteronomy 26 has entered upon the inheritance; that is the secret of it. It says, "When thou comest into the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein" — that is the secret. You have entered on the inheritance by the Spirit, you have taken possession of it by the Spirit, and you dwell in it. You are living in the light of the mind of God for you, in the light of the purpose of His love, you are enjoying it by the Spirit, you are enjoying these holy features, and you are growing rich, and immediately you fill your basket with firstfruits. The firstfruits signify the freshest; the very best and most spiritual thoughts you have are put together. The most energetic affections you have are all brought together and you come to God, and you give; you are occupied for the moment with what you have got, not with what others may have when you get there. And now you give, and you give it to the priest, which indicates that God has to be approached, not simply by a wealthy person, but by a holy person, for we must have holiness. True enough, our great High Priest, Christ, is there, but nevertheless we draw near to God as priests ourselves — a holy priesthood, it says, to offer up spiritual sacrifices,

acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; and we set down the basket.

Now the basket is yourself. The woman of Samaria got the idea from Christ; she understood that she was to be a vessel, and so it carries right through that the believer is himself a vessel — a vessel of mercy. What he had been is another matter. He says, "A perishing Aramaean was my father". He knows fully what he had been, but then he goes on to speak about his exercises. How did the change come about? God works through a moral process, and the change came about by the sense he had of the oppression of the Egyptians. He began to feel it, and in the oppression he spoke to God; he began to be a priest then, although he did not know it, for we begin to be priests when we speak to God. In truth, the believer begins to acquire wealth as he learns to speak to God. As a new-born babe he desires the sincere milk of the word, and he grows by it. I would speak for the encouragement of any young people here — that you begin to put by a little wealth by thus feeding on the pure mental milk of the word, and you add to it until you become wealthy; you get fresh joys, the firstfruits, and you draw near to God with these in your basket. How fresh you are! Inside are all these precious thoughts of God by the Spirit — the precious thoughts of the inheritance, and so as you sit down in the meeting, you are full of life and energy, only waiting your opportunity to give expression to them in a priestly way. It may be through others, but it is from you, that is the point; you have brought your basket and the priest will take account of it and use it; he will use what you bring. You are the basket — the vessel of mercy "prepared for glory" (Romans 9:23), and withal a holy vessel, as David says, "the vessels of the young men are holy", 1 Samuel 21:5. We are to possess our vessels in sanctification so that when we appear before God we are usable; our basket is there and the contents are full of Christ, full of precious thoughts about God, and about Christ, and about the inheritance. What rich meetings we should have if all present were filled thus! And so the service of God is to be continued, not in the poverty of mere threadbare expressions, but in the richness of a full basket of firstfruits. Whence came they? From the inheritance you have entered on, and possess, and dwell in, and you are accepted. Thus the work of God and the worship of God proceed, and God is glorified in His people.

In the closing verse I read it says, "thou shalt rejoice in all the good that Jehovah thy God hath given to thee, and to thy house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is in thy midst". God has His portion now and you get yours. You rejoice in every good thing that He gives you. You see how happy, and free, and dignified the spiritual man is; he thinks of the Levite, the minister that ministers the truth to him, and the stranger; he is like God.

And so it is that the Lord would help us to understand the riches that He intended for us, that which was in His mind for us when He became poor, that

through His poverty we might be rich.

Deuteronomy 27

- DEUTERONOMY 27 (CAC 5)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 27 (JND 36)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTERS 27, 28 (JND 36)
- THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL (7) (JT 16)
- SECRET THINGS (WJH 9)
- SECRET THINGS (WJH 9)

DEUTERONOMY 27 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 27

"The elders of Israel" are here associated with Moses in commanding the people; they identified themselves with what was enjoined by God. The elders would represent the intelligent responsibility of the people, and it was here seen as in full accord with Moses. Paul's address to the Ephesian elders reminded them of his own faithful ministry, with a view to their being thoroughly identified with it, so that the "inheritance among all the sanctified" might be held according to God. It is this which is in view, typically, in Deuteronomy 27.

Both the first tables of the covenant, which Moses broke, and the second which were afterwards hewn by him, were written with the finger of God. But, as having passed over Jordan, *the people* were to set up "great stones", and to "write upon them all the words of this law". The blessedness of the will of God concerning His people as in the land had been presented to them in the ministry of Moses. Now on their part, having come into the land, *they* had to write it on "great stones" suggestive of their giving expression to it in a stable and permanent way.

Historically this was carried out immediately after the destruction of Ai (Joshua 8: 32). Typically it would intimate that the saints understand the will of the Lord, and are able to give expression to it intelligently. It is written very plainly in Scripture, but one of our first exercises as "over the Jordan" is to write it "very plainly" as giving intelligent and intelligible expression to it. Only as having put on the new man could we do so, but the new man is "renewed into full knowledge according to the image of him that has created him" (Colossians 3: 10), and "according to God is created in truthful righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4: 24). The stable and imperishable character of the new man as a divine creation is set forth, I believe, in the "great stones". There is no looking to the flesh for anything; that has been cut off, typically, in circumcision. We look only to that which is created "according to God" as able to carry "very plainly" what is in His will for His people.

Both Colossians and Ephesians address the saints as having put off the old man, and having put on the new. As having done it, there is material suitable to carry in permanent expression all that is in the will of God. The prayer of Epaphras for his beloved Colossian brethren was that they might "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Colossians 4: 12), and if we link with this Paul's prayer for them in Colossians 1: 9 - 11 we shall get a good

idea of a company of saints who, as over Jordan, can bring into expression "very plainly" God's pleasure regarding His people.

The stones being plastered is suggestive of the fact that in "one new man" a collective idea comes in; the saints are not in view separately, but as set together to form one great and legible expression of the will of God. In the "one new man" expression can be given very plainly to the spiritual force of "all the words" that have come before us in this book.

It might be well to ask how much of the words of the Deuteronomic law have *we* written "very plainly"? Some part of that great tablet on which "all the words" are to be written today is, so to speak, under our hand. Are we concerned that the will of God should come definitely and unmistakably into expression in us, and in our relations with His people? It was enjoined that the king should "write for himself a copy of this law", but we do not know that any king of Israel ever did it. In Josiah's time "Hilkijah the priest found the book of the law of Jehovah by Moses" (2 Chronicles 34: 14), and it was quite new to the king. It was probably the original copy written by, Moses. The kings had not written it for themselves, and hence their grievous failures. But we, like them, may fail to write the law. We have to write it by becoming ourselves the expression of what is in God's mind concerning His people; it is to be seen in us in a practical and legible way. Then we can take up happily our place of acceptance with God in offering burnt offerings, and we can also take up happy relations with our brethren in sacrificing peace-offerings, and eating together with joy before God.

It is a beautiful touch of divine grace that on mount Ebal, where the curse was to be put, according to chapter 11: 29, we see the great stones, the altar, burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, and eating and rejoicing before Jehovah. It indicates clearly that conditions have come in which are exempt, from curse. Viewed as in the flesh "the handwriting in ordinances ... stood out against us", and "was contrary to us". But as such it has been "effaced" — a legal term used for annulling a decree of law (see Colossians 2: 14 margin). But we should not like to think of the Deuteronomic law, expressing the good pleasure of God for His people as in the land, being "effaced"; on the contrary it is to be written "very plainly" by a people who delight in it, and love to give It abiding expression. Many believers are so accustomed to think of the law in its condemning relation to man as in the flesh that they do not regard it sufficiently as the expression of God's will, in answering to which His people can be before Him in liberty and joy for His pleasure. The answer in Israel was only in type; the spiritual reality of it awaited new covenant conditions, which have not yet, for them, come to pass. But, typically, we see in Deuteronomy

27 a people risen with Christ, and quickened together with Him, and able to set up all that is in God's will for such a people, as having intelligently apprehended it, and being identified with it in their affections. They can give permanent expression to it "very plainly".

We may remark at this point that, in Joshua 8: 30 - 35, where we read how Joshua carried out what is here enjoined, we find an added feature of the greatest spiritual importance. "And all Israel, and their elders, and their officers and judges, stood on this side and on that side of the ark before the priests the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of Jehovah". They all stood, whether towards mount Gerizim or mount Ebal, "on this side and on that side of the ark". They were, typically, identified with Christ in the most blessed way as risen and quickened together with Him. It is only as being so that we can truly carry out Deuteronomy 27. As having passed over the Jordan we are identified with a risen Christ, who has rendered null the power of death that we might be for the pleasure of God as risen with Him.

The "altar of stones" — whole stones on which no iron tool was to be lifted — indicates how such a people regard their whole position and blessing as having been secured without any works of theirs, without a touch of the strength of nature, on the ground of the death of Christ. We are not viewed here as needing to bring sin-offerings or trespass-offerings, but as in conscious acceptance, and in the communion and satisfaction of what has been effected in the death of Christ.

In verses 9, 10 it is no longer Moses and the elders who speak, but "Moses and the priests, the Levites", The elders giving commandment in conjunction with Moses indicate that the people, as identified with their elders, are now intelligently committed to the responsibility of carrying out what was enjoined. But *the priests* speaking along with Moses typifies priestly concern that those who have definitely taken the place of being the people of God should hearken to His voice and do His commandments. Such a concern was found in Paul and Epaphras about the Colossians. See Colossians 1:3; Colossians 1:9-11; Colossians 2: 1; Colossians 4: 12. The elders without the priests will not secure the abiding pleasure of God in His people. To take things up responsibly without prayerful priestly exercises will only result in failure. The prayers of Paul and Epaphras for Gentile believers are intended to impress us with the urgent necessity that we should "persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving" (Colossians 4: 2). Only thus can the will of God be secured and maintained in His people.

Then Moses speaks alone from verse 11 onwards, and the instruction is as to the government of God. That government involves curse upon what is contrary

to His will as surely as it secures blessing where there is obedience to Him. The fact that six tribes stand to bless and six to curse shews that both sides are to be held in even balance amongst God's people. It was so with the Lord Jesus. He loved righteousness, but He also hated lawlessness, and on account of this He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His companions. He has companions who also, like Him, love righteousness and hate lawlessness, and true gladness is found on this line.

God will surely bless His people on condition of obedience, but He will ever disapprove in the strongest way of what is contrary to His will. What is abhorrent to God should be also abhorrent to His people. If we do not say Amen to His curses we shall not be morally qualified to say Amen to His blessings. It is a mistake to suppose that the principle of curse has no place in Christianity, and it leads to laxity. Perhaps the most solemn curse in Scripture is a peculiarly Christian curse. "If any one love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema Maran-atha" (1 Corinthians 16: 22). And Hebrews 6 speaks not only of blessing, but of being "nigh to a curse". If I am bringing forth thorns and briars — things which are a source of trial and suffering to the people of God — I am "nigh to a curse".

Blessing and curse are everywhere in Scripture, in the New Testament as well as the Old. We get them, in principle, in such scriptures as, "For if ye live according to flesh, ye are about to die; but if, by the Spirit, ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8: 13). "For he that sows to his own flesh, shall reap corruption from the flesh; but he that sows to the Spirit, from the Spirit shall reap eternal life" (Galatians 6: 8). These are unchanging principles in the government of God. The Lord's woes are to be taken account of as well as His beatitudes.

In "the land" the curses were to be uttered with a loud voice, and twelve times it is said, "And all the people shall say, Amen". God would have all His people in full accord with Himself in detesting and repudiating everything that is contrary to His mind, as well as in communion with the altar in the joy of obedience and blessing. Indeed it is essential to our communion with God and with one another that we should reprobate everything that is displeasing to Him.

It has often been observed that the blessings upon mount Gerizim are not given. Israel under divine government as in the flesh never did, nor could, on that ground inherit blessing, and no doubt the Spirit of God in Moses, who was about to declare prophetically that the curse would come upon them, had this in mind when He gave the curses, but kept silent as to the blessings. But the fact that the great stones, and the altar, and the burnt-offerings and peace-

offerings were on mount Ebal declared plainly that where disobedience and curse had been God would secure through the death of Christ, and by His working in His people, a full answer to all that was in His mind concerning them. But this was as yet among the hidden things which belonged to God. Publicly and dispensationally He was dealing with a people in the flesh, and on that line His blessing could not be secured. But He gave at the same time an intimation of what was in His mind, which we can read clearly now that His thoughts have been revealed. And the instruction is most helpful to those who are now spiritually in the position over Jordan where they were typically when they came to Ebal and Gerizim. As on the principle of works of law, a people in the flesh, they were under curse, as all are who are on the ground of their own works for righteousness before God. See Galatians 3: 10. We must distinguish between what they were in themselves and what happened to them as typical of what is true now on a new ground and in a spiritual way.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 27 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 27

Here note, on the one hand the altar is put on the mount of cursing, on the other it is not here a threatening of excision of the body, but a malediction on the individual who did not observe what was contained in the law; so that they are supposed in possession, but evidently on untenable ground. The public dealings of God with the nation in His right of government and righteous government are in the chapters which follow.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTERS 27, 28 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 27; Deuteronomy 28

Remark how not only here the curses alone, not the blessings, are recited (as alluded to surely in Galatians 3), but in chapter 28, where the governmental dealings are unfolded, how largely, though in a manner characteristically correspondent, the curses are developed and insisted on compared to the blessings. This stamps necessarily a peculiar character on the relationship between God and the people. It gives to us, accustomed to perfect and unwearied love, a somewhat painful feeling, not as to the rightness of it, but as to being in such a relationship. It is just what ought to be under law, indeed blessing must be always simpler, for the blessing itself, the favour is the great thing, and on a hard state of mind more positive and lower motives must (i.e., may) be brought to bear, but it makes us see what the position of law for man's heart is.

THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL (7) (JT 16)

Deuteronomy 27:11 - 14; 33:1 - 29

FL Do you see anything in the groupings here — the first six tribes are connected with blessing and the other with cursing?

JT Yes; the first six, connected with blessing, are more distinguished; these stand on mount Gerizim; they are Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. The second six stand on mount Ebal: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali; and are inclusive of the children of the maidservants. The moral point is that the acceptance of the responsibility as to blessing and cursing is equally divided. We are prone to put responsibilities on certain ones and to lighten them on others. The passage would teach us that all are to share the responsibility. The matter is in our own hands, as it were, God had brought us to the point of the blessing. The people are to say, "Amen" as the Levites read out the cursings; the blessings are not given here. The mountains were over against each other, so that the geographical setting is remarkable spiritually. The viewpoint of this position was toward the going down of the sun. The allusion to it might help us; it says, "And it shall come to pass, when Jehovah thy God hath brought thee into the land ... toward the going down of the sun ... beside the oaks of Moreh", (chapter 11:29,30). That is the position indicated by Moses, which they could view across the Jordan before they entered the land. The link is with Gilgal and the oaks of Moreh, so that, spiritually, the geographical surroundings are most advantageous; and as having entered they were to go there at once and put the blessing on mount Gerizim and the curse on mount Ebal. Then the people were to say, "Amen". But the blessings are left out, sorrowful to say, as if the failure of the people is indicated at the outset; that is, the law perfected nothing, it awaited the Lord Jesus to come in and accomplish redemption before we could have the blessing. But still the blessings were in the mind of God, for the first mention of the tribes in Genesis is that they are blessed, as we see in chapter 33 of this book; they are blessed and are viewed thus.

FL Does not the selection of the first six for blessing suggest that the blessing is held in reserve for Judah, Levi, and Joseph are in it, those whom the sovereignty of God has marked off for blessing?

JT The beginning of chapter 27 makes provision for the blessing; even though it is not immediately, it will be there. That is, "And there shalt thou build an altar to Jehovah thy God, an altar of stones". "And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly" (verses 5 - 8). The presence of

the burnt offerings and the peace offerings and the rejoicing, alongside the writing of the law points to the securing of the blessing, however distant.

FL So the last chapter of the Revelation refers to the "root and offspring of David"; would that follow out what you were saying?

JT Yes; our Lord sprang from Judah, so there is a guarantee in those tribes of the fulfilment of the counsels of God.

AFM Would you mind referring to the next chapter, where there are four references to blessing and cursing dependent upon obedience? It says, "If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Jehovah thy God" (verse 2), etc.

JT It is brought in there less formally. The ground on which the blessing is is generally stated; but prominence being given to the curse is very sorrowful as pointing to what actually happened, in that the curse fell on the Lord Jesus. This is emphasized to draw our hearts to the One who was made a curse for us.

WB-w There is another idea in verse 2 — "Thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster: and thou shalt write upon them ...". Do you link these two thoughts together?

JT I think underlying all that is what God had in mind as to His people. The stones not being hewn or squared by human means would refer to the saints as the work of God. The plaster would be the side of our exercises as affording writing material. The stones underlying refer to durability or permanency. Although the curse actually happened, it is met in Him who became a curse, but it is emphasised in this chapter so that our hearts might be drawn to the One who bore it for us. On the very mount of the curse, Ebal, the blessing is secured through the offering of Christ in type, and the permanency of that on which the writing is to be is indicated. The saints themselves as in the new order of things are the expression of the mind of God. Then the writing is to be legible, or "very plainly" written.

WB-w All by way of the altar — is that the idea?

JT Exactly; there is no sin offering mentioned but the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, showing the perfect devotedness of Christ to the will of God, and the consequent result of peace amongst the saints and rejoicing before God. The blessed thoughts of God for His people are very plainly seen on this mountain of the curse. Although the cursings are mentioned, the blessing is infallibly secured. Man, as in the flesh, undertaking the carrying out of the will of God, must incur the curse, and Christ only could meet it.

ANW Why are the sin offerings omitted?

JT I think to bring out the devotedness of Christ. It is the bright side of things, understood only by the Lord Jesus having come in; this happy state of things was in the mind of God for them.

AFM Would chapter 33 be the great answer in blessing to Jesus having borne the curse?

JT Yes. It is the mind of God now corresponding with the stones that were plastered.

FL I was wondering whether the burnt offerings and the peace offerings are illustrated in the recovery of Benjamin at the end of Judges? The curse was there, but then Israel is in a humbled state; they approach God with burnt offerings and peace offerings and then get their brethren; but there is no sin offering.

JT Burnt offerings and peace offerings without sin offerings would imply that sin *has been* dealt with — that the saints are now occupied with Christ according to what He is in effecting the will of God, we being brought into this.

WB-w We usually look at the land of Canaan from the side of purpose, but here you are speaking of responsibility.

JT The moral element must enter into the idea of purpose, for Canaan typifies what we enter into now rather than heaven in the future. We must not omit the moral element. The purpose of God is not like Eden in innocency, the moral element is there. This applies even eternally: "Then the Son also himself shall be placed in subjection to him who put all things in subjection to him that God may be all in all", (1 Corinthians 15:28). The moral element is never out of view; it only enhances what Christ was here as Man. The cross is the great witness to the moral side and everything is held on that principle. In the eternal state there is no more curse.

TA It says in 1 Corinthians 16:22, "If any one love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha". Would you connect that in any way with this scripture?

JT Yes. The idea of curse thus comes home to one; if God has brought us into blessing, as He has, it is in a collective relation. The idea of the land involves this, but how is it to be held? As Moses looked across Jordan, these two mountains stood out, as it were, in the very centre of Canaan, and Israel were to divide themselves according to this scripture, the one taking the position on mount Ebal and the other on mount Gerizim, standing to bless or to curse; and the people were then to say, "Amen". So it is quite evident that God was saying to them, as it were, 'I have brought you to a land flowing with milk and

honey, but it is to be held on the principle of obedience'. The law as the assertion of Jehovah's rights was to be plainly written on the plastered stones. And the fact that the curses are so prominent points to the *need* of the Lord Jesus coming in so as to sustain them all, in order that the land should be held on the ground of the fulfilment of moral obligation.

AFM What would be the reference to the sun going down? It would not be simply a matter of a point of the compass.

JT Well, it was that, but it is a remarkable form of expression. The view from where Moses stood would be right toward the west, where the sun went down. They entered from the east. If they entered from the west the outlook would be toward the sun rising, that was the position of Judah in relation to the tent of testimony, and is the means of the fulfilment of the will of God. There is hope in the sun-rising, but if I look toward the west the sun is going down. How is that to be met? Well the Lord Jesus went down, but He arose.

CAM The line of responsibility has just two issues, either blessing or cursing. God puts our responsibility and His purpose together in a remarkable way.

JT God would bring us to this point; He has brought us to the blessing in a collective way — because the idea of the land and eternal life involves our relations with one another. That is the form it takes now, but how is that to be maintained? We are in the very centre of Canaan here, between these two mountains, and the tribes are divided, and in their amens they express their obligation, as committing themselves. Thus the land is to be held on the principle of obligation to God.

ABP Do you have the sun-rising in Luke 2:32? I was thinking of "a light for revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel". It was like the sun coming in in all its strength.

JT And then going down. Simeon points to His going down: "And even a sword shall go through thine own soul", (chapter 2:35). The Lord Jesus was to go through death, and Mary would feel it. We really approach things from the east towards the west. There is the full shining of the sun, but it is going down, and Moses sees it going down, and the tribes are to carry out this order between these two mountains in that connection.

FL When Mary wept at the cross, she would see the going down of the Sun.

JT But what a glorious rising! So that the going down precedes the rising; the rising sun is the Sun that went down.

JS Our outlook toward man is either the blessing or the curse, there is not neutral ground.

JT Just so: "To the one an odour from death unto death, but to the others an odour from life unto life", (2 Corinthians 2:16).

JTJr We get that thought in Romans 6:23, of death and life; "The wages of sin is death; but the act of favour of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord".

JT A man of faith like Caleb here would say, "Knowing the people as I do there is nothing to expect but the curse".

FHL The altar was at Ebal.

JT Exactly — where the curse is to be; so the blessing is secured in spite of the curse being there, but you can understand a man like Caleb being there, and that he would say, 'I have been forty years with the people and I know what is there, and if it is a question of our responsibility, what can we expect but the curse?' But then he would say, 'Look at this altar and at these stones, look at this plaster, what does all this mean?' Faith would see something there that God had in His mind; *we* can see it now.

APT In Joshua 8, when this is brought about, the ark is present.

JT Yes. There the *people* come first; it says, "And *all Israel*, and their elders, and their officers and judges, stood on this side and on that side of the ark". "There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua read not before the whole congregation of Israel, ... and the strangers that lived among them", (Joshua 8:33,35). The blessing and the curse are read.

WB-w Would the gift of the Holy Spirit come in here? In Acts the Holy Spirit is given to all who *obey* Christ, who, as the Sun, went down and rose again. The Holy Spirit is given on the principle of obedience.

JT Exactly. The ark on mount Ebal comes in in Joshua; it is not mentioned in Deuteronomy in this connection. Joshua brings in the ark, and the people were on this side and on that side of it, so you have a new setting of things now; that is, the fulfilment of everything depends on the *ark*. That belongs to the book of Joshua, which we shall consider later, please God. It is important to see the position the ark has when this commandment is carried out.

ABP It is said of Jacob that as he set out for Padan-Aram he reached Bethel after the sun went down. As he returned we find a reference to the sun-rising, after he is adjusted, having wrestled all night — is there any connection?

JT I think so. He wrestled till "the rising of the dawn". (Genesis 32:24) I think the sun going down is Christ going into death. John gives the names of those who were at His cross and His grave, including Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus. They had to do with that. It is a mark of distinction that the work

of God in these two men shines at the Lord's burial — as the sun went down. Mary of Magdala saw where He was laid, and was occupied at His tomb very early in the morning, while it was still dark; as yet she had not faith in a risen Christ; for her the Sun had not yet risen.

AFM In Mark's gospel Mary of Magdala, with others; came to the sepulchre, the Sun having risen. I suppose Mark would emphasise the *early* resurrection of Christ.

JT Yes. The Lord did not remain any longer in the tomb than was necessary; by the way the facts are stated you get the suggestion that there is no delay.

JS Referring to Mary, are there not many beloved people of God just where she was — "while it was still dark" (John 20:1)? They do not see things *clearly*.

JT Yes, and there is no doubt that the darkness remained with her until the Lord calls her, "Mary!" She had said to the angels, "They have taken away my lord, and I know not where they have laid him", (John 20:13). There is no light in that. Then, supposing that Jesus was the gardener, she says, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him" (verse 15). The dark part still remained with her, and I think that is the case with many Christians.

AFM They need to hear Jesus call them by name and to recognise Him as "Rabboni".

JT What you notice in Mary of Magdala is that she does not investigate. There are thousands and thousands of Christians who do not "prove all things" (1 Thessalonians 5:21); they take in certain features of the truth, but are in darkness as to other features; whereas Peter and John investigated, they entered into the sepulchre and *believed* — because of what they saw.

APT The two on the way to Emmaus were in unbelief.

JT "We thought", they said; they were in darkness really.

FL Much teaching in Christendom is expressed in "I know not where they have laid him"; that is their attitude.

JT Whereas the normal Christian says, "We know the Son of God has come".

ANW Are you putting Peter and John ahead of Mary, in John 20?

JT They are not ahead of her in devotedness and affection, but there are many who, like her, have devotedness and affection for the Lord, and yet are suffering from being in darkness. There are others who have light and investigate; they have Bible readings, written ministry, and look into things; but nevertheless they go to "their own home". I think that is the way the

matter stands. There is a certain balancing between them. I think Peter and John have been discredited somewhat unfairly; for they made investigation at the Lord's tomb; Peter entered into the sepulchre and took notice of the cloths. If the Lord had been stolen, the wrappings would not be there, or if there, would not be in an ordered condition. Christ having been raised by the power of God, the cloths would be just as they were on His body, there would be no change in their position. That is what Peter found, and evidently believed, John entered in and "saw and believed"; that is, he believed because of what he saw inside the tomb, not simply that it was empty of Christ, but because of the orderly condition of the cloths and the handkerchief.

AFM Peter would be ahead of John by the fact that he entered the tomb and investigated.

CAM According to John 20, John was the first *confirmed* believer, and that is just in line with his gospel.

JS Whereas Mary required further adjustment.

JT You would have said, if you had been her: I think I will ask Peter and John something about this matter. These are brothers, why not ask them about this great matter, as to what they saw in the tomb? There is no evidence that she made any inquiry, or that they stayed to help her either. That is how matters stood. There are many devoted people, who go off on missionary work; and they get results. There are also brethren who go in for Bible readings, but they do not get in touch with one another and so certain darkness remains with them. The Lord sees the heart of Mary and calls her by name; she gets that honour, and the message which they did not get.

FHL Say a word about Thomas.

JT He came in after the Lord had been in the midst of the disciples and refused *their* testimony. He represents a class; he is neither of the Peter and John class nor of the Mary class. He says, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe", (John 20:25). He neither accepts the testimony of circumstances — which marked Peter and John — nor the testimony of persons who had had the Lord in their very midst. And he is making terms; there are a lot of people like that; they are hard people to deal with. They come to the meetings, but make terms.

JS They say, "Show me".

JT They put the responsibility on you and make the matter very hard.

APT What is in your mind in saying, "They went to their own homes"?

JT The light should be taken to the saints — it is to shine in the temple. What anyone has from God belongs to the brethren. The two who went to Emmaus were on a path of unbelief, but they came back in an orderly way with light in their souls. They did not go to their natural connections, but "found the eleven, and those with them gathered together" (Luke 24:33) and made known the light received. It was to Mary's credit that she remained at the sepulchre. Peter and John going to their own home are in contrast to her.

Ques . Even if the saints are defective in taking in the truth, the Lord adjusts?

JT He does. She remained at the sepulchre, and the Lord revealed Himself to her as risen.

JS She remained in the place of divine operations.

Rem Even if we all have not the ability to take in the truth like John and Peter, He is equal to adjusting us.

JT If we let Him. The dark part remained a good while; she said, "They have taken away my Lord"; and clung to that right up to the time when the Lord spoke to her.

JS She would be guilty of the same thing of which she accused others: "Tell me where thou hast laid him, and *I will take him away*", (John 20:15).

JT Why should *she* take Him away? Of course her thought was to care for the precious body of the Lord; but she was in unbelief as to His resurrection, and there was a corresponding want of balance in her words.

WB-w What did John actually believe?

JT The fact that it is left open is significant. The resurrection of Christ is, of course, in view. Characteristically, he believed the testimony so far as it was there, so far as the sepulchre afforded evidence of it.

AFM What would the handkerchief folded by itself indicate?

JT Peter would inquire in his mind, "Why should this be?" And his conclusion would be that some reverential hand had done that — some hand that had great regard for the Person that laid there. The idea of headship also would enter into it. Peter would think of it in that way.

AFM Whose reverential hands would they be that folded the handkerchief?

JT Mary would have an inkling of whose they were as having seen two angels sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Angels had attended the Lord in Gethsemane and they are now in His tomb; who but one of them would have folded the handkerchief? If Mary and

Peter conversed about it afterwards, that undoubtedly is the conclusion they would arrive at.

ANW Why did the Lord favour Mary of Magdala at the sepulchre and not Peter and John?

JT Love is the greatest thing. He values our affections and the instinct that goes with them. She remained where there was likely to be something more. Here it is instinct; the Spirit tells us that she turned backwards after the angel spoke to her. Why did she do that? We would have thought that she would have been intensely interested in those heavenly beings but something diverted her from that. Then the Lord says, "Mary", and she turned round, it is not that anyone told her. I think the allusion is to the instinct of the divine nature.

ABP These various features coming out show how necessary the "whole twelve tribes" are to bring out the complete work of God.

JT In view of what we have been saying we are led to the consideration of the whole twelve tribes as blessed, but not merely in an arbitrary way as Jacob blessed the tribes, but in their characteristics. Everyone has characteristics that indicate blessing.

WGK Does Moses represent the Lord in blessing the assembly?

JT Moses would represent the Lord in authority as "king in Jeshurun", as recognised in affection by a righteous, or upright, people.

WB-w Would this, "rose up from Seir" and "shone forth from mount Paran", be the idea of the Sun shining?

JT Yes. Certain settings are in view. First, we have: — "Jehovah came from Sinai, And rose up from Seir unto them; He shone forth from mount Paran". He *came*, He *rose*, and He *shone*. It is a remarkable thing that the divine shining is in wilderness settings peculiarly, as in mount Paran; that is the way through the wilderness toward Canaan the people had begun to move. The cloud stood still there in the wilderness of Paran after Sinai; (Numbers 10:12).

WGT Moses would have the wilderness in view entirely.

JT The land is not mentioned here. God came from Sinai, which is a question of His rights over us. He rises up from Seir, which would point to the nearest way into the land itself. It is an eleven days' journey that way; as if He were to say, 'The way in is short and in My love for you I would have you go that way'. It alludes to the Spirit. As we are in the Spirit, wilderness distances vanish.

The Red Sea and Jordan are thus the one death of Christ for the saints. The wilderness, short or long, is needed because of the flesh in us.

AR Is that what God intended at first in Numbers 13?

JT Yes, rising up from Seir seems to be God indicating the way in, it is like a great beacon light showing the way in.

WGT *Shining* would be grace there, not law.

JT It would be grace — what God is to us in the wilderness.

FL "And he came from the myriads of the sanctuary".

JT There it is the Lord amongst His people, holy myriads, really the priesthood — the saints viewed in priestly trim where God is worshipped in holiness.

AFM "He loveth the peoples", which, according to the footnote, is "tribes". They are seen now as *loved*.

JT Balaam thus saw them in their tribal setting in the wilderness.

GMcP Would this correspond with what we have in Ephesians 2:10: "We are his workmanship"?

JT Exactly; only Ephesians views us in the land.

WB-w Why does it say that "Jehovah came from Sinai"?

JT Mountains are symbols of strength and elevation.

WB-w The idea of bringing them up on these mountains would be to take them above the deserts.

JT It is moral elevation and is the way God operates. How above the level of man He is! So that at Sinai He says, "Ye have seen what I have done to the Egyptians, and how I have borne you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself", (Exodus 19:4). He is now proposing terms, wishing to enter into covenant relation with His people. Sinai is a question of His love viewed in that way. Mount Seir is as if He were to say, 'I will shine as you go in' — the shining way Paran is what He will be to you *on the way* because, according to these verses, it is the middle of the journey.

AFM There is thus every encouragement for us to take up our heavenly position as the tribes.

JT If God has, so to speak, brought us into tribal blessing, let us put on the features indicated: Levi says to his father and mother, "I see him not". This is a most important side of the position — to cut away from what is natural and take my place in relation to God's purpose. Levi fitted into his place; this

negates all that is natural and it is on this that blessing practically hinges. God loves the tribes; that is, the saints in relation to each other in love according to His ordering. He looks at them as Balaam saw them according to His own setting, and the blessing here means that every tribe is characteristically answering to the mind of God; not simply in place around the tent of meeting, but each having his own characteristics — that is, the work of the Spirit in the saints is contemplated.

JTJr Would you get this shining and the shining of the face of Moses when he came down from the mount linked up with 2 Corinthians?

JT Just so. Divine shining is always a question of what God is.

TA Is it necessary to be in fellowship to have a tribal position?

JT It is; that is implied in earlier typical teaching. I suppose it is one of the greatest things for us at the present time, if God has brought us into any little bit of blessing, to see it in the tribal position; thus we answer practically to the mind of God. The first setting of the tribes is in the breastplate and then their position around the tabernacle;

that is Exodus and Numbers. But Deuteronomy is more than that, it is what we are as of the tribes characteristically.

CAM It would be a great thing to get hold of that. It would seem as if it were a distinct thing in the mind of the Lord at the present time.

JT If God has brought us into blessing He wishes us to take up tribal features and relations. Let the saints take up the part God has assigned to them apart from natural relations, whether father, mother, wife, or brother, or sister. All that is wiped out by what is seen here in Levi. Thus there will be no rivalry or clashing with each other. It is a question of the sovereignty of God and His work in us. The tribal position is God's ordering, and is sustained by the high priest. In this sense the saints are peculiarly on the heart of Christ. What is intended in the tribes is worked out from that position.

JS We are to move on relatively in respect of our brethren.

JT Yes. Every tribe has its setting. For instance, Reuben: "Let his men be few". They are not in a mass, they are orderly and living, so that you can count them. Every one has distinction. "Let Reuben live, and not die". Life always distinguishes its subject.

HSD The stones in the breastplate would be all of different colours.

JT That is another point. Instead of names you have precious stones. It is a remarkable thing, you get the number of the tribes but not individual names.

A precious stone represents and distinguishes each one.

JEH The difference in the stones would correspond with the different references we get to these several tribes here — different features.

JT That is what comes out, everyone has his own distinction. The first idea is *life*: "Let Reuben live and not die". And then Judah: — "Hear, Jehovah, the voice of Judah, And bring him unto his people" — he is not to be isolated, or with others than "his people".

AFM I was wondering whether one person could not be marked by each of these features, as being the result of the history of the soul?

JT Normally every Christian bears all these features. The chapter is a constructive setting out of the work of God in its results in all the saints.

JS How do you view Moses here?

JT He would represent Christ as "king in Jeshurun". Not simply as King on the throne, but King in the affections of His people. He, as proved in His wise and gracious rule, is loved by His people.

ANW "All his saints are in thy hand". Who is the "thy" and the "his"?

JT I suppose, Jehovah. It is a question of whose hands the saints are in. We know they are in the hands of the great Shepherd of the sheep — in the hands of Christ.

WGT "And underneath are the eternal arms". Would that be the same thought?

JT That is more general — referring to God.

APT "Yea, he loveth the peoples". Love in activity, exercised all the time. Is that the way you look at it?

JT Exactly. The footnote would indicate that He alludes to the tribes — the saints viewed in this way; although the original word is not the ordinary one for tribe, but it has this meaning. The setting as in this chapter rather confirms that it refers to the tribes.

APT Going back a bit — Moses in speaking to the people said that God did not take them up because they were great, but because He loved them. We are taken up on the principle of God's love.

WGT The Corinthians did not answer to the "king in Jeshurun".

JT They did not give Christ His place, but the second epistle would show that they were coming to it.

AFM "And they sit down at thy feet". Is it like Mary as sitting at the Lord's feet? Is the "thy" Moses or Christ?

JT The Spirit has Christ in view. The introduction of Christ explains many pronouns in the Old Testament. John uses pronouns referring to Christ as Man and passes on to speak of God by the use of the same pronouns without mentioning any names — showing how fully the Person was in his mind.

SECRET THINGS (WJH 9)

Deuteronomy 29:29; Amos 3:1-8; Deuteronomy 27:14,15, Deuteronomy 27:24

One would say a few words in relation to what is secret. The Scriptures indicate that great mysteries are in process of unfolding in our day. Mystery marks both the activities of God, and the activities of evil. Indeed, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the glory of kings is to search out a thing." From the incoming of sin into the universe, many divine activities have been in mystery and we are living in a moment when the mystery of God is about to be completed. The Book of Revelation speaks of the time of the sounding of the trumpet of the seventh angel, when the mystery of God will be completed. That is to say, as I understand it, the great mystery as to why the Omnipotent, the blessed and only Potentate, has ever allowed another will to assert itself against Him. When the seventh angel sounds, the last divine judgment on the world, the mystery of God is completed. What a mystery it has been to men's minds, and perhaps to angels, that One Who, we know, is omnipotent, should allow anyone to assert his will against God. It is a mystery, but it is soon to be completed.

Then we have the great thought of the mystery of piety, (1 Timothy 3: 16), "Great" says the Apostle, "is the mystery of piety. God has been manifested in flesh." What a wondrous mystery, known to piety, to those who have to do with God and fear Him, namely, that God has been manifested in flesh. Unknown to this world, to the unregenerate, seen and hated of men, cast out of the world as worthless, but the great mystery of piety is that God has been here in Jesus, and we are in the secret of that mystery as the treasure of our hearts, which holds us in attachment to Christ, now and for ever.

And then the Apostle speaks of the mystery of which he was a minister; "the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory," (Colossians 1: 27). Christ is being formed in the hearts of the saints, particularly those of Gentiles in Colossians, also Jew and Gentile, one body, as in Ephesians — a great mystery, the place that the Church has in relation to Christ.

The Apostle also says, "Behold I show you a great mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," (1 Corinthians 15: 51, 52). God is about to bring that mystery into completion. He is going to secure His people from the grave as well as those who are living, for Christ.

On the other hand, Satan is working in mystery, the mystery of iniquity (2 Thessalonians 2: 7.).

It was begun by the serpent, inserted into the moral being of men, the desire to be as gods; and that mystery of evil already works, the Apostle says, until it comes to its head in a man who takes God's place publicly on earth. Then it is no longer mystery. When God and Christ are displaced in this world publicly, the mystery is out. The secret workings of evil have ever been to usurp the place of God. How little men know it! What a mystery it is, but it already works. Then, dear brethren, Satan has another mystery in that which bears the name of Christ in the great profession of Christianity, the mystery of Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, the abomination of the earth, (Revelation 17: 5). This also is a great mystery. "Mystery" says the Spirit of God, but soon to be manifested — the mother of harlots and abominations.

Well it is with these thoughts in mind that I would like to say a word or two about what is secret in both connections — in connection with what is good secretly, and in connection with what is evil secretly, that our souls might move in relation to one as coming into the blessed secrets of heaven, and that we might separate ourselves more than ever from the other as that which is secretly evil.

The closing words of Moses to Israel, part of which we have read, correspond to the present moment when the Lord's ministry to the assembly is about to close. He says, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things that are revealed, belong unto us and to our children for ever." That is to say, Moses closed his ministry by calling attention to the fact that there are "the secret things" which do not belong to us, which we will never understand, but on the other hand, there are the revealed things which belong to us and to our children for ever. We stand today in a similar position in the ministry the Lord has given in recent times, making clear that there are the hidden things, the secret things which are not ours. I believe many Christians thought that everything there was in existence spiritually, as to God, had been disclosed, but the Lord has made clear that there are the hidden things, and it is well to take this truth into our hearts, so that we might have an ever-increasing sense of the greatness of God and of Christ.

It is clear that there is a realm outside of the heavens and the earth, the abode of Deity from which God humbles Himself to look on the heavens, an uncreated realm, where God resides, so that it is an act of humiliation from that altitude to look on the heavens as well as the earth, but that realm is hidden. No creature ever enters there, no seraph, no cherub, no archangel, no mere man — ever could enter there, but, dear brethren, it exists, and it is for

us to recognise that God is eternally invisible, Whom no-one has ever seen or is able to see, to Him be glory for ever and ever! How well for our hearts to recognise that the form of God is hidden, no creature has ever seen it or ever will. Scripture shows that there is "the form of God," but outside the range of the creature's eye. It is hidden. Then the relationship between Divine Persons in the past eternity is hidden. Scripture makes clear that Divine Persons were distinct from eternity, that there was glory in that realm where Divine Persons abode from eternity, and that love pervaded all. Scripture makes clear that there was equality between Divine Persons there, but there remains what is hidden, as being beyond the creature, and it is well for us to accept this in the spirit of worship, as realising how infinite God is. Then Who the Son is remains hidden. No one knows Who the Son is. It is well to take into our hearts that besides all we do know and love, and which we worship in the light of, there is what is unknowable in the Son. He has a name written which no man knows but Himself. One of His garments is a cloud. He is clothed in a cloud, indicating inscrutability. As to *HIS* own personal glory and greatness, there is something there that is hidden and remains hidden from every creature for eternity, but there is what is revealed, and that is ours. The coming of Christ into manhood, has brought God into revelation; the only-begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has revealed Him. Scripture makes clear that the distinctive glory that attaches to God stands connected with the Father — "Unto us there is one God, the Father." That stands for ever. The Son and the Holy Spirit have accepted the place of service to God, while retaining ever their place in the Deity. This is for us — part of what is revealed, and it belongs to us. Thus God is known to us, for He has disclosed to us in Christ in manhood, all that can be disclosed of Himself. Solomon speaks in his song of "Our land" — a most wonderful suggestion. There is a land that Christ says to the assembly is "ours" — where "the voice of the turtle is heard" — the Spirit's voice is heard" — and where the Lord shares, with His own, everything that it is possible for us to know and enjoy, even the knowledge of His Father and His God.

He says, "I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." I believe that is the limit of what is revealed. We are on the boundary of the Infinite there. Beyond that is the sphere above all the heavens where Jesus as Man has gone, far above all heavens, but He brings His own into "Our land" to share everything that can be shared by men, even to the knowledge of His Father and our Father, His God and our God. So that the revealed belongs to us. There is a great range of what is revealed that is ours and our children's, while we recognise that there are also the hidden things beyond the range of the creature eternally — the secret things.

Now, I would say a little about the passage in Amos. There we have this wonderful word that "the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." I would like to commend that word to us. He will do *nothing*. If He brings evil into the city — (for He says, "Shall there be evil in a city and the *LORD* hath not done it?") — or whatever the Lord does, "He will do nothing without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets" — a most complete statement.

Now, what a place the prophetic ministry has. The Lord says He will do nothing but He will tell the prophets. What is greatly needed is room for the prophetic ministry today, because thus we learn what the Lord is doing. He will not keep one secret from his prophets, and the prophetic ministry is to help us so that we come into the secret of what God is doing. The greatest thing we could know is what God is doing. People talk about what the dictators of Europe are doing, what America is doing, but what is God doing? Is the omnipotent doing nothing? How impossible! What a suggestion that God is not active! He must be active. All His creatures are active, even the tiniest insect. Is not the creator of all the ends of the earth active? He must be active, and He will do nothing but He tells His secrets to His servants, the prophets. That runs through Scripture. If God is going to destroy the ante-diluvian world, He tells Noah that there are 120 years left ere the judgment falls. God tells His prophet He is going to overthrow Sodom and Gomorrah. He says of Abraham His prophet, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing?" If He is going to take His people out of Egypt, He speaks to His prophet Moses, telling him what he is doing. If He will provide a king for His people, one upon whom His eye has been, He will tell Samuel to go down, to the house of Jesse. If He is going to call for a famine for 32 years — that there will be neither rain nor dew, He will tell Elijah. If he is going to take Elijah to heaven, then He tells Elijah, and indeed Elisha and the sons of the prophets share in the knowledge. If He is going to leave His earthly people for 70 years in captivity He tells His prophet Jeremiah. He will do nothing but what He tells His prophets. If, as the God of the heavens, He foresees the deterioration of the Gentile world till it is part of iron and part of clay, He will tell Daniel the prophet His secret. If He will bring Jesus into this world, He will tell Anna the prophetess, He will tell Simeon, a man who is near Him. Indeed, dear brethren, He will do nothing but He will tell His secret to His servants the prophets. I am sure that ere the Lord comes to take the Church, His prophets will know what He is doing. I am not saying they will put any dates to this great matter, but His prophets will know what He is doing, and if we heed the prophetic word, we shall get the gain of it. The thing that matters is to hear His word, to be in touch with what God is doing. He always has those to whom He will tell what He is doing, and their

business is to utter the prophetic word and ours to receive it; so that we may be preserved. For by a prophet He brought His people out, and by a prophet they were preserved. Ezekiel looked on a valley of dry bones, all separated one from another. The word came, "Shall these bones live?" and God says "Prophesy," and as he prophesied bone came to its bone and skin and sinews and flesh, and there stood up a great army here for God through the prophetic word. That is what we need. Where there is disunity, where bones are scattered about, the prophetic word would bring bone to his bone, and bring also skin and flesh. But still it says "there was no breath," and God says, "Prophesy again, son of man," and the wind, the breath of life from God, came upon them, and there was a living state by the prophetic ministry. I would urge that we do not set aside what God is saying in this day, as if it did not mean something. It has in view that we should be preserved, that we should be intelligent as to what God is doing, that bone should come to his bone and that there should be life amongst God's people and not merely what is formal.

There is much more that is secret that God would promote. The Lord indicates the gain of praying in secret, a much needed exercise at the present time. It stands over against long prayers publicly. One great bane amongst the saints, one of the greatest destroyers of spiritual life in the meetings for prayer is long prayers *publicly* but what is needed is long prayers *secretly*. I think we could say without much fear that long prayers publicly often disclose short prayers privately. Long prayers privately will make us brief publicly. Let us not apply this to another, for it is one of the greatest weaknesses among us. The Lord indicates the gain of praying in secret. Go into your chamber and shut the door and pray to your Father Who sees in secret. We may spend hours thus, if we can. But can we? Who would not admit his weakness in secret prayer? The Lord would promote it. He would also promote giving in secret, not letting our right hand know what our left hand does. Giving in secret is entirely according to God's desire, "and your Father which sees in secret will reward you openly," because what is done in secret does not redound to the credit of the person who does it in the eyes of his fellows; it is only for the eye of God.

I would say a word on the other side as to what is in secret in relation to evil. The passage I read from Deuteronomy 27: 15, indicates what God thinks of those who secretly set up idols, for a curse was pronounced on those who made a graven or molten image and set such up secretly. This is a matter that we must face urgently if we want the blessing of God. As God comes into the secret chambers of our hearts, he looks round for images that are set up secretly. Of course, we do not set them up publicly, but the apostle John recognises the danger of idolatry, and so does Paul, so both speak of this to the *saints*; not to heathen, not to unbelievers, but to Christians. Let us allow

the Lord's eye to look into the secrets of our lives. Are there any molten or graven images, the work of the craftsman, set up there? That we are controlled by what we love, can be taken as absolutely true, and in the last days the apostle makes clear there would be many things seeking the love of men's hearts. In the last days it says, "there shall be perilous times, men shall be lovers of *themselves*." Self set up, the object of the heart, everything made subservient to it — an a idol; lovers of *money*, the root of all evil, an idol that displaces God; lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. God's worshippers are lovers of God, but who will deny that devotees of pleasure abound, and are we free? Time and strength and money that the precious interests of Christ should have are often devoted to pleasure. God help us to face this, and add our "Amen" as to what God thinks of idolatry! The word is, "unto us there is one God — the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ." Let us allow the scrutiny of the divine eye to search us, for the cases of sorrow that arise among us, I fear, have their roots in idolatry. John says, "Children keep yourselves from idols." So that we have to take account of the secret setting up of idols.

Then we have this word, "Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly." A very serious matter. There are times when smiting is necessary; when one prophet said to another, "Smite me." There was a time when Paul the apostle smote Peter, but he did it to his face; not secretly. He warns the Corinthians about whisperings. Whisperings are things said in secret which God hates. The Lord when on trial said, "In secret have I said nothing, I ever spake openly." That is, as to what He had to say about Caesar and about men, He did not whisper it. He said, "I ever spake openly and in secret I have said nothing." Many of the sorrows that we are facing at this time lie in secret smitings. The Spirit of God warns us that in conflict we must not smite secretly. No hand must touch what is secret in conflict, or such a hand must be cut off. This warning is specially addressed to women, though we all need it. There is a tendency, and especially with sisters, in conflict to attack through what is secret, and God's judgment will come upon such as do this. There is that which is secret in many lives which God has covered, and in conflict let no one uncover it, for God's judgment will come upon such. When matters have to be faced, let us come into the open. God loves to have things in the light.

We were speaking about the Lord not allowing any package to pass through the temple. I appeal to anyone who has a package, something that is covered, which is being brought into the temple, to see that the Lord will not suffer it; He resents it. God's holy eye, and the eye of Christ is on that package. I would appeal to every heart to take such packages out. Better to have to go out yourself than attempt to bring a package into the house of God, which He will not suffer.

That is all I had in mind. While recognising there is that which is beyond the creature eternally, there is also a vast domain that the Lord would bring before us, even to the edge of the infinite, where we bow down before God in holy worship. Think of eternity, and there is sufficient to fill every heart with eternal joy and satisfaction in what is revealed!

There is the promise of the Lord that He will do nothing but He will reveal His secrets to His servants the prophets, that what the Lord is doing right up to the rapture He will tell His prophets. Prophetic ministry is to bring us into the light and the protection and blessedness of what God is doing.

Then there is secret prayer and secret giving, both acceptable to God and to the Father, Who sees in secret. There is the curse on secret idols, and "Let all the people say 'Amen'." There is the curse on smiting anyone secretly, and judgment on touching what God has covered. There is no one exempt from the necessity of facing these matters. It says, "Let *all the people say*, 'Amen'."

Deuteronomy 28

- (Deuteronomy 27)
  DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTERS 27, 28 (JND 36)
- DEUTERONOMY 28 (CAC 5)

DEUTERONOMY 28 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 28

The previous chapter refers to what was to be done at mount Ebal and mount Gerizim after the people had passed over Jordan. But the chapter now before us contains further speaking of Moses in the land of Moab as to the government of God. He continues to present in sharp contrast the blessings which will attend obedience and the curses which will follow disobedience. Christ as our divine Instructor would call our attention to these things in a very definite way.

Blessing in the city (verse 3) has typical reference to our enjoyment of those common and mutual interests which we have as "fellow-citizens of the saints". As walking by the Spirit in obedience our relations with our fellow-citizens will be happy. There will be no discord, and the interests which we are all set to promote will prosper under the good hand of our God, so that we shall realise divine favour in our "city" conditions. In Ephesians 2: 19 - 22 our "city" relations are mentioned first; then that we are of the household of God; then that all the building increases to a holy temple in the Lord; and, finally, that we are built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

Then from "the city" we go to "the field", and are blessed there. The "field" is the place of labour, where ploughing, sowing, planting, watering, reaping are carried on; it is where "the labourer awaits the precious fruit of the earth, having patience for it until it receive the early and the latter rain" (James 5: 7). It is where "The husbandman must labour before partaking of the fruits" (2 Timothy 2: 6), and where "each shall receive his own reward according to his own labour" (1 Corinthians 3: 8). In "the field" we have ever to remember that God is "the giver of the increase", and therefore to labour without His blessing is to labour fruitlessly. Continued labour is needed if success is to attend operations in the field, but the blessing of God is the supreme factor, and to secure this the labourer must ever be in that spirit of obedience which says, "What shall I do, Lord?"

Verse 4 pledges every kind of increase, so that where spiritual conditions are maintained it is right to confidently expect spiritual increase. Not that this could be measured by mere increase of numbers — though we would love to see this in a godly way — but by spiritual fruitfulness which yields increasing pleasure to God. Paul tells us that all the body, as ministered to from the Head, "increases with the increase of God". This is true blessing. Not an outward increase which results — as it may be feared is sometimes the case

— in there being less for God than there was before. An increase which lowers the spiritual tone of things is to be deprecated rather than desired.

The "basket" and the "kneading-trough" (verse 5) have to do with the food supply. It is good to come across saints who have a full basket brought back from the field! Such have always something newly gathered up; we do not hear them complaining that there is no food. Then the "kneading-trough" indicates one phase of the diligence by which corn is made available as bread. It is, in its place, as important as the use of the mill, to which our attention was called in chapter 24: 6. All the operations that result in the corn becoming bread are necessary; they represent spiritual exercises that have to be taken up. The first mention of "kneading" in Scripture is when Abraham said to Sarah, "Knead quickly three seahs of wheaten flour, and make cakes" (Genesis 18: 6). It would suggest the putting of things into definite shape, so that they become available in a suitable form for intelligent appropriation. Many try to live on isolated texts which comfort them, but this rarely results in growth. Edification is brought about by the truth being apprehended in a definite way. Paul exhorted Timothy to "Have an outline of sound words, which words thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1: 13). He was to hold the "sound words" in a definite form. To be blessed in the ability to conceive of what relates to Christ, so that it is before our minds in a definite shape, and can be set before others so as to be apprehended by them, is a distinct mark of divine favour.

Then whether "coming in" for the enjoyment of privilege, or "going out" in the mission here (John 20: 17, 21) how good to move in spiritual liberty, and to be blessed in both! But time would fail to speak of the detail of these blessings. They are summed up in being established unto Jehovah a holy people, so that all see that the Name of Jehovah is called upon His saints (verses 9, 10).

The blessings attached to walking in God's ways are rich and manifold, but those who forsake Him will assuredly be pursued and overtaken governmentally by the curses. We do not need to dwell upon them in detail. The literal accomplishment of all that is written here upon disobedient Israel is a terrible witness that the government of God cannot be trifled with. "God is not mocked; for whatever a man shall sow, that also shall he reap". That is as solemnly true for us as it was for Israel.

But the thoughts of God in connection with His people are very blessed, and most attractive to every heart that loves Him. To be established to Himself a holy people (verse 9), to have His Name called upon us (verse 10), to serve Him with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything (verse 47)! Such are His thoughts and as we are found in

correspondence with them His government secures to us every blessing. It ensures that we shall be great gainers by affectionate obedience. Faith rejoices in the government of God because it is ever favourable to those who walk rightly. Even eternal life, as well as being the gift of God, is secured for present enjoyment on the line of His government, for it is written, "He that sows to the Spirit, from the Spirit shall reap eternal life" (Galatians 6: 8).

Deuteronomy 29

- (Deuteronomy 27)
  SECRET THINGS (WJH 9)
- DEUTERONOMY 29 (CAC 5)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 29 (JND 36)

DEUTERONOMY 29 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 29

The covenant as made in the land of Moab is additional to the covenant made in Horeb. See chapter 28: 69. And even that first covenant was based upon what the people had previously known of God. See Exodus 19: 4, 5. God does not introduce the thought of a covenant without first making Himself known in grace and delivering power so that His covenant proposals may be attractive and acceptable. There is a bond of covenant character which is connected with our first knowledge of God in grace. The covenant in Horeb is said to have been made "in the day of my taking them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt" (Jeremiah 31: 32). He had no other thought from the outset than that we should be for Him to be His own possession. And He looked that, as knowing Him in grace, we should readily commit ourselves to His covenant. The yielding ourselves to God (Romans 6), and the being "to another, who has been raised up from among the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God" (Romans 7) would answer to the covenant as made in Horeb. What *we* can say and do under grace, as seen in Romans 6, signifies definite committal to God.

In writing to the saints in Rome Paul assumes that they were on this ground.

Then after forty years of proving how faithful God had been in relation to wilderness necessities and exercises, and after proving that in His strength they could smite Sihon and Og, He proposed to make another covenant in the land of Moab which should have immediately in view their entering into the land. And Moses, in this chapter, recalls the whole history — what He did in Egypt, what He had done forty years in the wilderness, and what He had enabled His people to do to Sihon and Og (verses 1 - 9). It was not an *unknown* God who was proposing that they should enter into His covenant. His wilderness wonders were "that ye might know that I am Jehovah your God" (verse 6). The covenant would be of no value to Him unless it were intelligently entered into by a people who have learned to know and love Him. All that He has permitted us to see and experience before we reached Moab is brought to bear upon us to influence us powerfully to enter into this new and blessed bond.

It is quite possible that all these things may have been seen without being really understood. It was so with Israel. "But Jehovah hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, to this day" (verse 4). It had all been before their eyes, and yet they had not seen it in any true sense, so as to be rightly affected by it. How often is this the case! But even if it has

been so with us in the past this need not continue. There is here a call to all Israel as standing "this day all of you before Jehovah your God" (verses 1, 10). There is another opportunity — another day in which it is possible to definitely enter into the covenant.

The covenant made in Moab has its anti-type in the dedication for which Paul appeals so powerfully in Romans 12: 1, 2. The presentation of our bodies a living sacrifice,

holy, acceptable to God, our intelligent service, is essential as preparatory to our entering into all that is in the will of God. "The good and acceptable and perfect will of God" would include all that is brought out in Colossians and Ephesians. This covenant is made in Moab, but it is designed to qualify us for the possession and enjoyment of "the land". If we have not yet taken it up the blessed God would set us before Him "this day" that we may do so. He would appeal to us in regard of all that in which He has made Himself known to us. Whatever in the past has been the witness of His grace and His faithfulness is brought together by our blessed Instructor as powerful leverage to move our hearts to the definite entering into this covenant. It is, to us, a direct appeal of Christ, in view of our affectionately and intelligently entering into all that divine love has purposed for us.

The book of Deuteronomy supposes that a certain point in soul-history has been reached, and that there have been past experiences of God's actings for us of which He can remind us. And all are made the ground of an appeal on His part that we should keep the words of this Deuteronomic covenant, and do them, that we may prosper in all that we do (verse 9). "That thou mayest enter into the covenant of Jehovah thy God, and into his oath, which Jehovah thy God maketh with thee this day; that he may establish thee this day for a people unto himself, and that he may be to thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob" (verses 12, 13); God loves to verify to His people all that is in His mind for them, and He would have us to be definitely in that spirit of covenant dedication in which it can all be taken up.

And this is for *all* the people of God to take up. This is strikingly set forth in the words: "Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath, but with him that standeth here with us this day before Jehovah our God, and with him that is not here with us this day" (verses 14, 15). If any of the people of God, for any reason, are not present on this day of dedication — and it must be sorrowfully admitted that they are not *all* present — they, nevertheless, stand committed to the holy obligation of it. No saint is entitled to say that he is exempted from taking up Romans 12: 1, 2. Through worldliness, or

allowance of the flesh in some form, he may not really, in a practical sense, be present to dedicate himself to God, but the Lord Jesus will not leave him free from the obligation to do so.

The taking up of the covenant, and being true to it, are imperative if we are to be preserved from turning away to what has idolatrous elements in it. That is "a root that beareth gall and wormwood" (verse 18). Satan throws a glamour of imagined sweetness over what is idolatrous; he presents it as agreeable liberty, something to be desired. But getting away from God ever yields bitterness and defilement (see Hebrews 12: 15), and it is assuredly followed governmentally by the curse. Blessed as the covenant is for those who loyally take it up, there are, without question, what this scripture speaks of as "the curses of the covenant". One cannot doubt that Christendom as a whole has turned away from God, has forsaken His covenant and become idolatrous, and is at the present time far from the land of divine purpose. May we take these things seriously to heart! They have most surely a solemn voice for us.

Thank God, there are "hidden things" which belong to Him (verse 29). He has in reserve thoughts of recovery, even when all blessing has been forfeited by disobedience and departure. Israel will yet prove this, and saints of the assembly have proved it already in a remarkable way. Indeed it is on the line of the hidden things which belong to God that, after all the failure here and its governmental consequences, the saints will all come to glory, and be conformed to the image His Son. He will effectuate His eternal purpose in Christ in spite of all that has come out in the responsible history here.

God's purpose and promise and oath *must* ultimately be carried out, and hence if His people turn away and come under His curse, it becomes necessary for Him, in His immutable faithfulness, to follow them with such workings in their hearts that His word once more gets place and power with them. It is thus that Israel will be recovered in the last days. And it is on this principle that saints of the assembly are being now brought back, after long centuries of departure, to that state of heart which truly cherishes, and is set to be in accord with, the precious thoughts of God regarding His people, and the vast and wealthy inheritance which He has given them in Christ. This is largely the subject of the next chapter. It is an abiding principle that we are to be governed by what is revealed (verse 29); we are to go on with it in diligent exercise of heart. But everything that is for the pleasure of God is wrought by Himself. "For of him, and through him, and for him are all things; to him be glory for ever. Amen". It will come to that ultimately; all that abides for God's pleasure will be seen to be the fruit of His work.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 29 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 29

— 21 - 23. Note the way in which the Lord passes from the individual, separated out of the tribes of Israel, to the whole land as a natural consequence which follows certainly; compare the use of it in Hebrews.

Deuteronomy 30

- DEUTERONOMY 30 (CAC 5)

DEUTERONOMY 30 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 30

This chapter is of great importance, for it speaks of recovery after all blessing has been forfeited through departure from God, and it shews how the commandments of this book can be returned to after they have been departed from. The people are seen here as having come under the curse, driven from the land and scattered among the nations. This corresponds with the present state of things in the Christian profession. There has been gross departure from what God set up at the beginning, and the mass of those who profess to be His people are scattered; they are not in the enjoyment of the spiritual and heavenly portion of the saints in light. But God is moving in the affections of His people to bring about recovery.

It is noticeable how frequently *the heart* is mentioned in this chapter; three times we get the words, "with all thy heart and with all thy soul", and three times in it we read of loving Jehovah. It is a chapter for the affections; departure began there, and recovery begins there. Conscience is a restraint, but it does not supply motive. "I will arise and go to my father", is a heart movement.

It is of God's favour and mercy when things are taken to heart, and the spirit of obedience revives in heart and soul, so that there is return to Him (verses 1, 2). We then find — just as Israel will find when their heart turns to the Lord — that God has never departed from what He began with; He has not given up one of His precious thoughts. The purpose of His love, and the calling of His people, are just the same as at the beginning. Christ has not left His first love, and His thoughts of the assembly are unchanged and undiminished. When we are brought back to God and to Christ we appreciate the covenant and the inheritance, and God is before us in all the wealth of His imperishable thoughts.

The result of this is a turning of captivity, and gathering (verses 3, 4). If God's thoughts are to have place in a practical way there must be *gathering* of His people in spiritual liberty. His thoughts cannot take form where human arrangements and order hold His people in captivity. Nor can they take form in isolated individuals. The result of returning to God is that His people are gathered. This is a distinctive feature of the present time, and there is nothing which Satan has more sought to hinder by positive opposition, by imitation, and by sowing discord. But gathering goes on because God is doing it, and He is doing it in view of the inheritance being enjoyed collectively in "the land". One loves to think of the saints being gathered from many different points of

scattering by Divine grace and power! Even if only two or three are gathered it is a testimony of recovering grace and power on God's part which is intended to affect all His people. The way is open at the present time to return to God, and to the Lord Jesus, and to the truth of the assembly; we may return with our whole heart and soul to all that we have been considering as typically presented in Deuteronomy. Then our faithful and gracious God will turn our captivity, and have compassion upon us, and will gather us.

Loving Jehovah with all the heart and with all the soul is the result of his circumcising the heart (verse 6). How good it is when God frees the heart from fleshly desires and hopes, so that it may be wholly set upon Himself! This is truly the way of life. If He will do this for Israel we may be sure that He will not do less for those who in the present time return to Him. He will in a coming day put the heart of Israel through deep exercise with regard to the death of Christ. Isaiah 53; Zechariah 12: 10 - 13: 2; Ezekiel 36: 24 - 32 are amongst the scriptures which shew this. And if we are circumcised in heart and spirit — Romans 2: 28, 29; Colossians 2: 11; Philippians 3: 3 — it is by the import of the death of Christ being brought home to us. There is "the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ". To those truly circumcised the flesh ceases to be of any account, the whole body of it is put off, there is an end of confidence in it. Every phase of departure has been the result of allowing the flesh a place in some way; there are the seeds in our flesh of every corruption that has ever come in. But if the sharp knife of the death of Christ is applied by God to our hearts its effect is to cut off, as regards our affections and our confidence, that which has been the root and source of all departure.

We can only really accept the cutting off of the flesh when we apprehend that God has brought in and secured everything that is for His pleasure in Christ, with a view to it being also secured in those who are Christ's and have His Spirit. The commandments of Deuteronomy would be "too wonderful" for us (verse 11) if God did not connect it all in our hearts with Christ. Indeed the whole book would be spiritually meaningless if we left Christ out. Nothing could more plainly prove the spiritual intent of this book than verses 11 - 14 of this chapter. It is all to come, by God's favour, into the mouth and heart as a "word of faith" concerning Christ. See Romans 10: 6 - 10.

If with heart and soul we turn to God we shall find that the commandment is "not too wonderful" for us, neither is it far off. It is accessible even to the youngest or feeblest. We are not required to do impossible things. The period of divine blessing in which we live began by the establishment of every thought and promise of God in Christ as a risen and glorified Man, and by the

saints being firmly attached to Him in the power of a divine anointing. Recovery is brought about as we return to this. If our hearts are moved to do so we can return to that which was from the beginning.

"For the word is very near to thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it". Paul has told us by the Spirit that this word refers to Christ. It was He who came down from heaven to bring God's will in completeness and perfection near to men. It was He who went into death that what was in God's will for us might be established in Himself as risen from the dead, and that we might be linked with it in a divine way by faith and as having the Spirit. To confess with the mouth Jesus as Lord, and to believe in the heart that God has raised Him from among the dead is the way of salvation and righteousness, but it is also the way of recovery. So that every true believer has in his mouth and in his heart that which would suffice, if fully followed up, to effect his complete recovery to the pleasure of God. For spiritual recovery two things alone are essential: that Jesus should be confessed as Lord, and that God should be known as having raised Him from among the dead. These two things would suffice to recover us from all departure, and to bring us back to all that is in the commandment of God. It may be said that every believer has these two things in his mouth and in his heart. That is true, and therefore he has in his mouth and heart that in which lies the whole power of divine recovery. He does not require any far-fetched help, or any extraordinary ministry; he has within himself, by the favour of God, sufficient to bring about the recovery that is possible in the last days.

The recognition of the Lordship of Jesus, involving subjection to Him, and the confession publicly of His rights, is the way of recovery from all that is lawless and displeasing to God. Then the faith that God has raised Him from among the dead brings into the heart the light of what subsists in resurrection for God's pleasure. Paul's word to Timothy in view of the last days was, "Remember Jesus Christ raised from among the dead". This does not mean remembering the fact of His resurrection, but remembering Him as risen; He is in the condition of resurrection. What stops short of resurrection — however commendable it may be in the eyes of men — stops short of divine pleasure. Israel will be recovered when they see that the sure mercies of David are secured in their long-rejected Messiah as raised from the dead. And recovery for us lies in the heart-apprehension of Christ as risen, so that in spirit and heart we turn from the scene of failure, and from the man who has caused it all, to the faith of what is purely of God in Christ.

The book of Deuteronomy can only be taken up in the light of Christ as risen. Neither the covenant, nor the inheritance in the land, nor anything that is

commanded, can be understood or entered into save as it is seen bound up with Him. There will be no outward restoration of things in the Christian profession; things there will go from bad to worse; but it is open to God's people who take things to heart to return to Him, and to the abiding reality of what He has secured for His pleasure in Christ risen. We can, through infinite grace, come back to the divine thoughts in their unchangeable character, but we hold them all in our affections in relation to Christ. Then every commandment of God gets its place in the heart, and obedience becomes a delight. He will not fail to make it manifest that His blessing is upon His people who have in heart and soul turned to Him (verses 9,10). For they will honour every part of His will; they will find it all to be practicable, and that it is still possible to possess and enjoy the inheritance according to His pleasure. Indeed as divinely recovered we may confidently look for more spiritual good than has ever been known in the church since the days of the apostles.

The word "in thy mouth" implies public confession (Romans 10: 9). Things are not to be held merely in a private way, but one is to be committed to them in public confession. A confessor of Jesus as Lord stands publicly apart from the world that refuses to acknowledge His rights. It was in this way that believers were marked off at the beginning from Judaism and from the heathen world. And it marks off in the last days the faithful ones from all that is unrighteous in the Christian profession. "Let every one who names the name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity" (2 Timothy 2: 19). If I confess Jesus as Lord I cannot go on publicly with what is lawless and insubordinate; that confession involves separation from what is contrary to His commandments; it involves that everything must be taken up now on the principle of obedience. Our associations are now to be "with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2: 22). The mouth that confesses Him Lord is the mouth of one who has come into subjection to Him so that His authority is now supreme, and is acknowledged in a public way by the adjustment of our associations.

Then the faith in the heart that God raised Him from among the dead puts us in spiritual touch with an entirely new order of things. God is operating in the sphere of resurrection, and in that sphere He secures what is pleasurable to Him. When we see that we are no longer held by what has religious status in this world. The fine buildings, the music, the efforts to popularise Christianity, to give it a larger influence as part of the system of this world, are all seen in their true character. It is then apprehended that as risen with Christ we are to "seek the things which are above, where the Christ is sitting at the right hand of God", that we are to have our "mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are on the earth" (Colossians 3: 1, 2). As we do so we shall

realise in a spiritual way what it is to be brought "into the land that thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers" (verse 6).

The principles on which God acts are "exceeding broad" (Psalm 119: 96). Whether it be the salvation of an individual Israelite, or that of a poor Gentile, or the recovery of Israel after being driven out and scattered, or restoration in the present day after the greatest departure, all are brought about on the same principles. The departure and its consequences have to be realised; then God's pleasure as set forth in His commandment has to be apprehended and taken to heart as brought in by the Lord Jesus, and substantiated in Him as raised from among the dead. The confession of Him as Lord, the belief that God has raised Him, are righteousness and salvation for the individual sinner. But they are also the great power for recovery when departure and curse have come in. Subjection to Jesus as Lord, and the confession in a public way of His rights, are the divine way of recovery from all that is lawless and displeasing to God.

Deuteronomy 31

- (Deuteronomy 1)
  SPIRITUALITY (6) (JT 48)
- (Deuteronomy 1)
  SPIRITUALITY (6) (JT 48)
- DEUTERONOMY 31 (CAC 5)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 31 (JND 36)
- THE TESTIMONY PASSED ON IN FRESHNESS (JT 29)
- ELDER BRETHREN AS SPIRITUAL EXAMPLES (JT 84)
- ELDER BRETHREN AS SPIRITUAL EXAMPLES (JT 84)
- ELDER BRETHREN AS SPIRITUAL EXAMPLES (JT 84)
- SPIRITUAL GREATNESS (JT 90)
- THE TABERNACLE SYSTEM (8) (JT 95)

DEUTERONOMY 31 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 31

The first six verses of this chapter were spoken by Moses "to all Israel". They present what it is important for all the people of God to know. "Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan" (verse 2). As regards Moses personally there was a governmental reason for this (see chapter 32: 51), but here he may be regarded as typical of Christ after the flesh. Not even Christ *after the flesh* could bring us into what was in the purpose of God for us. As to His life in flesh He could say, "For also the things concerning me have an end" (Luke 22: 37);"the days of his flesh" terminated in death. He came in infinite grace into a condition which was not that of divine purpose; Himself the all-holy One who knew no sin He took part in the condition of flesh and blood — of which we were partakers — that He might glorify God in it, and be the propitiation for our sins, be made sin for us, and bring to an end the life to which, in us, sin attached. Christ after the flesh is no more; the silver cord has been loosed, and the golden bowl broken. Perfect and blessed as that life was, it was not the life of divine purpose for man, and "if even we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know him thus no longer" (2 Corinthians 5: 16). He has been "put to death in flesh, but made alive in the Spirit" (1 Peter 3: 18). As such He is the true Joshua, going over before His people, and with them, to cause them to inherit the land. The destruction of what answers to the nations of Canaan, and acquiring possession of the inheritance, depends on our following Christ as the true Joshua who by the Spirit leads His people in. The faithfulness of God is definitely pledged to Joshua in this scripture (verses 7, 8), and as we follow the spiritual leading of Christ that faithfulness will be our sure resource. "Thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And Jehovah, he it is that goeth before thee: he will be with thee; he will not leave thee, nor forsake thee; fear not, neither be dismayed" (verse 8). Joshua and the power of Jehovah are identified.

Joshua represents that spiritual leading of Christ which began in Himself as "made alive in the Spirit", and was continued in His apostles, and which, in principle, continues in the gifts which have come down from Him as the ascended One. Divine faithfulness is pledged to support all such spiritual leading. It is really the leading of Christ, though manifested through His representatives here. Viewed thus we can see the value and suitability of the call to Joshua in verses 7, 8, and to the "charge" and commandment of verses 14, 23. There is a remarkable contrast between the faithfulness and support of Jehovah fully assured to Joshua, and the unfaithfulness of the people as prophetically declared in verses 16 - 21.

All that Joshua represents has been, and ever will be, supported by God, and it will ever lead the people of God into the inheritance which His love has prepared for them. It is possible that the people may not value the leading, or get the good of it spiritually, but if is there in divine faithfulness for their good. To whomsoever it may be given to have any part in spiritual leadership the call, the charge and the commandment to Joshua are directly the word of God today. It was never more essential that spiritual leading should be marked by strength and courage, by confidence in God, and by the assurance that He is with those who are set in purpose to cause His people to inherit what He has given. It has been well said, "Our present work and duty, whatever it may be in the church, hangs from the charge, and is sustained by it, whatever we may know of the result as regards man's unfaithfulness". The spiritual leading of which Joshua is a type was seen in the apostles; they were strong and courageous, and God was with them. The public result soon became like verses 16 - 21. I suppose every reader of this chapter has felt how like its closing verses are to Paul's farewell to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20.

Before Jehovah declared prophetically what the people would actually do in forsaking Him and breaking His covenant He led Moses to express in verses 9 - 13 what was agreeable to His own mind. The Deuteronomic law, written by Moses, was delivered to the priests and to all the elders of Israel. The priests being characterised as bearing the ark of the covenant of Jehovah shews that this law is committed to those who are personally identified in affections and service with Christ. They are in priestly nearness to God, identified with His covenant known as secured in Christ. Then "all the elders of Israel" represent the people viewed in intelligent responsibility. Spirituality is ever accompanied by a deep sense of responsibility that God's mind shall have its influence in a practical way amongst His people. Apart from this there will be no sabbatical "year of release", which indicates that the saints are formed in the divine nature, and are able to express it practically amongst themselves. (See chapter 15, and also remarks in "Outline of Leviticus", chapter 25) And the "feast of tabernacles" speaks of fulness of blessing in the land, and of all Israel coming to appear before Jehovah "in the place which he will choose". See chapter 16. For Israel these are millennial conditions, and they will not be realised until the new covenant is consummated. But, as we have seen, they have a present spiritual application.

The people were to be gathered — men, women, children, and not excluding "thy stranger that is within thy gates" — every seven years at the crown of the festive year, for the purpose of having the law read in their ears, "that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear Jehovah your God, and take heed to do all the words of this law; and that their children who do not know it may

hear it and learn, that they may fear Jehovah your God as long as ye live in the land" (verses 12, 13). This is the last reference in the book to "the place" where Jehovah would set His Name, and it is a wholesome, and not unnecessary, reminder that assembly conditions are not complete apart from a place being given to what answers to the reading of the "law". God would have the feasts to be celebrated, and all other things which are mentioned in this book as to be done at the place where He causes His Name to dwell, but He would also retain a great place in His assembly for the continued communication of His mind in regard to His saints, viewed as in the land. He would give a great place to His word, and to priestly ministry of that word. We may think, perhaps, that praise and worship are more important than having the mind of God communicated to us, but it is not so. There is, indeed, no higher or more glorious feature of God's assembly than that He there makes known the pleasure of His love, and His mind in regard to all that constitutes His glory in that assembly. And even if some feel able to do without this, and to fill up all the time with praise, it is well to remember that there are always in God's assembly those who answer to "the children who do not know".

Verse 14 contains the only mention of "the tent of meeting" which is found in this book, and it is also to be noted as the last occasion on which "Jehovah appeared at the tent in the pillar of cloud". There is peculiar solemnity in this, for He was there to declare how utterly His people would depart from Him, so that His anger would be kindled against them, and He would forsake them and entirely hide His face from them! In view of this He provided a twofold witness for Himself against them in a song and in the book of the law. The "song" corresponds with those parts of the New Testament which plainly declare what the future of the Christian profession would be, as, for example, 2 Timothy, 2 Peter, Jude. The "book" of the law is the will, or pleasure, of God concerning His people in its entirety. In the "song" God anticipates the complete failure of His people to answer to the "book"; He sets out the solemn consequences of that failure; but at the same time He shews that He will not abandon His thoughts, and that He will ultimately secure them in His greatness and immutable faithfulness, on the ground of atonement. The dominant note of the "song" is divine faithfulness, and it ends in divine triumph. It fully exposes the terrible departure, but it leaves the impression that God is great, and that He will ultimately have His way. It is wonderful to think of God taking account beforehand of His people's failure, testifying solemnly against it, and yet giving that testimony the character of a "song!"

Both as to the "book" and the "song" Moses wrote and spoke the words "until their conclusion" (verses 24, 30). The "book" refers to the completeness of the way in which God has made known His pleasure concerning His people. He

has reached the "conclusion" of all that He has to say; there is nothing more to come out. Paul could speak of the ministry of the assembly, which he had according to the dispensation of God, as being given "to complete the word of God" (Colossians 1: 25). One feels that it is a serious thing to be living in a day when the word of God has been completed. It is extreme favour, but it is a grave responsibility. We are in a time of finality as regards the definite and permanent communication of God's mind which *writing* signifies. The book of Revelation is rightly put last in our Bibles, for it is morally the "conclusion" of what God would have put on record. Hence it ends with a solemn warning against adding to the things written.

Then the "song", while fully declaring the evil course of God's people in departing from Him, shews how He will secure them for blessing according to His own thoughts in the end. He will not stop short of a "conclusion", as regards the state and blessing of His people, which will fully correspond with His complete pleasure as set forth in the "book". A "conclusion" will be reached which will be in every way satisfactory to God, and He will reach it by Christ. The book of the law being put at the side of the ark of the covenant, while being a witness against the people, intimated that Christ was God's Resource for the effectuation of it all.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 31 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 31

There is much encouragement and comfort that the exhortation and charge to Joshua is given in the same time as the prophetic song which announces the failure of the people. Our present work and duty, whatever it may be in the Church, hangs from the charge, and is sustained by it, whatever we may know of the results as regards man's unfaithfulness. Note this well.

— 25 - 30, compare Acts 20:17, 29, and following verses. The analogy is very remarkable.

THE TESTIMONY PASSED ON IN FRESHNESS (JT 29)

Deuteronomy 31:14 - 30; Deuteronomy 32:1-4; ; Deuteronomy 32:44

It is said in Ecclesiastes 1:4 that "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever". I have in mind that there is that which is of God on the earth, and that it is to be maintained and passed on from the generation that is passing away to the one coming. I have selected this passage in Deuteronomy because to my mind it fits in with these thoughts exactly, that is, we have Moses as representing a generation — one marked by extraordinary events. Moses may be taken, indeed, as representative of those who are faithful in the maintenance of what God intends to continue, and we see the continuance in freshness in him.

Earlier, we have in Jacob a generation in connection with which also there were extraordinary events. He, too, passes away in freshness and energy. He, like Moses, passes on unimpaired to the coming generation what he held and treasured. You will recall how he strengthened himself upon his bed and conveyed to his sons the mind of God; in a most striking manner he was able to pass on unimpaired what he had maintained and cherished to those who followed.

So in a later day we have David, another great servant, representing a generation in which there were great events in the unfolding of God's mind in testimony. According to Chronicles he passes away in vigour. It is true that in 1 Kings he is seen as weak and heatless, needing external warmth to keep him alive; but in 1 Chronicles we have a different David — as if God would maintain this great principle — for we read there that he stood up upon his feet.

Doubtless he had learned to do that early. Many of us do not begin thus. You will all recall how the man in Acts 3 who had been lame from his birth stood up; he had never experienced such a thing, he had never in his life stood up upon his feet. Peter takes him by his right hand — for God would use every opportunity, every advantage, to help him — and in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazaraean bids him rise up and walk, and immediately his feet and ankle *bones* were made strong. Without these being made strong he could never have stood on his feet; but as he leaped up, in the consciousness of power in himself which was to be realised in a fuller way later — in the consciousness of *that*, he stood on his feet.

I would say, beloved young people, that apart from that experience, that is, the power of balance spiritually, you can never hope to be material for the

assembly. Unless that is learned at the outset, that is, how to balance, in other words, the power to stand up, we shall never be material for the assembly, we shall be a public charge; we shall be leaning on others. We all know how infants need help in learning to stand and walk, but this man at the very outset of his spiritual experience stood. He was not to lean on others, he was to be an asset among the saints, and so he enters with the apostles into the temple, and he walked and leaped and praised God; and he *held* Peter and John; he held them, they did not need to hold or support him.

Now, obviously, in the passage referred to, David had acquired this power and carried it through; he had learned early to stand upon his own feet. You may be sure that he needed that ability, that balance in his conflict in his youth, when he met the lion and the bear. He had had, too, to stand up against the rebuffs of his elder brethren in the presence of Goliath's challenge. One who had not learned to stand upon his feet would have withered under such a rebuke from his eldest brother — one of Saul's army, but he says, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" (1 Samuel 17:29). There was a cause — a great cause. The sequel shows what it was, and how fitted and equipped he was for it. What would he have been in the presence of Goliath had he not gone through this experience in his younger days? And so in his old age it is recorded in 1 Chronicles 28:2 — as if the Holy Spirit would give us a picture of the vessel according to the mind of God — that he stood up upon his feet and uttered most wonderful things. He spoke of headship — something that we all need to learn and very few understand. But before David passes away, what was illustrated in his ministry in the ordering of the service of God, for he himself was head, he attributes to God: "Thou art exalted as head above all!" (1 Chronicles 29:11) he says to Jehovah. That is the end of spiritual development and growth; a blessed end! It was not with him as it was with Nebuchadnezzar, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?" (Daniel 4:30). He says, "all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee", "all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own", (1 Chronicles 29:14,16). He stood upon his feet before he passed away to make one of the most remarkable utterances on record. The Holy Spirit tells us of it, and that his history, his acts first and last, were written by Samuel, by Nathan and by Gad, men of extraordinary spirituality and intelligence, as if to emphasise the principle of passing on what is of God.

Now Moses stands out strikingly amongst all these great vessels. He had arrived at the age of a hundred and twenty, or nearly so; but he is to die, as Simeon later was to die, according to the word of God; (Luke 2:26,29). It is a very great thing to live by the word of God, but to die by it, and that God

should mark the period of one's decease, is a great honour. And so here Jehovah Himself summons Moses and tells him that he is about to die, and that he and Joshua are to appear *in the tabernacle of the congregation*.

Now this is a most remarkable occurrence; it is full of instruction in regard to the epochs making up the history of the dispensation, in regard to the passing of active service and leadership from one set of hands into another. I wish to call attention to what took place in the tabernacle of the congregation in this connection, a connection that perhaps has not been much observed, but one of immense importance. As set up and anointed, the tabernacle is the great central figure in the history of God's people. In the book of Leviticus God *calls* out of it; this underlies the epistle to the Corinthians; it is a question of *calling*; the saints are "called saints" — the divine call issuing forth from that which God has set up here and anointed, and so believers were gathered in.

In Numbers it is God *speaking in the wilderness*, that is to say, it is God taking account of us in our circumstances in a scene of adversity and trial. Let no one assume that God is at all indifferent to our position in the wilderness; it is Numbers that gives us the different encampments; they were written down by Moses by the commandment of the Lord (Numbers 33:2) to remind every christian that his particular wilderness circumstances are taken account of. God knows them and He is with you in them normally; so that Numbers is the speaking in the wilderness but out of the tabernacle; the emphasis is on the fact that we are in the wilderness, that God knows it, and that God speaks in it: "The Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai". Now that is Numbers; and so, in every movement of the people, God is there. In fact, in chapter 10 in their first movement from one camp to another, the ark left its own place and went before them — a most touching allusion to the service of the Lord at the present time. Normally He is entitled to the most honoured place amongst us, and every attention, but He leaves that and takes the most menial and arduous and exposed position in order to find a resting-place for us. Such is divine love in the wilderness! It is God in His love moving with us in all our movements, and taking up the most arduous tasks for us. We can reckon on that. There was not a word said about the ark doing that in the directions for the journeyings of the camp, but as the people moved the ark left its place in the very centre of the camp and went before — exposed itself, so to speak, to find a resting-place.

But in Deuteronomy there is very little said about the tabernacle of witness or of the congregation, because it is a question of spiritual formation in this book. There can be no passing on of the testimony *merely* as a question of light. Deuteronomy is the period in which the Spirit is operating typically. He has

come in; He comes in after the brazen serpent. It contemplates, therefore, development, spiritual development in the saints. Without this the testimony must die out, the light must disappear. We may have our Bibles, and there are creeds and catechisms, but the testimony is not in these; and precious as the holy Scriptures are, even they do not convey in themselves the full divine thought. Without spiritual activities, spiritual formation, spiritual growth, the testimony must die. So that Deuteronomy is not a question of light, of what is objective, that is to say, the tabernacle, but of the subjective work of the Spirit, and all this is fully expressed in the great mediator, in the great figure of Moses; so that it is the words of Moses. And then we are given the geographical position in which these words were uttered; (chapter 29:1). Wonderful words! In chapter after chapter he urges motives for the people to love God. In a most skilful manner he urges upon them that they should love God; that God has loved them, and at the end he says, "Yea, he loved the people!" (Deuteronomy 33:3). God loved them, and that love was to be in the people's hearts. So there were two covenants in Deuteronomy. We have one made in Moab besides the covenant that was given earlier at Horeb. You can understand how these two covenants, the first and the second, were intended to enforce the love of God, to bring it home to the people so that it should be in their hearts. It is not simply the love of God objectively, wonderful as that is, but it is the love of God in our hearts, "shed abroad in our hearts", as it says in Romans 5:5, "by the Holy Spirit which has been given unto us".

Now in the light of these things Moses is to die; and God summons him and Joshua to the tabernacle. If leadership is to pass on from Moses to Joshua, it is to pass on under the most advantageous circumstances; it is God's doing and no transmission can be valid, or effective, or abiding save as it is done by God. Many may essay to be leader, as Adonijah said, "I will be king" (1 Kings 1:5), and many, like him, have taken things into their own hands, but it is God's disposition, and everything in the divine service and administration must be a question of divine disposition and that disposition is in the tabernacle; it is in relation to the whole system of things that God has set up in Christ; it is no local matter. The tabernacle does not denote what is local, it is universal, it represents the whole system that God has set up in Christ, and that stands, "The foundation of God" (2 Timothy 2:19) stands; nothing can touch it, and all His dispositions are in that relation; they are general, so that God summons Moses and Joshua to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. God does it.

Now the history of Joshua presents to us a most interesting subject, but I cannot dwell upon that now; but it ought to be studied by every young brother and sister. He was known to Moses, he was Moses' minister; at times he was

much behind his master, but his history in the main indicates spirituality. I do urge on young people the importance of spirituality — the importance of light, to be sure. But if you take a man like John the baptist, he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his infancy, but the intent was that he was to be spiritual from the outset, and before he had light; his spirituality preceded his intelligence. Intelligence without spirituality is a dangerous instrument. He was filled with the Spirit, we are told, from his infancy; there was the development of spiritual instincts with him. And then he was in the deserts — mark you, it is in the plural — where there is nothing for the flesh. How he would learn to keep his body under lest when he had preached to others he himself should be a castaway! (1 Corinthians 9:27). It is a question of the ability to keep the body under, that is to say, its natural desires and propensities by the Spirit; by the Spirit we are to put to death the deeds of the body, otherwise we are sure to be cast aside. And so John was carefully guarded, first by the giving of the Holy Spirit in his infancy and throughout, and then he was in the deserts until the day of his showing unto Israel (Luke 1:80), that is to say, God saw to it that this great vessel should be spiritual. By constant self-judgment we are to make room for the Spirit. Above all things be spiritual, that is to say, make use of the Spirit by self-judgment; the intelligence will come; there must be intelligence, and the Lord gives understanding; but as we see in Timothy the instincts of faith were there, and intelligence followed; hence his service. And so with Joshua.

The first great exploit of Joshua is in the battle against the Amalekites. Now, this is all for young people — it is a young people's battle particularly. Although God would unfurl the standard, and said that He would carry on that conflict from generation to generation, yet it had to be begun then. The things written were to be rehearsed in the ears of Joshua that God would utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens. Amalek is a question of the power of Satan in the flesh, that is the issue there, and Joshua, on the principle of prayer and dependence and intercession on high, overcame — an immense beginning for a man who was to lead Israel into the land of Canaan. He began by overcoming, typically, Satan working in the flesh, and then he accompanied Moses on high, and when Israel went wrong he remained in the tabernacle. The tabernacle having been pitched outside the camp, the place of reproach, he was not ashamed of it and remained in it as a young man. We read that Joshua departed not out of the tabernacle. You see the education of the young man, what spiritual education he had. And yet, notwithstanding all this, in Numbers 27 when Moses is told he is going to die, he beseeches Jehovah to appoint a man over Israel who should lead them out and bring them in, that they should not be as sheep that have no shepherd; he does not

mention Joshua. He does not venture to propose his successor; there is no such thing in Scripture as apostolic succession. The great prototype apostle, Moses, refrained from it. He asks Jehovah to appoint a man; and yet he knew that here was an eligible man whom he knew well, but he did not dare to appoint him until Jehovah spoke. It shuts out all personal predilections and preferences. It is God's doing and God's preference. You may say, I like this brother here and that brother there, but it is God's doing; it is God's province to dispose of His servants. "Separate me now", the Spirit says, "Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them". (Acts 13:2). It is a question of the Spirit. I might like this brother here, and that brother there, but what about the Holy Spirit? Is He remiss, is He neglectful? Perish the thought! He is down here, another Comforter, to look after things here, and He is ever active.

And so Moses refrains, and appeals to Jehovah, and Jehovah says, "Take thee Joshua the son of Nun". And what is the commendation? "A man in whom is the Spirit", not a man who can answer the great questions of the moment. In the handling of the testimony of God the Spirit must have His place, and so now here in view of all this God summons the great servant that is about to die and the younger one who was about to take his place, and they are both to appear in the tabernacle of the congregation, the tent of meeting — that is to say, where God is, where God meets with His people — and then the glory, the pillar of cloud, comes down over the door of the tabernacle where God indicates His mind. The door is the place of decision, the place in which God indicates His mind.

Think of the glory coming down in connection with the passing of the testimony from the hands of one generation into that of another; out of the hands of one servant into the hands of another! It is a question of the tabernacle of the congregation and refers to the whole divine system; the whole divine system is as it were involved in this; it is no local matter. Think of how important these matters are, and of having to do with them! It refers to the divine, universal system. Think of God who made the heavens and the earth, and who upholds all things, being occupied with this matter — the passing of the testimony from one servant to another, and when He came down the glory appeared at the door.

Well, Joshua is to receive a charge, but he and Moses are to serve together in a song. You say, You are making room for poets! That is not what is in view here. This song is more than poetry, it is more than rhymes — much more. Rhyming is a matter of words; poetry as ordinarily understood is a matter of skill in the placing of words, the substance may be a mere nothing; it may be a couch, or a house, a lake or a river, or even a tree. What spiritual substance

is there in these things? Not any, but here we are dealing with substance in this song. Hundreds and hundreds of years later we read of "the song of Moses"; there is substance in *it*. But what I want to point out is this, that Joshua is allied in this peculiar service with Moses, to show how beautifully the old servant and the young one were merged in perfect harmony; there were no cross purposes. You cannot have cross purposes if you are going to write a spiritual song together; you must be one. Moses wrote the song, but Joshua had to do with it. It was attributed to Moses, to his freshness, to his spiritual faculties, to his intelligence, and it is attributed to Joshua that he was equal to join in this great service with Moses. He joined with Moses in speaking this song in the ears of the people. He will have something of his own, something distinctive from the Lord in time, but for the moment Moses is leading, and Joshua is joining with him, and you have a song, a standing testimony issuing forth at this juncture; it is something that will be retained in the heart and in the mind. We see thus how the testimony goes forward; it is what is in the saints in a spiritual sense issuing forth at this juncture, and it is to remain with them for ever.

I wonder what you understand by this, by the song issuing forth from Moses and Joshua as recorded here. It is put in the mouths of the people, to be retained in the heart, something to be remembered, something to remind us in a positive way of Moses, and on the other hand it is a song well worthy of close attention, a constant rebuke, as its terms plainly show, to the flesh in ourselves!

It begins, "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew". It was not with Moses a question of his years. What a man he was! What freshness marked him! If you sat down by Moses, how much he could have told you, not of what happened in Pharaoh's house, for he would never tell you about that except to humble himself by it. There are those who live in the past and like to recite things that happened — early reminiscences. These things may be interesting to some, but they do not feed the soul. What does Moses say at the age of a hundred and twenty? As we read, "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak". He speaks of rain, dew, etc. What an old brother he was, as we speak! How refreshing! How he retained his freshness! These first four verses stand out as a tribute to Moses. How pious souls in Israel afterwards would cherish them and envy such a state in advanced old age! With what glory this great man departs! And then Joshua had part in it. He needed spiritual development and he was not now a youth, but a man of such experience as enabled him in a comely way to have part in this service

with the great mediator, Moses, for he had part in the delivering of this song to Israel.

Now, beloved, that is what I had before me in referring to this song — that there might be at this juncture the passing on of things in a positive way to the coming generation. We see them coming and Joshua is a great model here, so that the coming generation and the one passing away join together in a song, in presenting what is positive and what is to remain in the hearts and in the mouths of the people of God. The law, on the other hand, as written and completed, as we are told here, was to be placed at the side of the ark by the priests who carried the ark. There was a book, not simply ten words, and those who carried the ark actively were to deposit it at the side of the ark, and there it is. That is the objective thing contained in the law in relation to the tabernacle, but the song was to be in everybody's mouth, to be kept in the hearts and in the mouths of the people of God.

ELDER BRETHREN AS SPIRITUAL EXAMPLES (JT 84)

1 John 2: 13 (first clause); Genesis 24: 1 - 9; Genesis 48: 12 - 14; Deuteronomy 31:14,15; Deuteronomy 31:19; Deuteronomy 31:30; Deuteronomy 32: 1, 2; 1 Chronicles 29: 20

What is in mind in reading these scriptures, dear brethren, is to speak about the elder brethren. In almost every meeting of this kind a special appeal is made to the younger saints, and God is honouring these appeals, but the burden tonight is the elder brethren. It was in John's mind, as you will observe, in this verse. The younger were in his mind, too, the children and the young men; but the fathers were in his mind, and he says, "I write to you, fathers", and then, "I have written to you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning". He was a father himself, he was an apostle, but he had acquired, through exercise and affection in caring for the saints, the status of a father, so much so that he addresses the saints in the beginning of this chapter as his children. That is to say, children characteristically, not merely little ones, those of a family. He had evidently lived, as we say, to a ripe age; but fatherhood is not founded on years alone, it is founded on experience with God in the care of the saints in a parental way, so that the status of a father develops and is owned. Now, in calling attention to John in this way and to the fact that, as is generally understood, he lived to be old in the service of God and was owned and could take the place of a father in writing to the saints and in ministering to them, I would say that the thought of fatherhood is not necessarily a question of old age as regards years, for some become old quicker than others, and Paul alludes to himself in writing the beautiful letter to Philemon as "being such a one as Paul the aged". He could not have alluded to himself as particularly old from the standpoint of mere years, the facts that we have as to him would indicate that he did not live to be a very old man, for apparently he suffered martyrdom comparatively early. I have no doubt he was as young at the time of his martyrdom as many of us here. David too was regarded as an old man at seventy, and there are many of us here that age. Again, Solomon is alluded to as having become old when, from the facts we have, he could not have been more than sixty, and there are still more of us here of that age. Indeed, oldness relatively may begin even earlier than sixty, and certainly we may take on the character or characteristics of a father before we reach that age. So that what I have to say will directly apply to a goodly number of persons, and will, I hope, have instruction in it for all. For, whilst John addresses the saints in a graded way, little children, young men, and fathers, he also addresses them all in the same passage, not in three epistles but in one. So that what he

said to each grade would be of profit to all, for surely a young person, a young believer, would have certain aspirations come up in his heart as he hears these words of the apostle, "I write to you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning". Would not the youngest normally aspire to this? It is set before us — to know Him that is from the beginning; that is, Jesus from the outset, whether it be His birth or His testimony here. No believer normally would settle down to know just enough to get through, as we say. Normally a believer who loves Christ would aspire to know all about Him, and what a prospect, may I say to the young, lies before you, to know all that may be known about Jesus, about Him that is from the beginning.

Well now, I proceed to the Old Testament, having in mind Paul as the characteristic old person in christianity, that is, "being such a one", as he says, "as Paul the aged". I suppose, whilst he was not egotistical in the remotest degree, the Spirit had in mind that he was most distinguished, if not entirely unique, "being such a one as Paul the aged". That is to say, one who had gone through so much; for the Lord had said of him earlier, He is "an elect vessel to me ... *I* will shew to him how much he must suffer for my name" (Acts 9: 15, 16). What a history prospectively lay stretched out from the Lord's point of view, what this elect vessel should be, what he should suffer! He says, "*I* will shew to him how much he must suffer". It became God "in bringing many sons to glory, to make perfect the leader of their salvation through sufferings" (Hebrews 2: 10), and this thought would apply in the Lord's mind to this potentially great servant, that he should suffer. That was the great thought initially in the Lord's mind that he should suffer, a thought that is not much relished by us, but yet, beloved brethren, it must be accepted. If God is bringing us as sons to glory, surely we should aspire to have some part in the sufferings, for our Leader is made perfect through sufferings. It is not that there was any want, anything lacking, in Christ at any time; all was perfectly normal in Him at every stage of His holy life, but perfection through suffering alludes to what was needed, in the mind of God, for us, a standard for us. It was needed for Christ to reach where He is on that line — it became God. "It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things". Think of what He had in mind, dear brethren, what He intends us to be as before Him, as in relation to our great Leader; He intends us to have part in the sufferings. You may say, 'It becomes us', but it became God; it was necessary from His point of view that the Leader of our salvation should be made perfect through sufferings, and He intends to have us before Him in accord with that Person, with that holy Sufferer now glorified. As seeing Him there, we shall understand how essential the sufferings were, so that He should be there answering to the counsels of God as our Leader. And so, as I said, I take Paul (I believe rightly)

to be the characteristic aged person in christianity, such a one as he. I proceed to the Old Testament to show how the features that are proper to old brothers and sisters shone in Old Testament times as types, and more than types, for in some sense there was substance in all these persons, Abraham, Jacob, Moses and David. They tower above all others, I may say, in this sense, and the Spirit of God gives us their ends so that we might see and learn what is expected from us as advancing in years, how we finish in setting out or maintaining the mind of God in some particular feature. It may be the feature that has been especially set out in our little service, for the idea of the libation, the drink offering, should certainly come in at the end, to be poured out, as the apostle says, "as a libation on the sacrifice and ministration of your faith" (Philippians 2: 17).

Now in Abraham we have one imbued with heavenly thoughts as he is finishing, and how essential it is that in passing off the sphere of testimony to be with Christ, or as finishing up the dispensation if He come soon, we should be imbued with heavenly thoughts. That, as the apostle says, we should apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Christ Jesus (Philippians 3: 12), that we should obtain the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus. How important it is that we elder ones should be full of these heavenly thoughts, thoughts indeed that are proper to us, that belong to our place, our commonwealth which is in the heavens, as we are told, and that our backs are really to the world and to the earth,

even, as we say, in a good sense, that we have left all, that we have learnt the gospel of place, the salvation from place by the laying hold of the heavenly position. Now that is what comes out in Abraham. He is an old man, but he is very definite as to what is in his mind; that is another great feature, to be definite as to what is particularly in one's mind. And he is thinking of his son; he is thinking of Christ in type. He is thinking of the assembly in type, and he is determined that there shall be no admixture allowed, that there shall be nothing unsuitable allowed in this proposal; that is to say, the bride must be of the family of Abraham. I need not enlarge on that, it is well known amongst us, I trust; Isaac must not be taken out of the land; he must remain in the land. It is no question, dear brethren, of Christ coming out of heaven corporeally. It is a question of how we regard Him, and what we connect Him with, whether we have come to it to connect Him only with His own place, with the place to which He is indigenous, that He is of heaven, that He belongs to heaven, and that He is to be there eternally in fulfilment of the purpose of God, and that He is to have the assembly there. It is a question, as I said, of our thoughts, what is in our minds as to Him, what is in our ministry as to Him and what is in our minds as to the assembly. Abraham is most

definite that Isaac must not be taken out of the land, he is to stay in it, and that the bride must be brought to him there, that she must be of his kindred, and that she is to follow. And he is so definite about it that he requires the eldest servant of his house to swear that there shall be no deviation from these great and holy thoughts that possess his mind as he is about to die.

Now I go on to Jacob (I pass by Isaac — there are many that one could touch on as bringing out salient features of the fathers). Genesis is the patriarchal book, the book of the fathers, and Jacob comes out at the end as imbued also with great thoughts. I wish, dear brethren, that we might dwell on this a little, so as to be full of these things ourselves. Jacob stands out here as occupied with the sovereignty of God, that that must go through, that there must be no allowance of the slightest thought or shade of a thought in anything that we say or are, or in what we minister, to interfere with the sovereign selection of God. It gives great steadiness of mind to the saint when the principle of selection enters into it, the principle of exclusion and of selection. It gives great steadiness of mind to understand that God has His number; His counsels require a certain number, and they are all known to Him and He will have them and, 'As far as I am concerned', you say, 'He will have them. As far as my influence goes, as far as my words go, as far as my service goes, God's thoughts shall not be thwarted in the least degree. I will work with Him, and see to it that those He has in His counsels are to be brought in'. As the apostle says, that the elect "may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Timothy 2: 10) — the elect. He laboured and suffered reproach because of this; he had it in his mind that there were a certain number that God has set His heart upon, and that these must be secured; there must not be the slightest discrepancy between the number secured and the number desired in counsel. Now that was what Jacob had in his mind. I do not say he understood, I am only speaking of what the Spirit of God, who understood, has set down for us; for all the Scriptures are for us. They all awaited a people who had the Spirit indwelling them on the ground of redemption, who would be thus capacitated to understand these things. So that Jacob, though blind (he was in a normal old-age condition and did not ignore it; he could not do so — he was blind) was imbued with the sovereign selection of God, that that must go through. The greatest man in Egypt under the king, Joseph, could not divert him from it. He says, "I know;" as much as to say, 'I know what I am doing, I am with God in what I am doing, and I am not going to be diverted'. It is the acceptance of the sovereignty of God that gives great restfulness, the sense that I am with God in His workings and I know what He has in mind will go through and I am going to be with Him in it and not allow anything to interfere. Then another thing about Jacob is he tells

his sons the truth. "Gather yourselves together, and I will tell you what will befall you at the end of days. Assemble yourselves, and hear, ye sons of Jacob, And listen to Israel your father". A great matter in ministry and in our conversation is that the truth should be told out, whatever feelings may be aroused by it. Whatever Reuben is, whatever Levi is, whatever Simeon is, let us hear it, let it be known. Think of what Levi came to afterwards. Did it do him any harm to be told that he had to do with murder? No, beloved brethren, he had to come to that. Whatever has happened in our lives, we have to recognise it if we are to come into the purpose of God, to the sovereign selection of God, consciously in our souls; we have to come to accept everything, there is to be nothing unsettled, and the quicker we have things settled the better for us if we are to enter into these things. So he goes over the tribes and tells them everything, the good and the bad, there is nothing withheld. See what a man he was in his old age, dear brethren, what an example for us to carry on and tell the saints the truth, so that there might be a true estimate in each of us of ourselves as before God, and that everything should be settled, whether secret or public, that nothing should be unsettled, that everything is to be adjusted before God according to God. There is the means for it. John's epistle, with other scriptures, show us the great provision that is made for us so that things should be settled, that nothing should be left unsettled in our histories. Now that, in brief, is what I see in this patriarch, Jacob, as he is about to pass away through death. He knows it, he is not overwhelmed by the thought, he is victorious and he is full of the thought of the sovereignty of God and of the purpose of God in the tribes; so that, whilst he tells them the truth, it says he blessed them. He blessed all the tribes, even Dan, in spite of the things he has to say about them. You see what an example this is, dear brethren, for those of us who are getting on in years, that we may set out to the younger ones the reality of christianity, what it is, and how substantial it is, and how years do not interfere with it as faith is active in our souls. Years indeed only add to it; we become more mature and more appreciative of what is in Christ.

Now I come to Moses and drop from the patriarchal platform to the ministerial platform. Genesis is properly the patriarchal platform. Although David is called a patriarch and the heads of the twelve tribes are called patriarchs, yet the patriarchal book properly is Genesis, and those of us who are older do well to feed in that pasture in the light of the New Testament. Now when we come to Moses, as I said, it is a question of the ministers, those who are engaged through gift or other qualifications from Christ in heaven to serve. As advancing in years, what are our characteristics? Moses stands out as entirely unjealous in regard of the younger brethren. He says to Jehovah, "Set a man

over the assembly" (Numbers 27: 16). That was a fine sentiment; he never thought of nominating anyone, he left that with God. It must be so; nominations must come from God, promotions must come from God. How one loves to see a brother standing up in the assembly in ministry and to have the consciousness that God is promoting that man in that very instant. I have seen that. God is doing it; the assembly is His sphere and He knows how to promote the young men. I have no doubt that Moses had watched Joshua; he was his servant, his companion, but he does not nominate him. It is an entire mistake for any brother or brethren to press forward anyone to be a leader amongst the people of God; that is the province of God, that is His prerogative — I mean through Christ. So Moses wished that there should be such a one, a suitable leader, in view of his own death, for he was about to die when he said that. And Jehovah says, "Take Joshua ... a man in whom is the Spirit" (Numbers 27: 18). How Moses would understand; he needed no enlarged explanation of what that meant. He does not stop to ask Jehovah to tell him how he might know that Joshua had the Spirit. Jehovah says, 'He has the Spirit'. There can be no qualification for ministry apart from having the Spirit. The great Minister, Christ, had the Spirit: what He did He did by the Spirit here in His service. He is an example for us. Well now, in Deuteronomy 31 Jehovah requires that Moses and Joshua are to appear before Him at the tabernacle door. I dwell on this to show how this great servant in his closing moments took on the divine thought; and I can picture him standing there with this young brother. What a beautiful scene that was! The photographers of today try to get such pictures, but that is nothing at all. What they photograph is not what is going on at that moment, the radiation of affection and respect from the older to the younger. What a beautiful scene that was, and Jehovah comes down. How delightful it was to Him to see that old brother and that young brother stand side by side before Him. Jehovah is going to give a charge to Joshua, but He respects His old servant, He puts him there and says,

'Now you write a song'. He says, "Write ye this song", as if Joshua is brought into it; and I have no doubt Moses would readily share honours with his young brother in the song. The more we are with God, the more we know Christ, the more liberal we are in sharing honours with our younger brethren. We have got enough and to spare, beloved brethren, if we are with God. Moses had enough and to spare of honour; think of the honour that God had put upon him. But it was Moses who wrote the song, and what an example we have there in this old servant, ready, as he is about to die, to write a song to order. It is God that requires it; Moses is ready for it, he does it at once, that very day, it says, he did it. We could hardly understand, but that is the minister, advanced in years, yet we are told "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force

abated". He is going to die, and he writes this song and he rehearses it in the ears of Israel as if he did it himself. How lovely it would be to listen, with the light we have now of that great servant, to that rehearsal, what he had just composed, what had come fresh through him, as we may say, by the Spirit of God, and to hear him rehearse it in the ears of Israel, and how fresh he was, 'My speech', he says, 'is like the small rain, like the dew'. Think of the beautiful tones as he rehearsed in the ears of the people he loved, the thoughts of God, what God was, first of all, and then, alas, what they were. How faithful is that song, just as faithful as were Jacob's words to his sons.

Now, dear brethren, another thought that comes in in regard to Moses is the dying at the will of God. I have no doubt these facts are written down so that those of us who are advanced in years and who are looking into the face of eventualities might be helped. These things are to steady and fortify us and to enable us to go forward unflinchingly and to maintain vigour and freshness and youthfulness to the end by the will of God. That man's death was on the divine calendar — he dies according to that. How precious that is, dear brethren, that the life and the death of the saint is according to the will of God. And then how careful God is as to him after he dies, that he is buried by Him. I do not think there is much difference between Jehovah's burial of Moses and the burial of an honoured servant of God today. I know full well what our thoughts are. What a thing it was for Jehovah to bury him! We do not know what the instrumentalities used were, but could any instrumentality be greater than honoured saints, spiritual persons, laying carefully and reverently aside, as in the field of Ephron the Hittite, an honoured servant? Has God no hand in that? He certainly has a hand in that; that field is sown with wonderful seed which presently is to be manifested, "The first-fruits, Christ; then those that are the Christ's at his coming" (1 Corinthians 15: 23). Is not that equal to the burial of Moses? I am not detracting from the honour of that. No one ever had such a burial. But it says of Stephen that "devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him". Was not that a spiritual matter? It was. Was heaven not pleased with that? It was. And where Stephen lies is perfectly known to heaven, and he will come forth, with the rest of us, to stand with Christ at His coming for us.

Now I go on to David, to finish these great features as regards the old brethren. David represents many things, of course, and, as I said, he died young, as we speak; he was just seventy — we have his exact age. Chronicles gives us the David of God's mind, all else, as it were, eliminated for the moment. God is entitled to do that. We get the other side in 1 Kings; but God is entitled to give us the bright side of His children as they are about to die, the side that is in His mind, the side that fits into His counsels about them. Let

all else go, for it will go. And what you find about David in these wonderful chapters in the first book of Chronicles (from 22 to the end) is that he is thinking about the house of God. I believe David should be taken properly as representing headship, in that spiritual brethren as they grow older become more and more characterised by wisdom, by guidance for the saints, and the thought of God is that the whole trend of things for a man who understands headship is what the saints are to be in the service of God. So he sets up his son, young and tender, on the throne before he dies. Beautiful tribute to his unjealousness, and his wisdom too! His son was always an object of affection to himself and his mother and to Jehovah. What a young man he was, and how it enhanced and glorified the throne of David that Solomon was set up by himself! Now we have the doorkeepers, the porters, the singers, the priests, the Levites, and so on, all in order. David makes the most of everybody. He increases the Levites by reducing their age, and that is what the Lord is doing today, I believe, increasing the number of worshippers by appealing to the young and presenting to them the great truth of sonship as presented in the Lord Jesus. God is aiming at attracting the young, at increasing the worshippers by attracting them into this great thought of sonship. It is a question of consideration, of care, and that is what comes out in David, so that we have the number twenty-four, meaning that he is carrying everything forward; he is not omitting the services of earlier days, he is bringing everything forward. Every dedicated thing too must be brought in; the young people are to understand that it is not simply what is being ministered today, but all the ministry from Pentecost onwards is to be understood amongst us. We are to understand all the ways of God in the assembly by the presence of the Spirit amongst us.

So David was an old man about to die. The Spirit of God dwells on him in this chapter, the times that went over him, but here is Solomon on the throne and everyone goes to Solomon, but now David says to the people, "Bless now Jehovah your God". Is it not an appeal to us that our whole concern now is worship? Worship is the thought in the verse I read. "David said to all the congregation, Bless now Jehovah your God. And all the congregation blessed Jehovah the God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and did homage to Jehovah and the king". They did it.

I will close with this remark. I believe that the presentation of Christ in sonship as it is being enlarged amongst us through one and another by the power of the Spirit is intended to create a worshipful spirit amongst us, and that the attitude and bearing and language of the older brethren who love God and who love Christ, the bearing of all, is worship, "Bless now Jehovah", "Praise God". Do it in the assembly. Understand the assembly; every whit in it says,

'Glory'. God has that down here even now in which His service is to be carried on in this way, and He is appealing to the young, and the elder ones amongst us are to appeal to the young, by example especially, and to say, "Bless the Lord;" and they "bowed down their heads", we are told, "and worshipped". May God lead us more and more, dear brethren, into this great thought of His service in view of the end, the service of God carried on in leadership and headship in spiritual power by old and young.

SPIRITUAL GREATNESS (JT 90)

Hebrews 11:24 - 26; Exodus 11:3; Numbers 12:3; Deuteronomy 31:30; Deuteronomy 32: 1 - 4

I was thinking, dear brethren, of spiritual greatness; greatness that develops on moral lines, which is seen, as I hope to show in these scriptures, in a man of like passions as ourselves. Of course, greatness in man (I am not now speaking of it as in God, although I hope to refer to that) must be seen in its perfection in Christ. It is as man He is our Leader and Model. So in Luke 1: 32 Gabriel says, "*He* shall be great". The "He" is emphatic; the idea of greatness in man was coming. Many aspired to it; indeed, every man naturally does aspire to it. So we have Alexander the Great, Napoleon the Great, etc. We find a man called Simon the Great, who found an entrée among the professed converts of Philip (Acts 8); a warning to all who serve in the field of the gospel.

We are reminded of the possibility of a man coming in and being numbered with the converts, and yet he was Simon the Great all the time. He was a man that advertised. Advertising is a common thing with us. We slip it in sometimes when we are speaking of our humility. Simon advertised *himself*, that he was a great one, and his greatness was recognised.

It was through magic art. A man is coming who will answer to him, skilled in magic, bringing fire down from heaven, that all may be brought to worship a man; a man who "sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God", 2 Thessalonians 2: 4.

I speak of Simon as one who slips in among the people of God and carries with him the personality that attached to him in his natural setting. Peter discerned that he was "in the bond of iniquity", and had "neither part nor lot in this matter" Acts 8:21, 23. He would be greater still if he could be, if possible, buying with money the power to give the Holy Spirit. Think of the assumption!

But, as I said, true greatness can be seen in its perfection in Christ only. So that Gabriel says to Mary, "*He* shall be great". Before He is born this is announced. In Himself He is great, but there is also what is conferred and acquired. First, God should give unto Him the throne of His father David. Caesar's and Napoleon's do not stand. We read in the book of Revelation that a throne *stood* in the heavens. This throne stands. It may appear to have gone under; no, beloved brethren, the throne of David exists in the King, the Son of David, and will soon appear as occupied by Him. That greatness would be awaited by faith. It is what He *would be* when Gabriel spoke; but when the

angel spoke to the shepherds (Luke 2) it is what He *is*: "To-day a Saviour has been born to you in David's city, who is Christ the Lord" Luke 2:11. It is a present thing now. As the prophet says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace" Isaiah 9: 6. Set that down alongside all human greatness from Nimrod down! All fades away, but greatness in Christ will never fade. "Father of Eternity", think of that expression; and it is predicated of a Man, of One born, as it says, "*unto us*". You can thus see how enriched the people of God are. He is the "Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of peace". So that there is the embodiment in Jesus of all human greatness — all divine greatness, too; I am not speaking of that just now. You get the light as to greatness focussed on Christ so that the people of God should turn away their eyes from men. It is remarkable that even among the people of God there should be heroes here and heroes there. It is humbling to note how easily we slip into the thought of a local hero, or a district hero, or even a national hero, among the brethren. So that the Spirit of God would direct our eyes to this glorious Personage in whom greatness is, and shall be for ever and for ever.

Having that clearly in our minds, I will seek to outline the idea in a man like ourselves, because, after all, greatness is intended to attach to the people of God. And I selected Moses because I believe the Holy Spirit has selected him to this very purpose, among many other things. There are several in Scripture of whom we have life-size pictures, particularly Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Peter, and Paul. They are given to us in this way, God intending to set out particular features in each. I am concerned tonight with the thought of greatness.

So I began with Hebrews 11, because it ascribes greatness to Moses at the age of forty (Hebrews 11:24), and what marked him then. He became greater still, beloved, as the records show. Stephen tells us "a period of forty years was fulfilled to him" Acts 7:23, as if God gave him those years. God never lost sight of that young man, He had already secured him, anchoring him safe in giving him such parents as he had. He was fair to Himself, "exceedingly lovely", says Stephen. Stephen gives us the fulness of things. He was "full of the Spirit", and divine things glow in the hands of a man who is spiritual. He says there was given to Moses forty years and these were fulfilled. These were eventful years; three months of them in his father's house hidden, then a while in the ark, as Stephen puts it, "cast out". Under God this was the salvation of the babe. As in the ark he is *weeping*. There never was a great man according to God who did not weep. It is recorded of Moses at the outset, evidently as significant, that he wept. He was found there by his

saviour, for the daughter of Pharaoh was no less a person for *the moment*, under God. She drew him out and he was brought back again to the bosom of his mother, and he grew *there*. That is what the Spirit of God says about him; the *man* was being *made*.

It is most interesting to see a man in the divine making, and that is why the lives of the men I mentioned are given in full. Moses *grew* in his mother's house; Exodus 2:10. There was no better soil for the growth of a future great personage in the service of God at that time than in the house of Moses' parents. Samuel grew in still better soil — the house of God. Samuel grew in the house of God, a great man, too; Moses grew in the house of his parents, and the Holy Spirit dwells on those parents in the Old and New Testaments. Then he was in the house of Pharaoh's daughter, and there he grew, but the first growth is the telling one. The first growth is the one that counts with God, so that it is when he became great; not simply when he grew to be forty, but in growing to be forty he grew to be great. How is that proved? He refused to be *called* the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Think of what that means, not simply to be in the relationship, but to be *called* the son of Pharaoh's daughter! That implied his *known* or *public* status. Society in Egypt in those days would not think much of such a movement of that notable young man of the court of Pharaoh. 'Court items' would not flatter him for that. But what about the notes in heaven? After all, it is the records in heaven that count, and Moses began definitely to make history in heaven as he came to that decision. You may be assured, dear young people here tonight, that heaven takes notice of you when you come to a decision like that. You are now assuredly great in heaven's reckoning. Hundreds of years after Moses' action the Holy Spirit comments on it. Accurate records are there, beloved, of the great ones of God. Moses had become great, and he became greater still as he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; "choosing rather to suffer affliction along with the people of God than to have the temporary pleasure of sin". That was the theme that heaven would be interested in, true greatness showing itself.

How one would seek to enrol young people in that, in *heavenly* greatness. But it means going down here, losing position, losing title, losing all as far as this world goes, but we become great according to God for time and eternity.

You may inquire how Moses esteemed "the reproach of the Christ". The Holy Spirit refers to the *Hebrew* that was being smitten by the Egyptian. He was one of Moses' *brethren*. 'Hebrew' signified, in that setting, the reproach of Christ, and Moses esteemed that as greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. He was not ignorant of these treasures, for recent discoveries show that they

must have been great. But Moses gave them up in identifying himself with that Hebrew. He was one of his brethren. Surely he is a great man at the age of forty!

He is to graduate further, and I want to come to the passage in Exodus 11 because it shows how this initial greatness develops. One has to go on, it is either going forward or going backward, and Moses went forward. His life is divided into three parts by the Spirit of God, and he shines in every part; he shines brightly in the last third of his life, yes, the last year, as I hope to show. But in Egypt, where he esteemed the reproach of Christ, his greatness was to shine. So that the "man Moses" (the Holy Spirit loves to dwell on the *man*) "was very great". You say, Among the Hebrews? No, it does not say that here. He acquired greatness among the Hebrews, but he acquired greatness among the Egyptians. In the place of his degradation he became "very great". Does that not speak a word to all of us in the service of God? We speak of the man who can preach well,

speak well, has a fund of knowledge, what can he not do and say? But what about the *man*? You see here it is not the mediator Moses that is said to be great, it is the *man* Moses. God is looking at the man. If God were interested in fine oratory He would listen to an angel. What God is looking for is what He cannot find in an angel; He finds it in a man; it is "good pleasure in *men*".

It is the man Moses, and God is very jealous about this man; He would have all possible pleasure out of him. And so as he is on his way back to Egypt, we are told that God sought to slay him in the inn. Why should that be? Circumcision was lacking, and in these circumstances an inn is a dangerous place. Travellers who stay in inns, in hotels, are greatly exposed. We may be careless there, behaving as ordinary guests; it is only for a night. But God is concerned about you *every* night. Where Israel lodged after crossing the Jordan the twelve stones out of its bed were there. God seeks to have us, but as in the acceptance of circumcision. God will not lose one moment of such a life. Think of what the life of Jesus was to God! God would not lose a moment of that life, one day of that life was as a thousand years to God. How full it was! And so, relatively, God will not be without any part of our lives, He wants all, even the day or night in an hotel. He will have it, and if He does not have it He will discipline us. It is not feigned. Moses discerned that things were not right and Zipporah had to come to it. He became a bloody husband to Zipporah. Circumcision was accepted in his house. God was making a man out of him. God would make men answering to His mind of us all; for there must be subjection and circumcision. God walks with us as circumcised; that is to say, the flesh is disallowed in the power of the Spirit of God. "For *we* are the

circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in flesh", Philippians 3:3.

As thus disciplined by God, Moses in due course, in the sphere of his degradation, became honoured. Where you have been dishonoured, whether in the workshop or office, God will honour you, and your greatness will shine. I never knew it to fail. If you accept reproach, God will honour you in the place of reproach. He will make you morally great, and the honour that *He* puts upon you cannot be supplied by this world; it is greatness according to God. So that the man Moses was very great in the eyes of Pharaoh's bondmen and in the eyes of the people.

Now I pass on to the passage I read in Numbers. It is a question of one's relations with one's brothers and sisters. Aaron and Miriam, envying Moses, say, "Has Jehovah indeed spoken only to Moses?" You can hear that piped out by Miriam in her jealousy of her brother. She was evidently older than Moses. In true service we are sure to be envied. If God has given us any little bit of work, it is as sure as possible that we shall be envied, and sometimes by persons from whom we might least expect it. What comes out is Moses' meekness, and that is true greatness. The Holy Spirit loves to dwell upon it. He says, "The man Moses was very meek, above all men that were upon the face of the earth". What a distinction! It is a foreshadowing of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" 2 Corinthians 10:1. You see how the greatness shone in the midst of rivalry, of jealousy, which is "cruel as the grave" Song of Songs 8:6. Who can stand before it? What a voice this has for us as in service! It is a meek man that can stand before it. Moses said nothing, but God said much. God is sure to defend meekness — it is great in His eyes. It is a trait of Christ, who was "meek and lowly in heart" Matthew 11:29. That is what Moses was in the midst of his brethren and in his service.

Deuteronomy is perhaps the least understood of Moses' books, but it is the book that testifies peculiarly to his greatness, and inasmuch as it gives us the close of his life, it is interesting from this point of view. And I wish to show how in his greatness he draws Joshua, who is to succeed him, to his side. God says to him, "Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge". How God honours Moses! Joshua gets his charge, not by himself, but in the shadow of Moses, in the presence of spiritual greatness. Jehovah says, "write ye this song" Deuteronomy 31:19. That is very interesting in view of present exercises in regard of the hymnbook. Here is an order for a song. I am very doubtful of anyone writing a hymn to order in the ordinary sense, but here is a song ordered by *God*. Human words have been likened to a counter.

But if I have not the thoughts, what good is the counter? "Not in wisdom of word" 1 Corinthians 1:17; it is a question of substance, and Moses had the substance. Moses, one hundred and nineteen years old, "wrote this song the same day"! Jehovah says, "write ye this song". It is to embody many thoughts, which were to be carried down by Israel. A poetic production is that which can be committed to memory and retained in the mind better than anything else, and God put down thoughts sorely needed by the people in this song. Joshua is connected with Moses as writing it, although, as far as Scripture tells us, Moses composed it. God would merge the greatness of the old with the young, so that the testimony should go on. The idea is not that one's greatness dies with him, it is in a sense to be carried down by the Spirit. God would merge the old and the young in a perfect blend that nothing should be lost. Moses writes this song, *finishing* it. One important trait in a workman is that he *finishes* a thing.

I wish now to show how the greatness of Moses shines as he is about to die. He has been told by God that he is about to die, he is going up to die. Notable honour! He is about to be buried by God too. So he calls the congregation together, officers and all, and spoke to them the words of this 'song'. He might have asked Joshua to read it, but he did not.

I wish you to note the opening verses of this song. "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain". Is this an old brother? He is old in years, but young in spirit and energy. He is full of sap, like the trees of the Lord: "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated" Deuteronomy 34:7. He is not going to die from old age. He is going to die in measure like the Lord Jesus — he is going to die by *the will of God*. In truth, that is the way of a believer's death. It is a matter of the will of God, whether we be old or young. We cannot go by age; it is a question of the will of God and many *young* people are taken away by the will of God. The Lord Himself says, in beautiful piety, "Take me not away in the midst of my days" (Psalm 102:24); but He accepted the Father's will. And Moses is dying by the will of God. He goes up to die and he is buried by God. A unique honour!

So, dear brethren, God would set before us the idea of spiritual greatness; it is strikingly expressed in the life of Moses, as one here for the will of God. Morally it is the greatest thing to be here entirely for the will of God; and thus to leave the scene of service by the will of God. So Moses is going by the will of God, and he is speaking now to the people in beautiful freshness, saying, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb". We see how he takes account of the young

in this, "the tender herb". It is one of the features of the ministry of which spirituality should never rob us, nor should intelligence ever rob us of ability to touch and help the youngest of God's heritage. The first shoots of life are taken notice of in "the small rain upon the tender herb". The Lord Jesus took *infants* in His arms.

I do commend to you the variety of refreshment coming from this great servant as about to fall asleep; the greatness of the man. There is here consideration for the *coming* generation, a feature which runs right through Scripture. The tender herb is to be cared for and nurtured. Moses says further, "Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God". There is the secret of it all. That is what I finish with. This great servant, whom God has made and cultured so that greatness shines in him up to his last moment, is now ascribing greatness *to God*. Where else can it reside or come from? Who on earth can give true greatness? No one. God is the source of all, and greatness can only come from Him. That is the secret of true greatness, our ascribing it to God instead of to ourselves.

And then he goes on to extol God: "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he". So that we are left with God. Greatness in man ascribes greatness to God, and not to himself. "We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus" Philippians 3:3. "He that boasts, let him boast in the Lord" 1 Corinthians 1:31.

In the last chapter of this book the Holy Spirit returns to the subject of greatness, and He tells us how Moses was honoured, how he was allowed to look into the land, and how there was nobody like him — no prophet arose like him. But in the midst of that the Holy Spirit tells us that Joshua was acquiring greatness, he was advancing in greatness. God's idea is that there should not be great gaps;

greatness in His servants is to go right on. We have come into a heritage of greatness, descending from God through Christ, and it is for us to live in it. Joshua was living in it, so that he carries the thing on. Moses having laid his hands on him, Joshua was "filled with the spirit of wisdom" Exodus 28:3. Moses had no thought of a gap between himself and Joshua. And so today, the Holy Spirit is here, and He brings forward whom He will; if Moses goes, Joshua is there, *already* great; the testimony is therefore maintained according to God in greatness that God can own. So that in Israel's entrance into the land "Jehovah magnified Joshua" in their eyes; "and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life", Joshua 4:14. The greatness that

God puts upon us is not only on our own account, but because of His testimony.

THE TABERNACLE SYSTEM (8) (JT 95)

Deuteronomy 31: 14, 15; Joshua 18: 1 - 7; 2 Chronicles 5: 2 - 5

JT These passages may serve to indicate the teaching in connection with the tent of meeting in these books. What we noticed in Exodus was that God was pleased to dwell among His people, and in Leviticus we saw that the people approached Him as dwelling thus among them. Numbers shows how God journeyed with His people through the wilderness as He said to David, "I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel to this day; but have gone from tent to tent", 1 Chronicles 17: 5. This shows the love of God in journeying with His people and entering into all the circumstances of the wilderness, so that, as they began to move, the ark went before to seek out a resting place for them, a type of the Lord Jesus going before us in love.

We also saw that all matters of difficulty arising in opposition to the truth were met by God coming down to the door of the tent of meeting. These are important features for us to consider. We can reckon on God intervening in difficulties and settling whatever might arise. In Deuteronomy very little is said about the tabernacle; yet it is recognised as being there. Although there is not much said about the tabernacle after Numbers 21, it is mentioned in Deuteronomy 31 in connection with the change of leadership from Moses to Joshua.

AFM Would you mention the other places in Deuteronomy where the tabernacle or ark comes into view? Moses was told to put the testimony into the ark (Exodus 25: 16).

JT In Deuteronomy 31: 26. Moses commanded the Levites, "Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark". We will observe that, in the change of leadership, the song which Moses composed is taught to the people, and the book of the law is put into the ark.

Ques The tabernacle is spoken of in Numbers as the tent of testimony but it is called the tent of meeting here. What is the difference?

JT The idea in the tent of the testimony is that God sets out what is in His mind. He had said, "thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee", Exodus 25: 16. The testimony was placed in the ark and the ark was in the tent. This is one reason why the tent is called the tent of testimony in Numbers.

Rem Say a little more on the allusion to the tent of meeting in Deuteronomy and to the tent of meeting in Numbers.

JT The tent of testimony suggests that God sets out what is in His mind. In Numbers 17: 4 we see how God indicated His mind in relation to the priesthood when there was assumption on the part of others. Referring to the staves of the princes. Jehovah said, "thou shalt lay them up in the tent of meeting before the testimony, where I meet with you. And it shall come to pass, that the man whom I shall choose, his staff shall bud forth". Then in verse 7 it says, "And Moses laid the staves before Jehovah in the tent of the testimony. And it came to pass ... behold, the staff of Aaron for the house of Levi had budded". God showed that He had chosen Aaron. The first reference to the tent of meeting is in Exodus 33: "And Moses took the tent, and pitched it outside the camp ... and called it the Tent of meeting. And it came to pass that every one who sought Jehovah went out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp". It seems that God indicates His mind where the principle of separation is maintained.

In Deuteronomy there is to be a change of leadership and Jehovah appears at the tent of meeting. He had said to Moses, "Lo, the days are near for thee to die; call Joshua, and present yourselves at the tent of meeting, that I may give him a charge ... . And Jehovah appeared at the tent in the pillar of cloud; ... And Jehovah said to Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers". The time of Moses' departure was at hand, but the testimony was to be continued.

JS In connection with a change of leadership, how would you apply the principle today?

JT I think that God would indicate His mind concerning it among the assembly. In christendom leaders are introduced in another way.

Rem The assembly answers to the tent of meeting.

JT Yes, it is the place or sphere where God meets with His people who are in separation and in sympathy with Him and one another.

Rem It appears that there is a principle wherein God may bring in a change of leadership.

JT I think it is a principle with God to carry on the testimony in connection with leadership.

CAM But is there not a principle or a suggestion that God may change or use various vessels?

JS Is it not more a succession to leadership here rather than a change?

Rem That seems evident, for there is no change until Moses is about to die.

JT Yes, in the chapter before us we see how clear that is, "And Jehovah said to Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers". In a similar manner, Paul said, "the time of my departure is at hand", 2 Timothy 4: 6.

Rem His service was completed.

JT Yes, he had kept the faith and finished his course. Paul could say, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me", 2 Timothy 4: 8. Paul is concerned about the continuation of the testimony and charges Timothy, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word", 2 Timothy 4: 1.

AFM Where do you get the thought of succession to leadership in 2 Timothy?

JT In 2 Timothy 2: 1, 2, Paul told Timothy, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also". Timothy is instructed there to take up the question of leadership and to see that the ministry was passed on to faithful men. The tent of meeting should have an important place in our minds, because it is the place where God makes known what His dispositions are. Of course God is sovereign in connection with His dispositions, but He makes them known among His people as we see here in Deuteronomy in view of the continuation of ministry and service.

Rem We see the close of Moses' service and the beginning of Joshua's here.

Rem Joshua was with Moses from the outset. Sympathy with the previous leader is necessary.

JT Joshua was Moses' minister. He was with Moses on the mount; and he remained in the tabernacle after Israel failed in connection with the golden calf.

Rem It appears that God carried on the same line of things which Moses set out. For instance, in Joshua 20 we read, "And Jehovah spoke to Joshua, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint for yourselves the cities of refuge, whereof I spoke unto you through Moses" (verses 1, 2). God does not disregard the previous leader.

JT Much is made of Moses; the previous leader is always recognised. Hence we read, "And it came to pass after the death of Moses the servant of Jehovah, that Jehovah spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' attendant", Joshua 1: 1. Joshua is referred to as Moses' attendant. It is necessary that one

should be adjusted after he is installed. Joshua was never anything to Moses other than his attendant.

JS Joshua would maintain what Moses spoke.

AFM Deuteronomy 34: 9 shows that: "And Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as Jehovah had commanded Moses".

JT Moses did not suggest the name of his successor. It says, "And Moses spoke to Jehovah, saying, Let Jehovah, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the assembly, who may go out before them, and who may come in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in, that the assembly of Jehovah be not as sheep that have no shepherd", Numbers 27: 16, 17. Timothy is mentioned very little in the Acts, but he was qualified. I think the Lord takes up the one who is available, as seen in Timothy. You do not see a great vessel in Timothy as you do in Paul. The Lord said of Paul, "this man is an elect vessel to me, to bear my name before both nations and kings and the sons of Israel", Acts 9: 15.

BF We see the priests associated with Joshua when he took up the position of a leader. He charges them in relation to the bearing of the ark of the covenant.

JT There is a suggestion there of state. We are priests and Levites in virtue of the fact that we are christians, and have the Spirit. Leadership is looked at from another point of view; God mentions Joshua in a special way in Numbers 27. Moses appealed to Jehovah as the God of the spirits of all flesh, but he said nothing about Joshua. Then God said, "Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him". It may be said that every christian has the Spirit. But God particularly says of Joshua here that he is "a man in whom is the spirit". He is characterised by having the Spirit.

AFM Joshua was not a young man now, but a man fully developed.

JT He is a man "in whom is the spirit".

HSD He is not an inexperienced man.

JT Joshua has experience. Formerly, he was a young man and was spoken of as such. But at that time he was not mentioned in connection with leadership. The qualifications of a leader must be present with one whom God takes up, and these qualifications must be known and seen by the saints. God knew what was in Joshua.

Rem If the brethren introduced a leader, he would spoil things as Saul did. But David was a man after God's own heart. God supports the man whom He brings forward.

JT David had a secret history which was brought to light by the Spirit; Saul had none, for he could not even find his father's asses.

Ques What would his inability to find the asses suggest?

JT Do you not think that it refers to communion? Those who are in communion with God know His mind, and have light about things. Saul's servant said to him, when he was about to give up searching for the asses, "Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go", 1 Samuel 9: 6. Those who are in communion with God make His mind known.

JS How would you regard Timothy in connection with leadership?

JT The apostle said, "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me", 2 Timothy 1: 15. It was a question of apostolic authority. The brethren had turned away from Paul, but Timothy was one on whom he could lay his hands, a young man. Why should he take a young man? It was a strange thing.

Rem Joshua was one who had brought back a good report of the land. He carried the truth of the heavenly position in his soul at all times. Now he has become a leader; the people are with him and he would continue to present the heavenly side of the truth to them.

JT He would be associated with Caleb as standing for the heavenly position and testimony.

AFM Sometimes we see that there is opposition when the Lord brings forward a vessel. We may have our eyes on someone else, but the Spirit may indicate the opposite of what we had before us.

Ques Are there leaders or one leader?

JT It is written, "Remember your leaders who have spoken to you the word of God", Hebrews 13: 7. It is in the plural. There are those who are qualified. It goes on to say, "and considering the issue of their conversation, imitate their faith".

Rem So we think of Joshua, David, and others.

JT Those men were types of Christ in peculiar ways. But there are leaders, as we see in Hebrews "Obey your leaders, and be submissive; for *they* watch

over your souls as those that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not groaning, for this would be unprofitable for you", Hebrews 13: 17.

Rem The point you are making is that the Lord places leaders among us and they must be recognised.

JT Yes, that is the idea.

WB "The pillar of cloud stood over the entrance to the tent. And Jehovah said to Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers". We see how God indicated His mind to Moses and showed him what he should do.

JT Yes, Moses was told to call Joshua and present themselves at the tent of meeting; and Jehovah appeared there. The presence of the Lord among His people brings out what He is doing, and whom He is owning. Hence God appears and speaks to Moses; and finally He says to Joshua, "Be strong and courageous; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I have sworn unto them; and I will be with thee", Deuteronomy 31: 23. The idea of God owning and appearing to His servant is magnified in the gospels in connection with the Lord Jesus. In Mark's gospel it is written, "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptised by John at the Jordan. And straightway going up from the water, he saw the heavens parting asunder, and the Spirit, as a dove, descending upon him. And there came a voice out of the heavens: *Thou* art my beloved Son, in thee I have found my delight". We speak of the Son, the Lord Jesus, as the Servant in Mark's gospel; and we see in what a marvellous way He is owned and recognised by God: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth! I will put my spirit upon him", Isaiah 42: 1.

AFM "He saw the heavens parting asunder, and the Spirit, as a dove, descending upon him". The saints will see the glory of God in a similar manner, and it will be a confirmation to them.

JT You see an instance of that when Peter on the mount wished to make three tabernacles. But, "While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them ... . And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him", Luke 9: 34, 35. God showed whom He had selected.

Ques Would the glory appear today in the way of ministry?

JT One can never be sure of the way God may show Himself, of the way that He will come in; for He has His own way of appearing.

Rem The Lord's coming among us has to be observed spiritually.

JT Yes, I think those who are spiritual recognise it. In connection with the departure of Moses we have a song: "write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel". I suppose Joshua is included in the writing of the song, "write ye this song". What is put into the mouths of the saints is a living ministry.

Rem Joshua is associated with Moses in Deuteronomy 32: 44: "And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun".

JT Yes, Joshua is linked up with the living ministry that was to be put in the mouths of the saints. The ministry was of a poetic form.

BF It was that form of ministry which would be preserved in the affections of the saints.

JT It was a poetic writing, and it was to be put in their mouths; it was to remain with them. The song was written the same day that he was told to write it (see Deuteronomy 31: 22).

Ques Why should this song be a witness?

JT God said, "this people ... will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them", Deuteronomy 31: 16. This song would be a witness against them.

JS Hence we see that, "Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended", Deuteronomy 31: 30.

JT Moses knew what to write. That very day it was composed in freshness, and it was full of life:

> "My doctrine shall drop as rain,
> My speech flow down as dew,
> As small rain upon the tender herb,
> And as showers on the grass", Deuteronomy 32: 2.

Rem One may learn the song, but unless he gets in touch with God, it will do him no good.

JT But it will be a witness for God against him. For instance, the Bible is read in churches; it is a witness on God's behalf. The next thing we notice in connection with the song is how Moses rises to the occasion. It is a voice to all old brethren. Moses is about to die, but he is told to write a song and he writes it immediately. Joshua has part in it, a living ministry with which this

second leader is connected; and it is put in the mouths of the saints. But the book of the law is put into the ark. This may suggest the truth as it is in Christ. It will never fail; so that the reference in Revelation is, "Jesus Christ, the faithful witness".

AFM So that Moses says, "For the name of Jehovah will I proclaim: Ascribe greatness unto our God! He is the Rock, his work is perfect, For all his ways are righteousness; A God of faithfulness without deceit, Just and right is he", Deuteronomy 32: 3, 4.

JT Yes, and then he goes on to depict the condition of the people: "They have dealt corruptly with him".

Rem Moses makes a touching appeal to the people in his song: "Do ye thus requite Jehovah, Foolish and unwise people? Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee and established thee?" Deuteronomy 32: 6.

Rem The song seems to be very wide; Moses calls on the heavens and on the earth (verse 1).

JT Yes, it is very wide.

JS Is there anything corresponding to this in the New Testament?

JT I do not know. Of course you do not always get everything in the New Testament. There are things in the Old Testament which are not necessarily repeated in the New; the fact that they are in the Old Testament is enough. There are things new and old, and their instructions are applicable for all dispensations. You see how the testimony is linked together in a living way.

Ques Does verse 2 of the song (Deuteronomy 32: 2), "My doctrine shall drop as rain, My speech flow down as dew, As small rain upon the tender herb, And as showers on the grass" suggest that the ministry of a leader does not die with him?

JT I think that as Joshua was Moses' attendant all the time he was never lifted up to the level of Moses. Hence he needs a good start.

Ques Is Timothy a product of Paul's ministry?

JT Timothy was Paul's child. Paul said, "I have no one like-minded". Why should he speak thus of a young man? It was because there was no one among the older brethren.

Rem The new leader would not reproach the old one.

JT We see how the thought is worked out in Joshua. He is associated with the song which Moses wrote; and we see how he continues after Moses' death: "And Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as Jehovah had commanded Moses", Deuteronomy 34: 9.

JS You said that Joshua did not rise to the level of Moses.

JT He did not. When Joshua began his ministry, he is spoken of in terms that would humble him: "And it came to pass after the death of Moses the servant of Jehovah, that Jehovah spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' attendant, saying, Moses my servant is dead", Joshua 1: 1, 2.

HSD What may we understand by the words, "as I was with Moses, so will I be with thee", Joshua 1: 5?

JT It is not so much leadership there, but the inheritance is the important point: "Every place whereon the sole of your foot shall tread have I given to you". In Joshua 19, we see that the priest comes first in connection with the distribution of the inheritance: "These were the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed by lot in Shiloh before Jehovah, at the entrance of the tent of meeting". It is now more a matter of state in the people.

Rem State is necessary in connection with the inheritance.

H.S.D. Is it fellowship?

JT Yes, we are set alongside each other now, and there is likely to be need of much adjustment, so that things are done in the presence of Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers. It is a question of spiritual power among the saints.

AFM What is the difference in Joshua 18: "And the whole assembly of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting there; and the land was subdued before them. And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes whose inheritance had not been distributed to them. And Joshua said ... Provide you three men for a tribe; that I may send them, and they shall rise and go through the land, and describe it according to the proportion of their inheritance"? Joshua seems to take the lead there.

JT Probably you have something more in your mind.

AFM I thought there was a contrast between chapters 18 and 19.

JT In chapter 18 I think you see an end of the encampments. Shiloh represents the gathering centre, "to him will be the obedience (or gathering) of peoples". The tabernacle as set up at Shiloh became a test to the people. The two-and-a-half tribes built an altar of their own, but Phinehas and the princes made the tabernacle the test: "if the land of your possession is unclean, come over into the land of the possession of Jehovah, where Jehovah's tabernacle dwelleth", Joshua 22: 19.

Rem So that the truth of the assembly enters into everything; anything that is contrary to it pertains to what is sectarian.

Rem The assembly is the pillar and base of the truth.

Rem You said Shiloh was connected with the gathering of the people.

JT Yes, it is the gathering centre; it is a type of Christ.

Ques How may the distribution of the inheritance be seen now?

JT It is a suggestion of the place one has among the saints. They make room for you. It is a serious matter if they do not. The distributions were made in the presence of "Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun and the chief fathers of the tribes", meaning that the whole spiritual power was there.

Ques Is there sovereignty in the distribution by lot?

JT Yes, and the distribution is made at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

Ques There was difficulty at Corinth in recognising the sovereignty of God. Was it a lack of spiritual state?

JT I think so. Paul had to come in, as it were, and do things. The Corinthians were setting up leaders instead of recognising Paul.

Rem The spiritual element seen in Eleazar and Joshua was not in Corinth.

JT It did not appear so. We see a beautiful picture of what we are saying in connection with Solomon. He is anointed with the horn of oil, when Adonijah was in rebellion: "And Zadok the priest took the horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon: ... and all the people said, Long live king Solomon!" 1 Kings 1: 39.

WB The priest is the prominent person there, too.

JS It is remarkable that the horn of oil is taken out of the tabernacle.

JT They were a group of men associated with the priest: "And Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon

king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon", 1 Kings 1: 38. These men were not with Adonijah.

Rem Solomon is a type of the Lord.

JT I think the Lord has His place when the assembly recognises the Spirit. In 2 Chronicles 5 we see that: "they brought up the ark, and the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent ... . And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of Jehovah to its place, into the oracle of the house, into the most holy place". The tabernacle merges into the temple.

AFM The staves were drawn out.

JT There is the thought of permanence in that.

Ques Do you think that the expression, "increases to a holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2: 21) refers to what is eternal?

JT I think it refers to the millennium.

AFM "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men" suggests that God came as near to men as possible.

JT Yes, it suggests the closeness of God to men; not so much the grandeur and glory of Solomon's reign.

Ques Is there not an eternal thought in that?

JT Yes, the staves drawn out means that there will be no further wilderness experience.

WB What is the difference in David preparing a place for the ark and pitching a tent for it, and Solomon putting it in the temple?

JT David's act suggests what is provisional.

Ques Do you think that the final movement of the tent suggests the present moment? Is there not a comparison for us today with what was done at Shiloh and Solomon's act?

JT I think the ministry of Paul presents a fixed state of things. In the early part of the Acts, the saints continued to go to the temple; but after Paul's ministry that state of affairs ceased.

Deuteronomy 32

- (Deuteronomy 9)
  PRIESTLY GREATNESS (SMC 1)
- (Deuteronomy 31)
  THE TESTIMONY PASSED ON IN FRESHNESS (JT 29)
- (Deuteronomy 31)
  THE TESTIMONY PASSED ON IN FRESHNESS (JT 29)
- (Deuteronomy 31)
  ELDER BRETHREN AS SPIRITUAL EXAMPLES (JT 84)
- (Deuteronomy 31)
  SPIRITUAL GREATNESS (JT 90)
- DEUTERONOMY 32 (CAC 5)
- DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 32 (JND 36)
- SPOIL (12) (JT 45)
- DIVINE NAMES (4) (JT 50)
- THE DEW (WJH 16)

DEUTERONOMY 32 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 32

Heaven and earth being called upon to hear the words of this song intimates that it contains what is instructive and profitable for both the heavenly and earthly people of God, And it is essentially of a refreshing and invigorating character. "My doctrine shall drop as rain, my speech flow down as dew, as small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers on the grass" (verse 2). When there is a work of God in the soul all His communications have that character, however exercising and humbling they may be. We manifest what we really are by the way we receive them, and the effect they produce in us. See Hebrews 6: 7, 8. The more we are searched by the word of God the more shall we be established; we shall judge ourselves, and pass over into the region of His thoughts. See Psalm 139. He brings out what He is, that in the light of it we may learn what we are, and flee for refuge to Him as the Rock of our souls, and rejoice in the stability of His thoughts as established in Christ.

This song celebrates the greatness of God in stability, perfection of working, righteousness and faithfulness (verses 3, 4). He will carry through the purposes of His love in spite of everything. The reminder of this is always refreshing to faith; God becomes the Rock of the soul. Only in the light of what He is could we bear to review the terrible history of failure.

But, in spite of all that God is, flesh remains flesh, and it comes out in "a crooked and perverted generation", notwithstanding much past evidence that God is the origin of all good (verses 5 - 7). How many features have come out in each one of us that are not the spot of His children! God would have us to discern and judge those features under the influence of the pure and uncontaminated heavenly rain and dew that falls upon us, and which has its Source altogether outside the scene of failure. The object of ministry is that Christ may be brought into view, the flesh judged, and that we may have features which are acceptable to God. Have we the spot of God's children, or are we still, in spite of all that we profess to know of God, marked by the crookedness and perversity of the flesh?

But, even if the latter should be the case, how will the blessed God proceed to deal with it? He will, in the first place, do as His servant Paul did in writing to the carnal Corinthians. He will put before us the place which His people have by divine calling, and according to His thoughts and His heart (verses 8 - 14). This might well be called a "song", for it brings out God's thoughts concerning His people, and His portion in them, and that is wholly apart from what is of the flesh.

All God's providential disposition of things in the world has reference to what He has in mind for His saints; *they* are His portion, the lot of His inheritance. Nations rise or fall, kingdoms expand or diminish, but the Hand behind the scenes is moving everything with regard to those who are "called according to purpose". So that, in truth, "all things" are ordered, and made to work together, for their good. How small is man! How great is God! Vast political movements going on, mighty changes being effected, the whole world having its very constitution re-fashioned, man fancying that he is doing it all! But God, the mighty unseen Disposer of all, assigning, separating, and setting bounds with reference to His present or future designs concerning His people, whether heavenly or earthly! Why should Claudius order all the Jews to leave Rome? It was, apparently, an arbitrary act of imperial power, but it was designed, under God's hand, to bring two persons to Corinth just in time to receive Paul, in view of God having an assembly in that city (Acts 18). His providential orderings now are not less real, or less recognisable by faith, than the movements which grouped the nations round Israel.

There is no mention in this song of Egypt, unless it is implied in verses 6, 7. But "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste, howling wilderness". God finds His people when they are entirely shut up to Him, and have no other resource, and He delights to become everything to them there, as we see in verses 10 - 12 — a beautiful and touching picture of God's watchfulness, preservation and leading in wilderness conditions. Paul said, "For a time of about forty years he nursed them in the desert" (Acts 13: 18). What a sweet expression of the tenderness and solicitude with which He had watched over them! And we have all had experience of that loving and faithful care. Then verses 13, 14 describe the wealth of good things which constituted the plenty of the land.

But from verse 15 we have a sad history of departure after proving all this goodness on God's part. And the name Jeshurun — the upright people — is used as though to mark in the strongest way their terrible defection. The tendency to depart had been there all the time. See chapter 31: 21, 27, 28. God knows what the flesh is, how ready it is to give Him up, to lightly esteem Him, to turn to every form of idolatry. We have all had to learn what the flesh is, even since we knew God, or were known of Him. It is evidence of a work of God when we really discern the perverseness and contrariety of the flesh, and begin to appreciate what is of God and His faithfulness. But before we learned the flesh God knew it; He testifies against it, and He shews plainly how His government will operate in regard to it; but He puts it all in the form of a "song", which intimates that He will eventually secure, even through deep

exercise and sorrow, His own happy "conclusion". It will all end, marvellous to tell! in shouting for joy! (verse 43).

The middle part of the chapter is occupied with God's necessary governmental dealings with His people as having departed from Him. There is no excuse for departure; if we act according to the flesh we shall reap accordingly. God will hide His face, He will move us to jealousy by allowing us to see others enjoying what we have missed (verse 21, and see the connection in Romans 10: 19), and His solemn governmental ways will take their course. At the present time departure from God is being visited by His displeasure. The loss of all spiritual blessing through worldliness, so that those who profess to be God's people are indistinguishable from the world, is a sore affliction. Would to God that it were felt to be so!

But while God's government takes its course He does not forget that the ruin of His people has been sought, and brought about, and rejoiced in by an enemy (verse 27). God vindicates Himself by judging the evil that manifests itself in His people, but, having done that, there remains a direct issue between Him and the adversary. Who is, after all, the greatest in power — the enemy who would destroy, or God who would bless, His people? That is the final issue, and the raising of it involves the ultimate triumph of God, and the full blessing of His people *because of what He is*. See verses 39 - 43.

How good for Israel, and for us, to know that God's governmental dealings consequent upon unfaithfulness and departure, severe and inexorable as they are, are not His last word. He uses them to reduce His people, and to bring them to the point of utter helplessness as to themselves (verse 36), and utter hopelessness as to getting any help from the idols to which they had turned aside (verses 37, 38), they are made to realise that their own folly, and all its consequences, are the work of the enemy, that they may turn to Him who says in verse 39, "See now that I, I am *He*". God remains in His own immutability, and He can be turned to in the very last extremity of need and distress. When His people realise their utter helplessness, His governmental dealings have done their work, and reached their end. Divine compassions can then flow righteously forth on a self-judged people; He can act on their behalf, for this is the force of "Jehovah will judge his people". He will see that they are brought into all that His love would give after having been deprived of it by the enemy through their own folly.

"I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal". His killing and wounding are but the prelude to His quickening and healing power being exercised. How many saints have proved this! We do not *live* spiritually without some experience of what it is to be killed; God brings the truth of our condition home to us in a

painful way. But those under such a dealing of His mighty hand need not despair; the issues will be such that His saints can glorify Him even on this behalf. His woundings are the faithful woundings of a Friend, and they give occasion to prove how He can heal. It may be said that there is no *necessity* for saints to have such an experience as is described in this song. That is true. But where is the saint who has lived in unbroken continuity of enjoyment of the land? Who has never deviated from God, or never needed any correction or scourging? The natural tendencies of our hearts have to be learned; they are there; there may be much departure in heart without flagrant misconduct before others. In such a case it is pure mercy when God kills and wounds that He may quicken into true spiritual life, and heal the wayward and wandering heart. Compare 1 Samuel 2: 6.

God will ultimately defeat and destroy all the power of the adversary and enemy (verses 41, 42). The nations will shout for joy with His people (verse 43, quoted in Romans 15: 10 with a present application). He will avenge the blood of His martyred saints through the ages. And He will make atonement for His land and for His people; all will be secured and will stand on the ground of forgiveness through atonement. What a song is this! How humbling to us! HOW glorifying to God! For in all its principles it is as instructive to us as it will be in another day for Israel.

Moses and Hoshea came from the tent of meeting, and from the presence of Jehovah there, to teach this song to all Israel. It is most important that we should set our hearts "unto all the words" (verse 46). "For it is no vain word for you, but it is your life". No part of the Lord's instruction is a "vain word". It is wonderful grace on God's part to communicate His mind to us; now it is for us to set our hearts to His words. Christians are apt to ignore what they do not wish to obey. But "every scripture is divinely inspired"; it is not only absolutely dependable as being of God, but there is the breath of divine life in it. The letter of Scripture may be, in itself, empty of result, but if we set our hearts to the words as having the power of life in them they will convey to us the knowledge of God as revealed in Christ, and that will be life to us. This wonderful book unfolds in a typical way the conditions in which the brethren can enjoy the inheritance together. Let us set our hearts to it that it may not be a vain word for us, but that it may be our life. Our spiritual being needs to be quickened according to God's words, so that they may be worked out in life amongst the brethren. What a conception it gives of the assembly to think of it as a company of persons capable of taking up the mind of God, and answering to it in a living way in collective enjoyment of "the land"!

It is far too often assumed that a great deal of Scripture is impracticable, but that is to say plainly that it is a "vain word". If we do not set our hearts to the words they will be "vain" to us; they will not be our life. This accounts for the fact that comparatively few have the present gain of life eternal. John's Gospel was written that we might have life eternal in the Name of the Son of God, and his Epistle was written that we might know consciously that we have it. This is really "the land ... over the Jordan". Peter realised that Jesus had the words of life eternal; His words were instinct with the power of life.

The closing section of this chapter brings out in a striking way the governmental character which is impressed on the whole of this book. It gives us what is, perhaps, the most solemn and impressive instance of the government of God which Scripture contains. For Moses was a most eminent servant of God, who enjoyed personally great divine favour. But he was not allowed to go into the land because he trespassed in failing to hallow Jehovah at Meribah-Kadesh. The more eminent and faithful any servant of God may be the more incumbent it is upon him to hallow God at all times in the midst of His people. What a discipline for Moses, that faithful servant of Jehovah and true lover of Israel, to be forbidden to enter the "pleasant land"!

But it is encouraging to see that, while the government of God was not relaxed, even in favour of Moses, he got peculiar personal favour from Jehovah which must have been compensation to him in the deprivation which he felt so keenly. He was permitted to behold the land. Jehovah Himself shewed it to him in detail, as we shall see in chapter 34. The government of God may be severe, and its results may never be escaped from down here, but at the same time opportunity may be given to faithful hearts to get what they desire. God regarded,

amidst His governmental dealing, the faithfulness of His honoured servant, and He allowed him to see the land. Those fertile hills and valleys lay outstretched before his undimmed eyes. He had a clear view, in company with Jehovah, of all that was in Jehovah's purpose, and had been the subject of His oath. Publicly he was debarred from entering the land, but privately he saw it all in communion with Jehovah.

This is, in the principle of it, great encouragement for the moment in which we live. Publicly privileges are forfeited; this was largely true before the apostles finished their course; the government of God is dealing out just retribution for many a trespass, and for much that has failed to hallow Him amongst His people. But faithful hearts may still have unique opportunities to see the land, and to know its wealth. Spiritually we may have as full a view of God's purpose and grace in Christ Jesus as ever saints had. John wrote particularly for a day

of public departure when many antichrists should be present. But he brings out the wealth of what can be enjoyed with God by those who love Him. In, his precious Gospel Jesus is seen as in the bosom of the Father, and His loved disciple is seen in His bosom. Personal intimacy remains, and can be enjoyed to the full by faithful lovers. In this connection we may note that the word "loveth" in Deuteronomy 33: 3 — a word which occurs nowhere else — means "to have in the bosom". It suggests peculiar nearness. The faithful need not look to be publicly distinguished — to be anything outwardly — but a poor and afflicted people; that is the position that has to be accepted. But in private intimacy there is not a bit of "the land" that cannot be seen in spiritual vision. What a transcendent, privilege! The sovereign favour of God abounding, and conferring supreme blessedness, notwithstanding all that takes its course governmentally!

There is governmental scattering in chapter 32, but the results of the sovereign favour of God in gathering and blessing are seen in chapter 33. The man of God, who has learned personally the severity of God's government, but also the sweetness of His sovereign favour, can bless the Israel of God according to all that is in God's heart for them.

DEUTERONOMY - CHAPTER 32 (JND 36)

Deuteronomy 32

The connection of this chapter with Exodus 6, already noticed elsewhere, is exceedingly striking, as showing the place that these prophetic revelations hold. At the end here, they are returned and stand in the house celebrating Jehovah who has blessed. That is the place of these Psalms.

— 8, He set the bonds of the "peoples" not "people".

As regards the development of principle in the Scripture history of the world; first, Innocence which precedes the ways of God, then man left to himself in sin (though not without testimony), but without governmental restraint. Then the principle of government in man's hand in Noah. After this, the sources of blessing and governmental interference being by man attributed to, and so morally fallen into the hands of the enemy, the separation of Abraham takes place by the revelation of the glory of the true God, and election, calling, promise, and we may add faith, are brought out fully to light as public principles of dealing, for without doubt God has acted on them ever since the fall. Then the establishment of a people, by redemption and deliverance, under the law and immediate government of God are introduced — a people of God in the world. Within this come priesthood, prophecy, and subsequently royalty.

After this, the government of the world trusted to man — one man as head of empire and sovereign authority in the world — replacing a people in relationship with God, centre of other nations, who ought to have owned Him. After the rejection of Christ, who came under this state of things, the government is left externally unchanged, only the Jews are set aside; various historical changes take place, but the age remains unclosed, and the Church is called out for heaven, and then, God resuming His dealings with Jews and Gentiles as guilty of rejecting Christ as Head of all, and in Him all is substantially resumed. The Law — a people by redemption — Israel, centre of nations — universal dominion in Man — royalty in Israel — and the results of calling, election and promise; the Church being in its own place apart, i.e., associated with Christ. Babel may be noticed, by the way, as introducing the formation of nations, of which Israel was to be the centre.

The book of Deuteronomy then contains the terms of the responsible possession of the land with Jehovah there, so that their enjoyment of it should be inseparably connected with Him where He placed His name. Chapter 26 gives the expression of this and closes the book. It does not go beyond Jacob

and redemption out of the ruin he had got into by going down into Egypt, and enjoyment of the blessings brought into by it. This is not approaching God, nor sure promises given to Abraham, etc.; the latter are not the subject of the book, for he was a stranger and a pilgrim, and the former gave rise to there being nothing, save a few circumstances to secure their and the people's enjoyment, about priestly action. Chapter 16 gives another character, God's work by which He gathers round Himself, and the condition of the people so gathered around Himself. Every male was to come to the place where He had put His name.

The three feasts are well-known, prefiguring the work of the deliverance of the soul based on Christ's blood, its state in connection with it — the gift of the Holy Ghost, so that there is a free-will offering, and the common joy of grace, yet warning — and the full enjoyment as no longer pilgrims but blessed in everything. The wilderness is not Deuteronomy. There it is properly typical, and the question was approach to God Himself in the holiest; hence it is heavenly, though the heavens were not yet opened, the veil unrent, and no one able to go in. Hence in this book there is no eighth day to the feast of tabernacles, nor are the sacrifices before as in Leviticus, and still more Numbers, but gathering round Jehovah and the spiritual state connected with that which did it.

L'amour de Christ est un amour qui est au dessus de toutes nos misï¿½res, mais qui s'adapte ï¿½ toutes nos misï¿½res, et qui n'est froissï¿½ ni refroidi par aucune de ces misï¿½res.

The love of Christ is a love which is above all our wretchednesses, but which adapts itself to all our wretchednesses, and which is not repelled nor chilled by any of these wretchednesses.

Le tombeau dans lequel nos pï¿½chï¿½s sont ensevelis est le monument de la grace ï¿½ternelle de notre Dieu.

The tomb in which our sins are buried is the monument of the eternal favour of our God.

SPOIL (12) (JT 45)

Nehemiah 9: 5 - 8; Deuteronomy 32: 39, 40; Joshua 5: 13 - 15; Psalm 102:23 - 28

AFM No doubt you have an exercise about our reading tonight, and we should be glad to hear what you have to suggest.

PL Could we not include in the thought of recently recovered spoil, along with the precious light as to Christ's sonship, a clearer apprehension by the Holy Spirit of the Lord's Godhead, glory, and majesty as underlying and giving character to all that He is and does in the sphere of revelation. With this in view might we trace, in at least three of the scriptures read, how He who is The Same, the I AM, which in effect is a name of God having its bearing toward the Absolute, affords in His own immutability, as thus apprehended by faith, the stability and strength needed in a recovered remnant to continue to the end in every feature and activity proper to the whole assembly. It is in John, the gospel bearing peculiarly on the last days, that the Lord, to the confusion of His foes, alludes to Himself as the "I am" (chapter 8: 24, 58; 18: 6).

Whilst recognising that the names, "The Same" and the "I am" differ in the original, their meaning generally is equivalent. In the apprehension of the glory and majesty of the great I AM a worshipful spirit is promoted which imparts its own impulse and lustre to every spiritual activity, thus assuring rich spoil to God in His service and testimony amongst His people. J.N.D. in the following lines pictures the celebration in heaven, by the unnumbered hosts, of the One who is hailed as the great I AM.

> These — of Godhead's counsels deep
> Him th' Accomplisher proclaim;
> These — how Jesus' self could weep —
> Of Godhead's love the witness came!
> All, on love surpassing rest,
> That clothed in flesh the great I AM

In Nehemiah 9, God is acclaimed under this name in relation to His sovereign operations from the outset in regard to creation and the call of Abraham. How strength-imparting to the weak but faithful remnant would be this apprehension of His immutability; the praising Levites reviewing all the ways of God in this precious light! Deuteronomy 32: 39, 40 would bear upon the levitical side, as we see how Moses, the pattern servant in his day, found, as reaching the climax of his great ministry, his strength and joy in the glory of

the unchanging One, in contrast to Israel's fickleness as depicted by him in this chapter. Psalm 102: 27 would rather stand connected with the service of God in the sanctuary; the Lord, as thus saluted of God, is to be apprehended as the One in whom that service is inaugurated and sustained through succeeding generations (verse 28). The quotation made from this psalm in Hebrews, an epistle largely devoted to the service of God, would furnish confirmation as to this thought. In Joshua 5, whilst He is not so alluded to, yet stability both in leader and in those led depends upon an apprehension of Him as the unchanging One: He who is Captain of Jehovah's hosts.

AFM Would the side of things contemplated in Nehemiah 9 be a priestly one. The names of the priests or Levites are mentioned as giving the setting. The fruit is praise out-flowing to God.

PL Yes, and how all this praise contrasts with mere human creeds, which are the fruit of Babylonish influence on a captive people, but which are so unsuited to a divinely recovered remnant with spiritual affections liberated Godward.

Rem While the positional side had been recovered, is it not emphasised here that we must have substance to fill out the position.

PL Yes; "seeing your order" (Colossians 2: 5), might suggest the positional side as seen in the first epistle to the Corinthians, but the truth of the Lord's Person as introduced in Colossians has particularly in view the formation of the assembly inwardly to correspond in love to her exalted Head.

AR Is the chapter in Nehemiah the climax of the result of spoil being distributed amongst the saints? The feast of booths being introduced by Ezra leads on to the glory position in the chapter we read.

PL Yes, the feast the tabernacles suggests our nearness to God and to Christ, and spiritual intimacy with one another, this is typified in the dwelling in booths. John not only tells us that the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, but the atmosphere proper to the feast of tabernacles is set forth in John 13 - John 17. What intimacy and liberty marks the Lord's intercourse with His own, and finally with His Father! The Lord alludes in that gospel to who He is, as the I AM; the truth as to His Person being the crowning feature of remnant recovery in a broken day. Indeed John, writing for such a day as this, gives us in Revelation the Lord's word to Philadelphia, "that no man take thy crown", the assembly's crown being Christ Himself, as held in her affections in the full light of His glory. In John 8: 58 He disposes of mere orthodox judaism in His majestic utterance, "Before Abraham was, I am", and later, when His

foes came to take Him in the garden they fall backwards as He confronts them in His authority as the I AM.

CAM The light and glory of this Person as known and held in the hearts of the saints is what is really going through. It should give everyone a great desire to be truly recovered.

PL Quite so. What spiritual stamina would the apprehension of Him as the I AM afford Nehemiah and those with him in those days and nights of vigilance in conflict and construction, with the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other! All this leads up to the supreme object for which God has wrought in assembly recovery, that He might have among His saints those to whom He can entrust the light and glory of the Person of Christ with a view to the service of God being rendered in greater fulness and intelligence.

CAM Human innovations, such as creeds, could not change this glorious truth: He is "The Same".

PL Yes. All Nehemiah's toil has as its issue the remnant's recovery to Jehovah as "The Same", that One whose presence among them once filled the tabernacle in the wilderness with glory — as also the house in the days of Solomon.

Ques Is there in the background of this, what is furnished in the way of faithfulness on the part of the people?

PL Does that not take us back to the thought of the covenant, the unchanging engagements of divine love which call forth love's response without reserve in a people committed to the God of the covenant? In Nehemiah 9: 38 we read, "Because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, our Levites, and our priests are at the sealing". In these statements the recovered remnant are seen representatively at their best. Their hearts thus move in fresh committal to God in His unchanging and faithful love. The immutability of Him who, as the I AM, imparts such stability to His engagements, is disclosed in contrast to the fickleness of Israel, to which their sorrowful history, as recited by the Levites in Nehemiah 9, had borne such undeniable witness. The revival thus issued in the princes, Levites, and priests, being at the sealing. The analogy to the sealing would be found in the cup of the covenant which we bless, as in partaking of it we own the claims of divine love.

AFM Would this sealing be in the nature of spoil for God on the part of Nehemiah and those with him?

PL Surely, in the securing of a people for God in the light of the covenant, and spoil for the Lord in this setting would lie in the espousal of the affections of the saints as a chaste virgin to Christ, as in the Lord's supper. What spoil that is, that holy love-feast, having, in these last days, been lifted out of the superstitious darkness in which Satan had for centuries enshrouded it by the Babylonish captivity of the public vessel!

Rem I was thinking of what was said in prayer about what is vouchsafed to us in this day. It says in verse 2, "And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers". I was wondering whether that is not preliminary to what the Lord is now vouchsafing to us in the way of light as to His Person.

PL Quite so. How deep and searching is the moral history which underlies all this, both personal and collective. By this way alone can there be assured to God, from the assembly, that priestly atmosphere in which He would confide to us what is so infinitely precious to Him — the truth relating to the Person of Christ. Those thus taught of God could, in spiritual fibre, survive every vicissitude of the responsible vessel, and go on together in love to the end. How many sorrowful defections in relation to the testimony could be traced to uncertainty as to the truth of His Person, with all the attendant lack of committal in love which, alas, affords the foe his opportunity to cut off stragglers!

WR Does not the history of the assemblies in Revelation 2 and 3 help us vitally?

PL Yes. Whatever the public break-up, the overcomer in Philadelphia abides a pillar as sustained in the apprehension of the Person of Christ.

ANW And the great response of the Spirit and the bride, in the last chapter of Revelation, is in answer to the presentation, "I Jesus" — who He is personally.

PL Yes, "The root and offspring of David". The root, of course, alluding to Deity.

JTJr How do you view the Levites here, in verse 4, as standing up?

PL They set forth what is comely before God on so great an occasion, and give a lead to the people in the praise of God, as verse 5 shows.

AR Four times up to verse 5 we have reference to standing up. Does it suggest spiritual dignity and power? The last one is, "Stand up, bless Jehovah your God from eternity to eternity".

PL Thus calling on us to bless God for what He is in Himself. What a priestly touch enters into all this, graced as it is with such depth of spiritual feeling, such as for instance, "Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them" (verse 20). How blest are such recitals as indicating what, from God's side, has led up to the recovery of the light and truth of the Lord's Person. Such a review is calculated to stimulate that service of praise to Him who, as "The Same", has ever been the strength of His people.

Rem So that what the children of Israel refused in Caleb and Joshua in the wilderness, when they brought the heavenly ministry to the saints, was what was according to "thy good Spirit".

PL Thus testifying among other things to the tenderness of divine feelings. John, who presents Christ as the I AM, also records the tears of Jesus in chapter 11. How near He has come! John, who dwells so much on His infinite greatness and majesty, thus touches on His tender feelings as in holy manhood.

CAM You can understand how that the glorious truth of the unchanging greatness of Christ would awaken ever fresh and distinctive response as time goes on.

PL Quite so; the reference in verse 8 to Abraham, "and foundest his heart faithful before thee", shows that the reviewers are in the understanding, that such movements of love and glory in Him who is "The Same", make their own searching but blessed claims upon us in regard to responsive committal.

ABP They must have had some very remarkable, prophetic ministry in those days. Haggai speaks of "the latter glory of this house".

PL Prophetic ministry would largely involve the application by the Spirit of much that has been reserved by God to meet the unparalleled situations arising in these remnant days.

Rem The prophetic ministry of Haggai and Zechariah precedes this.

PL It does, and Jeremiah's tears would water the early seed sown in his ministry which yielded so rich a crop many years later in the recovery under Ezra and Nehemiah. Christianity was sown in the tears of the Son of God, and remnant revival owes much to the priestly tears of God-given leaders and others who have wept through assembly sorrows to a divine issue. As the spiritual review of assembly history is made in the light of Him who is "The Same", our hearts become restful in the sense that what is of God is going through to completion.

AFM Do not these successive steps, these cumulative thoughts that are being presented, indicate an answer to that utterance of Moses in Psalm 90, "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy majesty unto their sons"? In these present days of recovery, has not God's work appeared to His servants and His majesty to their sons? Are we not to be encouraged by that kind of thing — "thy majesty unto their sons"?

PL Yes, and what a heritage we have come into, lustred as it is with the majesty of His Person! "And let men bless the name of thy glory, which is exalted above all blessing and praise". In this chapter, as you say, everything is cumulative, and thus fresh strength is developed. "They go from strength to strength; each one will appear before God in Zion", Psalm 84: 7.

AR How did they secure this knowledge? They say, "who hast made the heaven of heavens, and all their host, the earth and all that is therein, the seas and all that is therein. And thou quickenest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee" (verse 6). They really bring in the whole heavenly realm and the earth, and they worship God.

PL Would you not say that in the sovereignty of divine mercy. Nehemiah's faithful maintenance of divine principles has been rewarded with light from God as to the house as the place of divine habitation? What a spiritual outburst we have here, begotten of priestly feelings, fruit of the light recovered in sovereign mercy! What cause we have for thanksgiving to God that He has graced these closing years of assembly revival with the true light as to Christ's sonship, so essential to a spiritual understanding of the Lord's Person.

In passing on to Moses in Deuteronomy 32, we can see how he crowns his closing ministry with a song containing this ascription of praise to the great I AM.

> "See now that I, I am HE.
> And there is no god with me;
> I kill, and I make alive;
> I wound, and I heal" (verse 39).

He blesses Him who is without rival, supreme in His operations, in holy government as in all else, so searching in His movements, but ever ready to bless! Moses indicates that he had been true to his great mission as cherishing in his soul the I AM, the One who in that character had originally appeared to him and given him his commission (Exodus 3: 6, 14) and in whose unchanging faithfulness he executed it and endured as seeing Him who is invisible. What

energy, what endurance and definiteness in his ministerial service — did Moses derive from his apprehension of God as the I AM! He is thus a suited model for us in service as we learn to go forward in it, through evil and good report, continuing to serve in that spiritual stability and authority which the vision of the I AM alone can impart.

In Joshua's vision the Lord does not allude to Himself as the I AM, yet He who bears that name declares that He is now leading the saints in victory in relation to the heavenly inheritance. How important it is that in all conflict we should neither go before the Lord nor lag behind Him!

Ques Have you leadership in mind in this scripture, the need for waiting on the Lord before taking the road?

PL Yes. How establishing would this vision be to Joshua in his great commission! How conclusive is the Lord in His reply to Joshua's partisan inquiry: "Art thou for us, or for our enemies?" Leadership as viewed in Joshua is to be reinforced by the apprehension of the Person who alone can lead His people in military triumph into their inheritance. The *No* of Jehovah's Captain must have sunk deeply into Joshua's mind and heart, as it may well sink into ours. Divinely accredited leadership is unmoved by all partisan appeals. How easily otherwise, alas, would the dignity of spiritual conflict be lost, its standard lowered, and its precious fruits forfeited!

AR Did he not recover quickly? As soon as he gets the rebuke he says, "What saith my lord unto his servant?"

PL Quite so. The footnote in the New Translation shows that the Lord's words have a double force; it reads, "For I, the captain (or prince) of the army of Jehovah, am now come". That is. He had *not* come into this before. The Lord chooses His own time to come into a matter, and if He has not come into it, do not let us presume, like Peter, to take the sword precipitately. When He comes into it, it is to unsheath the sword and deal with every element that is obstructing the entrance of His people upon their inheritance. How blessed, then, to fall upon our faces to the earth and worship, as did Joshua! The subduing sense of what the Lord is doing is the great adjusting feature in all leadership and conflict. If we do not go into battle with ever greater thoughts of who He is, we are sure to drop to the low level of a partisan cause, to our spiritual undoing.

Ques Would you say that partisanship shuts out priesthood? In chapter 6 the place the priestly element has in the conflict comes to light at Jericho.

PL Yes, a party spirit would tend to shut out Jehovah and His priests: "For as captain of the army of Jehovah am I now come".

ANW Is not Joshua allowed to ask that question purposely to emphasise the greatness of the matter in hand, that is, conflict in relation to the inheritance?

PL Surely. How often have our mistakes, when we have judged them, but made room for spiritual adjustment in relation to that which, in divine instruction, is of the greatest moment!

AFM Is not that the way in which Jehovah gains spoil from such as Joshua? As you were saying, he was in the place of subjection; he takes off his sandal from his foot; he deports himself suitably to the presence of God.

PL As thus adjusted he is found in worship.

CAM I think that ought to help everyone. Anyone who wants to know the direction in which a conflict is going should see that it is moving in a course leading to an increased apprehension of Christ now in our hearts.

PL Would conflict have any spiritual value otherwise? In a crisis, the simple and uninstructed do well to follow those who are manifestly making much of Christ; but the full issue and fruits of the battle, ere it takes place, are anticipated in Joshua's soul as worshipping, for if the Lord has taken charge of the conflict at the outset there can, for faith, be but one issue to it!

ABP Would Joshua being alone by Jericho mean that he was seeking the aid of God in regard of this great issue?

PL Yes. Joshua lifted up his eyes and looked (verse 13). The wilderness exercises had but sharpened his sight. His senses had not always been so trustworthy, his ear deceived him on that momentous occasion when he came down from the mount with Moses; but his sight here is not deceiving him. Forty years earlier he had looked upon that land in appreciation, and now his gaze rests upon Him whose land it is, and whose people Israel are!

AR If we truly understood that the Lord is the Captain of the host, whatever conflict we might go through, although persons may be employed in it, we would know that it is the Lord's battle. Hence the issue is clear.

PL Quite so. How urgent that the great truth of the Lord's Person should enter into all this with us! How can lost assembly territory be recovered otherwise or subsequently held? The truth of the Lord's Person is to be woven into the very fibre of our beings, thus enabling us to be warriors without partisanship in Jehovah's hosts. He will recognise no warriors save those who are doing battle under Christ for the whole assembly, and no true churchman would go into conflict for less than what pertains to Christ and to the whole assembly on earth.

RWS The truth as to the Lord's Person is available by the Spirit for the whole assembly, not only for the few who may have entered into it.

PL Yes. The creeds at best bear Babylonish features. No doubt all ages have borne testimony to the presence of faithful souls who shrank from the system which held them captive, and such would not sing the songs of Zion in a strange land. Many in the Middle Ages died at the stake rather than join in the unholy revelry of Rome. How could there be light in Babylon as to Him who is "The Same", when the Romish system which in describing itself as 'Ever the same', arrogates that name to herself to her final overthrow? Whatever glimmerings of light faithful individuals may have had in earlier ages, it awaited this great closing era of assembly revival for God to recover to His people not only the truth as to the sonship of Christ, but greater and more worthy thoughts as to His Godhead glory as set forth in Scripture, all tending to enrich the service of God and add to the volume of praise among the saints. May we be preserved to the end in divine mercy in the moral import of all that this involves!

In regard to Psalm 102, this name "The Same" is also used by David when speaking to God in 2 Samuel 7: 28 and 1 Chronicles 17: 26 (see New Translation). How David in those chapters covers the various names of God, as known to Israel, all leading up to his addressing Him as "The Same"! David went in and sat before Jehovah (1 Chronicles 17: 16). That is love's climax — not standing but sitting! There were no seats in the tabernacle; the priests stood there, but the posture of sons is to sit. Sonship belongs to heaven, where we are made to sit down with Christ. And so David sat before the Lord, and then he began to address God in such choice spiritual feeling, crowning his utterance with this ascription of praise to God as "The Same", the self-existing One. What liberty he had in this holy service! In 1 Chronicles 17: 16 he alludes to Jehovah-Elohim, rising in that deep sense of mercy in verse 17, which is so becoming in us in response to those sovereign movements of God in love and mercy toward us. So David moves upward in love's holy ecstasy until he reaches the climax in verse 26 of that chapter; "And now, Jehovah, thou art that God"; that is, "The Same", the I AM. What spiritual tone in the service of God is thus assured, both in depth of feeling and elevation of intelligent utterance!

CAM God addresses Christ in the beginning of Hebrews in a majestic way, quoting from Psalm 102.

PL Yes. It is good to see that those addressed in that epistle are called to prove the purity of their genealogy in a remnant day by going forth to Him

without the camp bearing His reproach, (Hebrews 13: 13). Psalm 102, which is quoted in Hebrews 1: 10 - 12,

not only dwells on the majesty of the Lord in the divine greeting to Him, but dwells so touchingly upon Him who could liken Himself to a sparrow alone upon the house-top (verse 7). How enriching to our spiritual feelings is such an allusion to the depth of the Lord's stoop in love, enabling us, as entering into this spiritually, to rise to the majesty of the divine salutation at the end of the Psalms! In that psalm He is greeted of God under this name in contrast to being cut off as the Messiah; in Hebrews 1 as the self-existent One in contrast to the transient character of the material creation.

CAM That is very beautiful. It seems to link up the beginning of Hebrews and the close of it. The Lord is referred to as "the same yesterday, and today, and to the ages to come" at the end of Hebrews, and His sorrows are subsequently alluded to. The working of the thing out, I suppose, in the covenant is in the body of the epistle.

PL Truly. It is evident that the deep emotions to which the Psalms give expression are largely penned by one who among Old Testament saints came nearest to Christ in suffering, that is, David.

DIVINE NAMES (4) (JT 50)

Genesis 1:1; Genesis 14:18 - 20; Deuteronomy 32:15

JT At our last reading we were dwelling on Genesis 1:1. It is thought we should begin there tonight — considering the names of God in the Old Testament. In the originals of these three scriptures, the first is Elohim, which we have already touched on; the second is El, chapter 14; and the third is Eloah or Elah, the same under two different original words, one Hebrew and the other Chaldee. There are other names of God in the Old Testament, which we may consider at the next meeting. We noticed before that Elohim is God's creative name; at least, the name by which He is spoken of as Creator. He is the Being with whom men have to do; to whom they are responsible; He is to be worshipped. This is the appellation by which He is most frequently spoken of in the Old Testament. Why there should be so many names of God in Hebrew is a matter to be specially noted, for in the earlier western languages, especially Greek and Latin, there is only one title in each language. It would seem as if faith in its earlier stages laid hold of God in different features, each title conveying some distinctive one, as if love would multiply names. But in general the names in the Old Testament carry the idea of power. So that if we think creationally, faith would, as following the Old Testament custom, think of God under this great general title of Elohim. We have the attributes of God used as names too, such as the Almighty. The pronoun 'He' is used to designate the Deity. All these titles culminate in the name Father in which God is revealed to christians. We do well to look into these various designations of God and see whether our minds may not become enlarged as to Him, our affections, too; for the ultimate of all these considerations of the Scriptures should lead to a greater love for God. It is said that in the last days men are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

AR In that sense is the last revelation cumulative in relation to all that has preceded — the last revelation of God as Father?

JT Yes. And the accumulative designations largely refer to attributes; that is, God known in various ways, and all brought down in the New Testament as included in the appellation God, whom the only-begotten Son has declared. It is one term, whether it be in the Greek or Latin parts of the western world. Then He says that He has become Father to us: "and I will be to you for a Father, and ye shall be to me for sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty", 2 Corinthians 6:18. So all really merge in the great relation in which He stands to christianity as the Father. Of course. He is God — "yet to us there is one God, the Father", 1 Corinthians 8:6. So our considerations of this great subject

ought to lead to increased appreciation of God, and especially as our Father, because all these attributes enter into the name of Father.

APT "We have contemplated his glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father", John 1:14. Will you just say a word as to what is inferred there?

JT Well it is the idea of a father and an only-begotten son there. It is not *the* Father but *a* father. It is a *descriptive* thought, a thought taken up from ordinary family relationships and applied to Christ seen as man with God. They saw Him, and what did they see? It would not be as Moses was with God, or Enoch, or Noah. It would be in the intimate relation of Father and Son, and that brings the matter down concretely to our own experience.

AMacN Is it of Elohim the apostle speaks when addressing the Athenians? He says, "In him we live and move and exist", Acts 17:28?

JT The allusion is to that title; it is what God is in creation, only the apostle used the Greek name for God.

Ques The name the Lord God Almighty, what would be the force of that?

JT The living creatures. Revelation 4, address Him thus — as known in Old Testament times. "Who was" comes first there. It is God known historically. In chapter 1 "who is" comes first, *Himself* being more in mind. We shall come to that later, the compounds of divine names. They begin in Genesis 2. They are quite extensive, more than we can look at now. The wise course now is to take each of these titles and consider it by itself and then we shall see the compounds, how they work out. The first one is in chapter 2 — Jehovah Elohim. That is, the compound is the title of covenant relations with man. We are on a higher level in chapter 2 in that sense, because it is a covenant relation there.

FHL One has noticed that the Spirit of God used the word Elohim some thirty times up to that point. Would that not make it most emphatic at the outset of their operations?

JT That is quite right. It is used more than any other title of God in the Old Testament right through, showing that it is comprehensive as to God coming into His creation.

ANW Should Elohim, being in the plural, lead a godly unprejudiced Hebrew to inquire further as to the other Persons in the Trinity?

JT Well the question is whether it is plurality in the ordinary sense. I think it is generally understood to be more emphasis, as in many other instances. The plural represents emphasis, although the Spirit of God may have in mind that

the emphasis in this case involves more, awaiting the revelation of the Trinity in the New Testament.

ANW "Let *us* make" — would that not suggest something more than emphasis?

JT Well, it is a question of whether you are entitled to put more into it. The Spirit of God is mentioned in Genesis 1:2, and Psalm 2:7 speaks of the Son of God and thus the Trinity is plainly contemplated in the Old Testament, but, that it is in the title Elohim is doubtful. Agur asks, "What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou knowest?" Proverbs 30:4. Well, he may have had an inkling. Psalm 2 was probably written before his day. He professes to be a very ignorant man, and it is from a man that has a small estimate of himself you might get an inkling of the Trinity.

Ques And the Lord speaks of "My Father worketh hitherto and I work", John 5:17. Does He infer there that there was only one worker in the Old Testament?

JT He is designating one Person in the Trinity when He says that, and the New Testament shows that that Person is God: "There is one God, the Father"; but when He says, "My Father worketh hitherto" you cannot say that the other Persons of the Deity were not involved in what was done. But the Lord is speaking from the standpoint of the economy into which He had come. In this the Father and the Son are working. I think if we are too literal in these things it would lead us beyond our depth; the Lord speaks and the Holy Spirit speaks in the gospels from the standpoint of revelation, that is, from the standpoint of God as in the christian economy.

ANW Would you care to say that the Person mentioned in Genesis 1:2 is other than the Person mentioned in verse 1 — the Spirit of God?

JT The Spirit of God (Himself a divine Person) is included in the designation 'God' in chapter 1. The Spirit in verse 2 is in effect God Himself hovering over the face of the deep. His *feelings* were expressed there. Jehovah is spoken of as the Creator in the book of Proverbs, but then John 1:3 shows that the Creator really is Christ. Thus, in the light of the revelation of God, we can see that the three divine Persons are in the Old Testament contemplated as operating.

CAM There has been a statement made that one great thing to note in the Old Testament is that there is one God, and the great thing to note in the New Testament is that God is One. The reason I say that is because of what you have said in the matter of revelation if I understood you rightly; you connected that in a special way with the New Testament, is that right?

JT It is. The New Testament says, "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him", John 1:18, and "no one knows the Son but the Father, nor does any one know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son may be pleased to reveal him", Matthew 11:27. So that revelation properly belongs to the New Testament. It is there we get the whole truth about God. We have the word God in Genesis 1, and it may be said that it is revelation; it is a name used to designate the Supreme Being, but whether it can be called revelation is the question. I think we have to come to the New Testament properly for revelation and declaration and these two thoughts depend on sonship; that is they begin with one of the Persons becoming a Man so as to be apprehended by man. There was no mediator, Job said; he sought a mediator, but there was not one. Of course Moses was one, but he was only a creature; there was no one great enough to lay his hand upon God and upon man until Jesus became a Man, so that it all awaited that great and blessed fact.

JTJr Would the Psalms help us in understanding the thought of God? The psalmist says, 'My God' and 'O God' etc., and the Lord takes up the strain from Psalm 22 Himself.

JT Well, they do now that we understand, but what could you say more than that? It was Christ in Spirit speaking anticipatively on the cross. It was David who actually used the words at first; they were a prophetic allusion involving the incarnation, but Christ was speaking in Spirit. We can see now that sonship in Christ was anticipated, but how could David understand it? No doubt he inquired like Agur, "What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou knowest?" Proverbs 30:4. He had some little inkling but that is all we can say. Psalm 2 speaks about the Son, but where was He? "Thou art my Son; I this day have begotten thee", Psalm 2:7. Faith had laid hold of that, but had that day come? It had not come. The New Testament records the great event as having taken place.

CAM Those three men that came to Abraham have been likened, in your ministry, to the Trinity *suggestively*, is that right?

JT Yes, we can see that now.

CAM Quite so, so that God had given suggestions of what existed.

JHE Would all these titles be cumulative?

JT I think they are; we have already remarked that they entered into the great relation in which God stands to us. Whatever might be said in the Old Testament about God, you can say, He is my Father.

JHE We have had a little before us, "then the Son also himself shall be placed in subjection to him ... that God may be all in all", 1 Corinthians 15:28. That is the final thought, is it not?

JT Yes, it is the great ultimate in mind, but it does not set aside the abstract equality of the three Persons in the Trinity, nor the great variety of other thoughts that enter into the eternal state of things.

ANW Referring to Abraham again, while three stood before him, he answered and addressed One in the singular; is that not striking?

JT He did; he discerned Jehovah, and that is what we should discern, that there is one God, the Father,

but there is the Son as well, and the Spirit. I do not say for a moment that the three persons that came to Abraham were the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, because two of them were angels, but there is the *suggestion* of the Trinity. The idea of the three runs right through Scripture.

RWS In the multiplicity of names in the Hebrew, you mentioned the thought of power running through. Is there a suggestion of love in any of these titles?

JT Well, I suppose Jehovah would be near to that; Jah even more so. These are said to be names that are never pronounced by the godly in the Old Testament; they are too sacred in their minds. Whether that were so or not literally, it would indicate a certain affection developed in some that would lead to worship, not only because of His attributes, but because of what Jehovah Himself was, so that you get the psalmist saying, "I love Jehovah", Psalm 116:1. There is much said of God's love for His people, and this of course reflects what He is. You get love for Jehovah in the Psalms, and I suppose that would be the outcome of experience with Him. But I do not know that any of the names convey the idea of love, and yet when we come to the New Testament we are told that God is love; it was there; it must have been in some sense manifested. It most certainly was. He says to Israel, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee", Jeremiah 31:3.

Ques Did not they have some sense of relationship? In Isaiah they say, "thou, Jehovah, art our Father", Isaiah 63:16.

JT Yes; that would be the spirit of prophecy fully naming what Jehovah had been practically to Israel, but it is not a relationship entered into with them. In John 20 we see that He has formally taken up this relation with christians.

AC I wanted to ask you why in Genesis 1, where the creation is mentioned, Jehovah is omitted, but in chapter 2, we have Jehovah for the first time

coupled with 'Elohim'?

JT That is because Adam is brought in there in covenant relation. It contemplates covenant relationship in chapter 2, so that we have Jehovah frequently throughout the chapter. It is the compound thought we alluded to, which I think will help us when we come to it.

WB-w "The Most High God" — is that an attribute?

JT Yes; although a formal name of God. It is El first. You will notice in the New Translation in the note 'El Elyon' is power repeated. The note continues "Elyon is habitually represented by 'Most High'", but also carrying the idea of power. 'El' separately is God in the sense of power. So it is the idea of power and *elevation* in Genesis 14, a matter that enters with great instruction into that chapter, because we have Melchisedec there in view of the millennial world.

WB-w In chapter 17, it is Almighty. That is power too. Is that an attribute or a name?

JT It is an attribute, but used as a name of God, as we have been remarking. In the book of Job, it is used frequently. In 'Almighty God', Genesis 17: 1, the word *God* is power; that is, El, the second name we are touching on now; showing that whoever used that title first was impressed with the idea of power. God says to christians, "I will be to you for a Father, and ye shall be to me for sons and daughters". He says this as Jehovah Almighty, showing that we now have Him in that way. His power being available to us.

AR Was that the same power that was seen in the operations in relation to the creation?

JT Yes; that is the idea of it.

WB-w The word 'El' refers to God; and 'Almighty' would refer to power.

JT Well, El is power, too, as we have seen. It is the Mighty One; therefore when almightiness is added to that, the speaker must have had a great sense of power. He either knew it or wished to know it, and God says that is how we christians are to know Him. Of course the greatest evidence of that is the resurrection of Christ — the "exceeding greatness of his power". All these designations of power looked on to that.

JTJr You mean that all awaited the incoming of Christ before there could be any full knowledge of God.

JT Yes. Of course there was some knowledge of Him; because these names indicate knowledge of God but only in a general creative way, and as Creator, power, goodness, mercy and other beneficent things were seen in Him. Indeed

the whole system of creation denotes great thoughtfulness on the part of the Creator so as to lead the creature to love Him and worship Him in some sense. "Because what is known of God is manifest among them, for God has manifested it to them — for from the world's creation the invisible things of him are perceived, being apprehended by the mind through the things that are made, both His eternal power and divinity", Romans 1:19,20.

AR Would chapter 42 of Job confirm what you are saying — "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes", Job 42:5, 6; as if he had heard of God in some way through the creation, do you think?

JT Just so. Elihu first spoke to Job and evidently helped him, but all on the line of creation, bringing in the thunder, rain, hail, snow, and the clouds. Elihu used all these things in creation to affect Job, and he evidently succeeded to some extent, but not entirely; so that in chapter 38, God takes him on. And He says, "Gird up now thy loins like a man", verse 3; as if God would say, You are making some headway, and answer me if you can. And then God proceeds with the creation — Where was he "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Job 42:7. That is very touching, that there were persons *affected* by God as Creator. And God proceeds, calling his attention to the sea, light, darkness, snow, hail, constellations, birds, land and sea animals, especially behemoth, the chief of the ways of God, and leviathan, king over all proud beasts. And now Job says, "I will lay my hand upon my mouth", Job 40:4. First, his "words" were ended, but now he says, "I will lay my hand upon my mouth", as if to say, lest I should speak at all, I am so affected. And then finally, he judges himself — "now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself". He saw Him as known in creation, not in His essential Being, because no one sees Him in His essential Being, but in the way He created and what He created. And Job repented "in dust and ashes".

FHL In Psalm 19, David speaks of the declaration of the glory of God in the heavens, and he closes with "Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer", Psalm 19:14. I thought that followed your thought in regard to Job.

JT I think Job and the Psalms run together. Job is the gentile working something out with God in the creation. The Psalms are the Jews working things out; not only in the creation but through certain communications, the oracles of God, and therefore in the Old Testament they come nearer to God than others.

RWS Would you just say how "the invisible things of him are perceived, being apprehended by the mind through the things that are made, both his eternal power and divinity — so as to render them inexcusable", Romans 1:20?

JT That would be in creation. It is His power and divinity there; it is not His Deity. It is a word of less value or character than deity, so that it is what God is more in His attributes that is in mind, but when you come to Colossians, we have another word. It is not divinity but Godhead: "in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily", Colossians 2:9. That is actually His essential Being.

RWS The comparison of divinity and Deity helps.

AAT I notice in the book of Job that the title Jehovah is used much. Did Job have the light of God as Jehovah?

JT Well, it is mainly by the writer, whoever the author of the book is. Job himself is quoted as using the name Jehovah only in Job 1:21 and Job 12:9. The use of the title 'Jehovah' extends back to Eve; she was the first to use it, but that does not mean that she understood it any more than she understood the appellation 'God'. We understand the word 'God' now, but did the saints of the Old Testament? 'Jehovah' was not understood until Moses, although it had been used. God, as it were, made it new; He says, My *new* name, Jehovah. He formally says to Moses, that Abraham and Isaac and Jacob did not know Him by this name, but that they knew Him as Almighty God.

CAM Would you say that what we are considering tonight, the name of God as expressed in these three scriptures, is to be fundamental in our souls, in an initial way as to the recognition of God — His mightiness?

JT I think so; I think it is most important that we should look into these matters. It is a question of how many of us have thought of them, and if we have not it is well worth our while to stop and consider what is for *us* in these names that were used by Old Testament believers. We want to get the good of them.

APT Moses being the writer of these books, is it not important to note that in Exodus 3 he speaks of God saying, "I am the God of thy father?"

JT I think He alluded to Abraham. I think it is the general allusion to the beginning of that line, that God began with Abraham. He is the father of us all; he is the father of all believers. So that it is well to begin with that.

AR Luke in his gospel goes back to Adam, does he not?

JT He does; he says that Adam was of God. He traces the line of Christ through Adam to God.

AC The reference a moment ago to Job was interesting as to the creational aspect; in Exodus 24 Moses and Aaron and the seventy elders ascended the

mountain and they saw the God of Israel and ate and drank. Now 'Jehovah' is not mentioned there.

JT Well, that is a further advance on what we are speaking of now. It is not a question of the God of creation; it is the God of Israel. That is the covenant idea; they are on narrower ground, but spiritual ground. But we ought to dwell on the title 'Elohim', because it is His creative name. What can I get out of this name? We shall come to the God of Israel and to Jehovah later, God willing. Jehovah is not mentioned in Genesis 1, but in Genesis 2. It is God's relationship with man. But now we are dealing with God in creation and man included. Chapter 2 is man in relation to God not the cattle, although they are mentioned there as named by Adam. It is man set up in the garden on the principle of covenant and a wife given him there.

AC Well, then, we understand that in each mention of the names and titles of God there is a certain specific line of teaching or education for us.

JT Certainly; that is the point we are seeking to get at; young people here are enjoined: "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth", Ecclesiastes 12:1. That is important — your *Creator*. Who gave you your spirit? It was God. "And the spirit return unto God who gave it", Ecclesiastes 12:7. There is a direct link in that sense between God and every man, woman and child — "in him we live and move and exist", Acts 17:28. It is well to begin there. Every moment, every breath I breathe affects me. God gave me my spirit, involving my individuality and responsible link with Him.

CAM I suppose it is on that ground that you would have an appeal to anybody and everybody — in God's creation.

JT That is the ground upon which the gospel goes out in Mark; it fits in here. The Lord Jesus says, "Go into all the world", Mark 16:15. That is the moral side in which men are living in, lawlessness; but He says, "and preach the glad tidings to all the creation"; *the creation*; that is, men looked on in a different way. We may go out in the street and speak to men who are passing and call them wicked sinners and that sort of thing, and you may cause indignation, but if you speak to them as God's creatures, their attitude will be different; and you will say, I have a link with you, because I am a man, as Peter said to Cornelius, "I myself also am a man", Acts 10:26.

WB-w Let us get it clear in our minds as to whether Elohim refers to Deity, or whether it refers to His creative power, or both.

JT It is both; it is certainly His Deity, but then did they have an apprehension of God as we have? They did not. Even in His relation to Israel. He said, "Lo, I will come to thee in the cloud's thick darkness", Exodus 19:9. There were no

lights in the holiest. God said He would dwell in the thick darkness, 1 Kings 8:12. Now "he is in the light", 1 John 1:17.

WB-w Is there any name for God in the Scriptures that covers His deity only?

JT Elohim expresses His deity, only it is relative to creation. El is Deity too, only expressing power. Elohim is the plural of Eloah. It is power, but there is more in it. It is the supreme God in His creation, an Object of worship. But Jehovah and Jah, are nearer to absoluteness, as I hope we shall see when we come to these titles.

Ques Can we have the apprehension of God apart from revelation?

JT I think so. The creation testifies to that, but I do not think there would be any result to Him from it if the Holy Spirit was not operating. Left to himself, man would not arrive at it, though actually the testimony was there and that ought to lead him to it. The opportunity was there. But the Spirit was operating. It says immediately that He was brooding over the face of the deep and that is the secret really of men turning to God. In Adam's case God took pains with him, so that he might know Him — according to Genesis 2.

EEH What was it that affected the men in the city of Nineveh?

JT Jonah's preaching — "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" Jonah 3:4. That affected them. It is the preaching that brought about the repentance — the goodness of God.

APT In that way, Paul apparently uses Genesis 1, he says, "The God who has made the world", Acts 17:24. If he was not in the good of revelation, he would not be able to preach, would he? Is that how you are seeking to help on the line of the glad tidings?

JT In going about, he observed the shrine "to the unknown God". That is his text. Well the word 'God' is on the shrine. Who put it there? Some one with some exercise must have put it there. It was not idolatry. It was an unknown God that he had in mind. And Paul says, "Whom therefore ye reverence, not knowing him, him I announce to you", Acts 17:23. So he goes on to preach the gospel. He carried on from this. And so the angel that preaches the everlasting gospel begins with Genesis, Revelation 14:6,7 — "Fear God and give him glory ... do homage to him who has made the heaven and the earth and the sea and fountains of waters".

AR He will go further in his testimony?

JT No doubt, but he got back to it. It is a testimony of God for all times, and we should go back to it. Young people are enjoined to "remember thy Creator

in the days of thy youth".

CAM Creation has a voice, as you say; men are responsible to acknowledge God's divinity and power to which it testifies. The Holy Spirit was active to bring all into the light of it.

JT That is right; if the Spirit of God had not been active in this chaotic condition, there would be no results for God at all. The Spirit of God is the means of subjective result and that begins with faith and repentance, and that accounts for Abel's sacrifice. The Holy Spirit helped him to bring a suitable sacrifice; he brought his offering "of the firstlings of his flock, and of their fat", Genesis 4:4; he knew that was suitable to God.

ABP Does Romans 1 apply to all men, whether they have faith or not? They are inexcusable because it is possible to apprehend God in the things that He has made.

JT Psalm 19 is based on that, as was remarked a moment ago: "yet their voice is heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their language to the extremity of the world", Psalm 19:3,4. So that Paul brings that very thing in; he says they are without excuse.

ABP In our thanksgiving now, as knowing the declared name of the Father and it may be far beyond our apprehension of God, may it not? But in Genesis, the names, the titles you referred to, do you imply that they were an expression of the measure of the apprehension of some person?

JT Quite so; that is what we were speaking of lately, how the Old Testament merges with the New, how one dispensation merges into another; how all the testimony from Adam down was cumulative so that all that they had in Genesis came into the book of Exodus. In chapter 17 God said to Moses "Write this for a memorial in the book", Genesis 17:14; that is, the book already had been started; that suggests that the truth as it came out was cumulative, that there is nothing lost. So that the writing of Moses in the five books is the gathering up of everything from Adam down to his own time.

Ques You referred to the sacrifice that Abel brought; was that not what God had in view, that all should do that?

JT Quite so; God Himself gave the idea in that he made coats of *skin* for Adam and Eve; that is the basis. We often go back to Genesis 3 for the gospel; it is there in the principle of it.

AC Is it not remarkable that in the kind of gospel when Paul and Barnabas preach to the heathen audiences in Lystra they bring in the creational setting, referring to the creation of the heaven and the earth, Acts 14:15?

JT Yes. He adds the thought of filling their hearts with "food and gladness", bringing in not only the creation but the *fruit* of it.

AC And further confirming what you were saying as to the various titles the Spirit of God brings to us as to the Godhead, that we should be educated through it.

JT Well, that is what is in mind tonight, to try and get the brethren, the young ones especially, to look into this, to look into their Bibles. You see what a range of things is there.

Now leaving Genesis 1 and going on to chapter 14, we get the priest and it is in connection with moral elevation and power; "the Most High God", coming in after Noah, after the flood, after Babel and the scattering of the race. Abraham is taken up and God is starting anew in him. The idea of father is stressed in Abraham, clearly pointing to the fatherhood of God, which had not yet been disclosed. It underlies the stress laid on the name 'Abram' which is 'high father' and then Abraham, an enlargement upon it, which is 'father of a multitude'; that is. God is taking him up upon the ground of fatherhood, as if to intimate to him, I am to be that, but you are to set it out. Abraham is to set out the idea — a fresh testimony brought in, and now he is met by this great person called Melchisedec. Who is he? The writer to the Hebrews, says, "without father, without mother, without genealogy; having neither beginning of days nor end of life", Hebrews 7:3. And his name means "king of righteousness", and he is "king of peace" as well, being king of Salem. So that we have a great setting now, a family setting, and a new name of God, it is the first time the word 'El' is used. The Spirit of God went through fourteen chapters before this title of God is brought in. It is a family idea, and God is saying, There must be great elevation. Abraham is 'high father'; that is elevation, and now we have the 'Most High', and He is most powerful, so that we are in the presence of a divine setting of things, which enters into christianity, or, as we noted before, Abraham is the father of us all, Romans 4:16.

CAM The light that the New Testament gives us would show that inasmuch as Melchisedec was "made like unto the Son of God" this must have been a very wonderful epoch in the ways of God in regard to fatherhood and sonship.

JT Yes. This fourteenth chapter of Genesis is a remarkable chapter because we are introduced into the divine family setting involving elevation and power. So that we need not be afraid of current happenings. The Lord says, "And when ye shall hear of wars and tumults, be not terrified", Luke 21: 9. There is power on our side, and there is elevation on our side; let us therefore not get down to the level of men and what they are doing. Here a world war had just

happened, four kings with five, and this great personage comes in and blesses Abraham.

Rem The Most High God would be the One who overrules the outcome of the nations in conflict, and the High Priest would be the one who intercedes to help the saints from being affected by the conflict.

JT That is right; He is the Most High, meaning that He is above the level of all that is going on. God is not affected by the things that are happening, and lest Abraham should be affected by the things that are happening, God's priest meets him and brings out bread and wine to support him above the pressure and influence of war conditions.

CAM I suppose in that way we should recognise that in this tremendous conflict, four against five, our brethren would be recovered that are apparently lost.

JT That is what comes out, the recovery of Lot is the one thing that concerns Abraham, it is when he comes back after the slaughter of the kings that he meets this great personage, and I think it points very peculiarly to our own times. It points to power in God, and elevation in God and priesthood on His side on our account.

FHL The great contrast to the slime pits, Genesis 14:10.

AR Is there now power to enable Abraham to refuse the king of Sodom when he comes to him afterwards?

JT He does refuse him; he does not come under the influence of the warring powers.

JTJr Does he maintain the separation that God brought in in chapter 11? Is that maintained in Abraham's life?

JT Exactly. Where did he dwell here at the beginning of the war? I was thinking of that. It gives us a clue as to our own position now. It is said, "Then Abram moved his tents, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron. And he built there an altar to Jehovah", Genesis 13:18. And then we have this war started. That gives us a corresponding position, I think; that is, we are to be dwelling outside the world in connection with the purposes of God, at Hebron. That saves us from taking sides merely because of nations. It elevates us above all that, a very important matter,

because we are sure to be defiled if we take sides with nations *as nations*; at the same time taking sides with right against wrong.

ANW So the supremacy in Elohim would suggest supremacy in majesty; whereas the supremacy in El would suggest infinite might, is that the thought?

JT That is the idea, and that God has a system, although the divine system did not fully develop until Exodus, but still we have a priest of the Most High God here, and that involves a system, to some extent. It is not the service of God that is in mind here. Melchisedec does not represent that side, Aaron does. Service Godward is seen in Aaron in type, but Melchisedec is from God towards the saints.

ABP Is the place of peace important, too? He is King of Salem as well as King of righteousness. A place of peace would that be?

JT That is what it is; by interpretation, the writer to the Hebrews says, "also King of Salem, which is King of peace".

ABP Does it anticipate Jerusalem?

JT It does.

ARS What have you to say about Lot? It says in this chapter that Lot was taken captive. He gets recovered and then goes right back into what he was recovered from — a solemn matter.

JT Just so. He went back into Sodom.

AR It says in this chapter, Lot was taken captive. I suppose he represents those who come under the thing and are affected by it, affected by the darkness.

JT Yes; it is significantly stated, "For he dwelt in Sodom", Genesis 14:12. He came under the influence of the warring nations. As possessed of faith, the saints are living in the light of the Most High God, we are outside of that — living in Hebron; that is, in relation to God's counsels which were before the world.

APT Verse 13 in this chapter indicates that the war does not change the heavenly position. Abraham is still dwelling in the same place at the end of chapter 13.

JT Just so. "And one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew", Genesis 14:13. I suppose this is the first time the word 'Hebrew' is mentioned. It marked them off as the people of God. They came from another place across the Euphrates. "And he dwelt by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eschol, and the brother of Aner. And these were Abram's allies" (meaning, 'masters of covenant'). Whatever they represent, they would be men in a corresponding status. They were not among the warring nations.

CAM It is a very searching thing about the warring nations. I suppose the reason John could write in The Revelation about things that should be "after these" is that he was taken up into heaven at the beginning of chapter 4.

JT They were to be written from a heavenly point of view.

Rem I was thinking of the three hundred and eighteen servants born in Abraham's house. That would correspond to the assembly's position today, it is not systematically organised as the nations are.

JT That brings up a very important distinction; that christians are warriors or soldiers, trained. He had three hundred and eighteen, we are told in Genesis 14:14. "He led out his trained servants, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them", meaning that it was a household matter. Christianity is a household matter. It is the household of God, and the saints are trained servants in it, but we are warriors of a *heavenly* kind. "For the arms of our warfare are not fleshly", 2 Corinthians 10:4 — "not against blood and flesh, but against principalities, against authorities, against the universal lords of this darkness, against spiritual power of wickedness in the heavenlies", Ephesians 6:12. We are warriors but not of the ordinary kind. But then we must not despise the ordinary kind because they belong to the four monarchies which God uses provisionally for our protection, and therefore we are not to despise them as if they were just the world, because they are essential to government. Governments must have soldiers, they must have police, etc.; we do not belong to that side at all, but we do not despise them. We pay for them from that point of view. I believe that is what Abraham represents. He is here a characteristic believer. He used what he had to rescue his brother.

ARS What is the meaning of the word "the Hebrew"?

JT It is not clear, but what is stated in the note in the New Translation furnishes some light. It is implied that Abram came from across the Euphrates. It is a term applied particularly in Exodus. The Hebrews were despised. It would look as if the term might bear on the children of God. "For this reason the world knows us not, because it knew him not", 1 John 3:1.

ABP Does that emphasise our heavenly position?

JT It corresponds with it; that you are under reproach here, so we are to accept the reproach of Christ, "Let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach", Hebrews 13:13.

AR What have you got to say about the scripture in Deuteronomy?

JT There is not much time now, but just to add that Eloah (Chaldee, Elah) is a term used much in the book of Job, also Ezra and Daniel; and I suppose it would mean God known in foreign or captive conditions. The Jews were there but God had not forsaken them. He puts His people into conditions, in discipline, that are hard, but He has not forsaken us. So that it is a Chaldean title in Ezra and Daniel. The name of God was known there, too. Wherever you go, you will find God; I think that is the idea of it. Job found Him, and those who were captives among the gentiles found Him. You will never lose God if you are right with Him. Although He hid His face from the Jews nationally, wherever there was love for God as in Daniel, God was there.

CAM Would you say the second book of Psalms illustrates that? They are outside the place of the ordinary current of blessing, and the name of God changes in that book characteristically. It is more *God* than Jehovah.

JT It is very comforting that no matter where we are placed under the government of God in discipline, if we cry to God we shall find Him. We may not be able to use the Hebrew title so to speak, but I can use the title in the language of the country where I have gone. If I love Him, I will find a name for Him.

WB-w Even when Israel had given Him up. He could be found. Is that the idea?

JT That is how it reads: "Then Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked — Thou art waxen fat. Thou art grown thick, And thou art covered with fatness; — He gave up God who made him", Deuteronomy 32:15. If you will look at the notes, you will see that it is Eloah, the first occurrence. "He gave up God who made him". The word 'God' is used, thus, in rebellious conditions. "And lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation", Deuteronomy 32:15. That is, they had given Him up, but why should they have given up *such* a God?

W.B-w. Like Romans 1?

JT It corresponds with Romans 1. They did not like to retain Him in their knowledge.

ABP When God spoke to Job's comforters. He did not excuse them for not knowing Him. They had not spoken of Him as His servant Job had, and therefore they had to sacrifice, and Job had to pray for them. There is no excuse in that sense for not knowing God.

AR How does Psalm 139 fit in: "take the wings of the dawn and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea", Psalm 139:9. Is that the same idea here?

JT Quite so; God will be there; He is not far from any of us, no matter where we are.

JTJr It is a remarkable thing in verse 39 you have another name — "I am HE", which means 'The Same'. If we do get away and come back, we find that He is the *same*.

THE DEW (WJH 16)

Deuteronomy 32: 1 - 3; Daniel 4: 33 - 37; Micah 5: 7 - 9

I desire to engage our thoughts for a few moments with the immense power that is available to the saints in what is represented as the dew. Amongst the weapons of our warfare (which are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds) perhaps one of the greatest weapons available is the dew. One feels how often we fail to realise what can be accomplished with dew.

The scripture I read in Deuteronomy 32, speaking no doubt of the Lord Jesus pre-eminently, says, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew." The dew, I take it, refers to the gracious, gentle, blessed influences of heaven; it is the dew of heaven. Joseph is blessed with "the precious things of heaven ... the dew." The Lord Jesus Christ, the true Joseph, and the true Moses, was down here in this world covered with dew. It did not descend upon Him; He corresponds with Mount Hermon; of which it is said, "The dew of Hermon." That is to say, the Lord Jesus Christ, as a blessed Man upon earth, morally was so exalted, He extended into heaven itself; the dew was native to His blessed Person. It descends as the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion, and the Lord Jesus Christ towered up into heaven as He walked through this world, and the dew was upon Him everywhere. It was a mighty power; it came out particularly in His doctrine and in His words. Just listen to some of His doctrine: "Blessed are the poor in spirit." That doctrine fell upon the ears and hearts of those that listened to it as the very rain from heaven; it rained upon them because He Himself was the expression of what He said, hence the power of it.

With what gracious influence of heaven His doctrine would fall upon those that heard! who so poor in spirit? He adorned the doctrine. What a wonderful thing the apostle refers to in Titus, that the doctrine looks better with us attached to it than without us, that the doctrine would not look so well if we were missing. Is that so? "Adorn," it says, "the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." The Lord Jesus adorned His doctrine. Who so poor in spirit as He was; His whole pathway was marked by perfect dependence upon God, never a movement of self-complacency or self-sufficiency;

He was dependent to the last, going down even unto death as poor in spirit: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." He went there confident, in dependence upon God even to the grave.

What blessed words the Lord utters in another of His doctrines: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." The doctrine came down as the gracious, gentle influence of heaven supported by the meekest Man in all the earth. What do you think of meekness such as this: All sin and blasphemy against the Son of man shall be forgiven. Think of it, He says that for those who blaspheme His blessed name there is forgiveness. Never before was meekness like that! The Lord Jesus in His doctrine supported it by what He was, and it dropped down, not as arbitrary commands, not as doctrinal statements, which must be obeyed, but it dropped down as rain into every heart that appreciated it.

And then it says, "My speech shall distil as the dew." Think of His speech, think of His gracious words coming into the souls of men like the dew. The Lord stood up in Luke 4, with all the dew of heaven upon Him when "He began to say" (Luke never tells us that He finished). He stood up with the dew of heaven upon Him, and every word distilled as the dew. We cannot touch on all His words — every one of them infinitely precious — but one would turn in thought to one or two occasions when He spoke. Think of the Lord drawing near to the city of Nain, and His saying to the woman, "Weep not." He brought the influence of heaven into the soul of that poor woman — His words distil as the dew. And when Simon Peter stood in the house of the high priest, a self-confident heart, a man who did not know his own heart, who approached evil in confidence instead of fear and trembling, who denied with oaths and curses that he knew the Lord, it says, "Jesus looked upon him," and carried into his soul the very grace, the very gentleness of heaven, so that it broke his heart, for it says, "he went out, and wept bitterly." And then think of His words on the cross. In that dark and terrible scene, indescribably dark, encompassed by the hatred of the human heart, the dew of Hermon descends upon it all — "My speech shall distil as the dew" He says, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"; the dew of heaven, so powerful in its mighty effect that a man who had lived all his life in sin and darkness and evil is turned right about. The malefactor says, "We indeed justly" (he judged himself under the power of the dew), "but this man hath done nothing amiss." "Lord," he says, "remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." One calls attention to this because the dew is to come upon the mountains of Zion, that is to say, upon each one of us; we are all mountains of Zion. We have all been set up in relation to Christ on the principle of sovereign mercy, and the same blessed dew of Hermon is to descend on the mountains of Zion, and our doctrines are to drop as the rain. If our doctrines drop in any other way, they will not accomplish anything; there will be no power in them. We may speak ever so correctly of doctrine, but does it come down upon the saints as the rain, the

gentle, blessed, gracious influence of heaven? It will accomplish much like that. And our words, do they distil as the dew? What are the words we use towards one another? "My speech," says the Lord, "shall distil as the dew." What was true in such blessed pre-eminence in Him is also to be true in the mountains of Zion.

One word more as to what the dew can accomplish. The influence of heaven creates a condition for the manna to fall upon; you can never get manna until you have the dew. The manna does not fall upon the earth, and it does not fall upon hearts engulfed in business,

and it does not fall in newspapers either, it falls upon the dew. Where you have the gracious, blessed influence of heaven, there you have the manna. You will get the manna morning by morning. Under the blessed influence of heaven we can get the bread of the mighty, so that we can proceed on our way through the wilderness energised by the bread of heaven, by the food of the mighty. Think of Caleb, he ate that bread to such an extent that when he was an old man he said he was just as he was forty years before. Of Moses, too, it is said his strength remained in him, he never got weak. The influence of heaven in this town, in every place, makes room for the manna to fall, makes room for that wonderful food, so small, so round, so white, like coriander seed, tasting of the sweetness of honey. But if we have not the influence of heaven — the dew — no manna can come. Let the influence of heaven be present, and the manna can fall each morning, so that we move through this wilderness in correspondence with the manna; we become small, we become round — no jagged, awkward corners — we become white, we feed upon the sweetness of the grace of God.

What wonderful provision the dew is for every one of us. Who would leave the influence of heaven and run to feed upon the sink of corruption in this world? Who would go there when they can have the manna by abiding under the influence of heaven?

One would pass on in order that we might get a little sense of the immense power of the dew in the case of Nebuchadnezzar. But first of all it might be well to refer to Gideon. Gideon had to face conflict with the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the East. The Midianite is a terrible man, he trades in the things of God. He is prepared to buy and sell Joseph; he is prepared to barter in the things of God for his own gain. He is a terrible enemy, and Gideon is called upon by the Lord to meet him in conflict. Gideon was the least in his father's house, and one who had no idea of personal greatness, no sense of what he could accomplish; and it says the Lord looked upon him, delighted to find a man like that. I wonder if the Lord can look upon

us like that? And He says, "Go in this thy might"; and so he is to face the enemies.

Gideon is very anxious that he should not move a step towards the camp of the enemy till he is perfectly satisfied he knows where the dew is; he must know where the dew is before he will move, because if he is going to move, he must move in accordance with the dew. He cannot go on until he is quite sure he has the influence of heaven with him. Is that how we approach conflict? Have we got some difficulty to face, some question of the rights of the Lord? Never move at all until you are quite sure the dew is with you. With the dew with us we are sure of victory, because we have the influence of heaven; we shall not be using carnal weapons, we shall be moving in the power of the dew.

Now I would like to indicate what wonderful things can be done with the dew if we can wait for the dew to work. Think of Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up in pride and self-will and cruelty, prepared to cast men into burning fiery furnaces; there he is against the people of God, against God, and what will God do with that great adversary, that immense difficulty that exists, how will it be met? God says, I will bathe him for seven years with the dew, that will alter him. Have we sought to meet our difficulties like that? Dear brother or sister, have you a difficulty with any one? Try bathing them with the dew; do it for seven years; that is how God acts. It will break down a Nebuchadnezzar. Under the gracious, gentle influence of heaven for seven years, his understanding returned to him, and he moved on the rest of his days magnifying and honouring the King of heaven. His greatness, his position, his enmity to God had gone,

his hostility to the people of God is over. "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and Honour the King of heaven." Who would ever have thought that the dew could do that, who would have contemplated that it was possible that seven years of bathing with the dew of heaven would transform that hard, bitter man into one of the servants of God? Let us try it; wonderful things have been done before today by approaching a difficulty with the dew; by gathering it from Christ — that is the test.

You say, How can I do it? None of us can do it of ourselves, but the dew descends from Hermon to the mountains of Zion. Surround that blessed Man, dear brethren, keep in touch with that blessed One, and the dew descends. It is not native to us, not to any of us, but if we are near to Him in our affections wonderful things can be done with the dew of Hermon which descends upon the mountains of Zion. Brethren can be together in unity there, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" We dwell

together in unity where the dew descends from heaven to the mountains of Zion. "There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." Now the scripture in Micah shews us that there may come a time when the dew is not effective. The Lord Jesus knew the power of the dew. He moved through this world bedewing people's souls with the very grace of heaven, and, indeed, the dew was equally applied to Judas, but that man was unresponsive to it. One marvels at the infinite patience of the Lord with Judas. He never exposed him during the three and a half years. The disciples at the end had no idea who it was that should betray Him; the Lord had treated him in the same gracious, blessed way that He had treated them all. So we learn the divine order in Micah. Jacob is first of all to be as dew. "The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew." If that is not effective then the remnant of Jacob shall be as a lion. That is exactly what happened, and the Lord eventually had to roar at Judas as a lion. He had to reject him, but the dew had been refused, the blessed influence of heaven had not been responded to. But mark the patience first.

Now in the Book of Daniel the same principle is observed. The dew breaks the heart of Nebuchadnezzar and his will, but Belshazzar his son, who knew of it, was not affected by it, and the judgment of God fell upon him. But the thing to be observed by us all is that the remnant of Jacob shall be as the dew among many people. Let us first of all meet every difficulty with the dew. I do not say there may not be a time when we shall have to be as a lion, but the point for each one of us to lay hold of is the immense power that is in the dew to bring in the gracious, blessed influence of heaven.

The Lord Jesus when He went up to heaven still had the dew, and from heaven He bedewed the soul of Saul of Tarsus until it broke his heart. Saul of Tarsus corresponds with Nebuchadnezzar, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, an insolent, overbearing man. Have we a difficulty like that to meet? The Lord bedewed his soul with the dew of heaven, and it broke his heart and his will. He surrendered under the power of the dew, and he says, "I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." We can trust that weapon to do almost anything if only we will use it. Difficulties between brethren and between sisters will vanish if the mighty weapons of the meekness and gentleness of Christ are laid hold of, but how it tests where we are. The dew is there upon Hermon; it is to be had by nearness to Christ. There is no difficulty about getting the dew. The Lord Jesus is blessed with the blessings of the dew. He has got them, but we have to go to Him for them. The apostle had to roar as a lion in regard to one of the Corinthians; the dew had not affected him, and he says, "Put away that wicked person," but in regard to them as a people he bedewed their souls with

the grace of heaven. He made clear to them that whatever they did to him, whether they spake against him, or contrasted him with other apostles, it did not alter his love for them. Thus he says, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." That mountain of Zion was so near to Hermon that he met things in the grace of Christ.

One greatly desires that we might get a sense of what can be done with the dew. If Saul of Tarsus can be converted, and if Nebuchadnezzar can be transformed into a servant of God, magnifying and honouring the King of heaven, then what can the dew not do? The difficulty is that we know so little about waiting. God was prepared to go on bedewing Nebuchadnezzar for seven long years before He would give him up. If we are prepared to follow the divine example we can accomplish wonders in the power and influence of the grace of heaven.

May the Lord help us then to really appreciate what is possible if we attack difficulties in the grace of heaven, the weapons of our warfare, and we shall find there is mighty power to break up the hard clods with the dew. The hard hearts that have been unmoved by the repetition of right statements and correct doctrine, the grace of heaven will break such hearts and transform them for the service of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 33

- (Deuteronomy 9)
  PRIESTLY GREATNESS (SMC 1)
- DEUTERONOMY 33 (CAC 5)
- THE BLESSING OF THE TRIBES (CAC 17)
- HOW THE FULL TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL IS REACHED (JT 3)
- THE LEVITICAL PLATFORM (JT 7)
- WHAT THE ASSEMBLY IS TO CHRIST, AND WHAT IT IS TO GOD (JT 11)
- THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL (8) (JT 16)
- THE INHERITANCE, PRESENT AND FUTURE (JT 18)
- THE CARE MEETING (JT 18)
- THE KING AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART (JT 27)
- THE BLESSING OF MOSES (JT 32)
- ENLARGEMENT (JT 33)
- THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST IN THE ASSEMBLY (3) (JT 43)
- THE GREATNESS OF THE SAINTS (JT 44)
- UPRIGHTNESS (JT 44)
- THE ANCIENT MOUNTAINS (JT 46)
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DEUTERONOMY 33 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 33

This is a chapter of wonderful and unmixed blessing. It brings before us the spiritual features of the Israel of God, and thus it may be regarded as corresponding with the tribes as represented typically in the precious stones of the priestly breastplate. Such features are the product of the work of God.

The introduction (verses 2 - 6) and the conclusion (verses 26 - 29) are general; the one shewing the origin of all blessing in the movements of God in love, and the other giving the result, in security and happiness, to an upright people who know Him as their God.

The movements of God which Moses speaks of in verse 2 are not movements in redemption and delivering power, as seen in Egypt and at the Red Sea; they are movements in regard to a redeemed and delivered people with whom God has established His covenant. He moves from certain points which represent what is in His own mind, and He moves that He may work it all out in result in His people.

"Jehovah came from Sinai". That was the place where He made known the requirements of His love. We are justified in so regarding it, even apart from the direct statement of the next verse, for if He had not loved the people He would not have sought their love,

nor been jealous of every influence that would divert their affections from Him. If God moves from the point of what His love requires, He will not fail to secure it; He moves that His heart may be satisfied by bringing about in His people a full answer to all that He desires.

Then, further, He "rose up from Seir unto them". At the opening of this book we are told, "There are eleven days journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea" (Deuteronomy 1: 2). Seir indicates the direct — one might say, the divine — way into the land, by taking which the necessity for forty years in the wilderness might have been obviated. It typifies in this connection the Spirit as that by which what God has before Him for His people may be quickly reached. We may be forty years in coming to it that we can only reach divine things by the Spirit, but God's movements in love began with that as a starting-point, and He will never deviate from it.

Then "He shone forth from mount Paran". Paran was where the cloud stood still when the people made their first journey from Sinai in divine order and under divine leading (Numbers 10: 11 - 13). The tabernacle had been made by a devoted people, had been set up by Moses and its services inaugurated,

and the camp had been ordered in relation to the tabernacle and its movements. All was, so far, according to God; everything corresponded with His mind. It was that brief period, before unbelief had begun to work its mischiefs, when all subsisted and moved in divine order — a period which had its antitype in the days recorded for us in Acts 2 - Acts 4. God shone forth by securing in His people what was in correspondence with Himself. It has been actually seen on earth by the mighty power of His Spirit in conditions which were, as yet, uncorrupted. His shining was distinctly seen upon His people, and their movements and order were correspondent with it. This was how God actually moved when He inaugurated the dispensation in which we have part. He moved in love, with unalloyed blessing in His heart and in His ways.

"And he came from the myriads of the sanctuary (or holy myriads)". God moves from the starting point of His own thought to have holy myriads before Him. He had purposes from eternity, formed in Christ, to have a vast company "holy and blameless before him in love" (Ephesians 1: 4). He will secure those "holy myriads" by working in sovereign electing love; He moves from that point in such a way as to secure it fully that His love may be satisfied.

"From his right hand went forth a law of fire for them". God's own movements become a "law of fire" for His people, for this is probably an allusion to the pillar of fire which gave them light. Spiritual guidance is assured as we move in the light of the movements of God; the strength of His right hand is then for and with us. To have such a "law" is a very definite mark of divine favour, for it is the mandate of a love which delights that we shall move with Him even amidst surrounding darkness.

"Yea, he loveth the peoples" (verse 3) is a precious word, especially for the "other sheep" which are not of the Jewish fold, for it takes in Gentiles, and intimates that God's movements in love have a wide bearing; they have regard to the many who, through the word of His servants, are invited to the mountain of blessing by the call of His grace (verse 19). They are viewed, too, as gathered together, having come, according to purpose, into the hand of Christ the Mediator. "All his saints are in thy hand". The Father has given them all into the hand of the Son. What a skilful hand! How gentle and yet how firm! One of the precious things we learn from John's Gospel is that all the sheep are in the hand of Christ, and none can pluck them thence. The effect of being in His hand is that "they sit down at thy feet; each receiveth of thy words". How great the change from the waywardness and wilfulness which marked Israel according to flesh! What a joy it must have been to Moses to contemplate before his death that such a result would be brought about by the mighty working of God! As subdued by divine love, the place is taken

which Mary took of sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to His word. It is thus that divine impressions are made.

The law, as commanded by Christ, is "the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob" (verse 4), for it expresses the pleasure of God's love concerning us. How often is the word "commandment" used in John's Gospel and in his Epistles! When Israel occupies the earthly inheritance they will be in it as finding heart-delight in everything that God wills. His law will be the inheritance in which their affections live, and its blessedness will be proved in supremely happy relations with God and with one another. What they take up in their affections will be their inheritance in the truest sense; it is that, I am sure, which is greatest in the mind of God. The "land" without the "law" could never be the inheritance in any true or divine sense. It is not of material things that the Psalmist says, "They are more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold; and sweeter than honey and the dropping of the honeycomb" (Psalm 19: 10). And if we would know what the "law" is to one who has taken God's testimonies as a heritage for ever, we may read it in great fulness and detail in Psalm 119. A psalm which is the more remarkable because it is the language of one who is not in the inheritance as to outward or millennial conditions, but who has found a spiritual heritage in everything that expresses the pleasure of God, and who speaks with ardent affection of His law,

His commandments, His statutes, His testimonies. Eternal life will be the spiritual side of the world to come, and it will be entered into by those who have learned the blessedness of the "law" in Christ.

We are in this most favoured position today. We have come under commandment to Christ as the true Moses, the true King in Jeshurun, and what He enjoins has been perfectly exemplified in Himself. It is not a law as a mere code of rules, but the powerful and affecting influence of a living Person who has acquired kingly rights in the way of infinite love. Jeshurun — the upright people — come to light now by giving Him the place of supremacy. He is "King in Jeshurun", and none are upright before God save those who accord Him this place. We shall only learn the meaning of this chapter as we come under His blessed rule; its spiritual reality can only be known in the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love.

It is in the gathering together of "the heads of the people and the tribes" that Christ gets His true place as King in Jeshurun, and the will of God prevails. It is a great thought of God that His people should be "gathered together" (verse 5). We shall look at each tribe separately as we go through this chapter, but we must do so with the thought in our minds from the outset that they are to be "gathered together". God has given us in detail in the blessing of each tribe

the features which are to mark His people collectively as enjoying the land, but they have to be "gathered together" to get the completeness of His thought. The tribes are not seen here in the order of birth, or according to their order as in the wilderness, but according to a sovereign disposition which assigns to each some particular feature of what is in God's mind for His people, with a view to it all being gathered together in them collectively.

Reuben is to "live, and not die" (verse 6). The thought here is not the positive blessedness of life as fully developed in the sphere of its enjoyments — life "abundantly" (John 10: 10) — but life as contrasted with dying; that is, life viewed potentially. If Reuben died there would be no possibilities, but if he *lives* who can tell what the result may be for himself or for God? The first feature of divine blessing, as seen in this chapter, is a people in whom there are great possibilities because they *live*. It reminds one of the Lord's words to Paul at Corinth, "I have much people in this city". Many of them had, perhaps, not yet been called, but they were in the Lord's view as living "people" — potential material for the assembly of God, with all the possibilities connected with such a privileged place.

"And let his men be of number", as it reads literally (see margin of New Translation). Each one is taken account of; none are lost in a crowd. *Names* were written in the book of life; all written there are the subjects of God's personal election. We read of Jehovah counting "when he inscribeth the peoples" each one born in Zion (Psalm 87); we read also of "every one that is written among the living" (Isaiah 4: 3). Each saint has a definite number, and is known by name; each one is, if we may so say, a distinguished individual. The consideration of this would produce exercise that the possibilities to which we have referred might be fully attained. If I am personally taken account of by God for a place of blessing in His Israel, it is for me to learn what that place is, and to be found filling it by His grace. Each saint should consider that he has his own personal and God-given distinction, and he should earnestly covet that it should come into expression.

Then in Judah (verse 7) we see how those who live come to light, and how they find their place with their people. It is by prayer, as we see in Saul of Tarsus and Cornelius and Lydia. They are not characterised by self-confidence or self-dependence, but by prayer. This separates them inwardly from the world, and it becomes essential to them to find their people. It is a fine moment when the voice of Judah is heard; God hears every voice that is uplifted in true prayer. Every praying person realises intuitively that a people who are altogether different from the world are his people now. Not that things have been explained to him, or taught doctrinally, but as having to do

with God for himself he becomes conscious that those who have to do with God are *his* people now. "Bring him unto his people". Divine intuitions always work in this direction in living souls. They find themselves out of accord with their old worldly associations, and they realise that *their* people now are those who fear and love God, and are under His blessing. Saul and Cornelius and Lydia were brought to their people, and we see how young converts clave to those who were blessed of God (Acts 13: 43; Acts 17: 4, 34). They realised that there was that here which was of God, and that they now, through His grace, belonged to it. The work of God in souls always moves on this line.

But then we are brought to God's people as *our* people not only to share in their blessing, but to take part in conflict and labour for them. "May his hands strive for them; and be thou a help to him against his oppressors". As brought to our people we realise that they are in conflict because they are not going with the stream of this world, and we come to strive for them in their holy war. Judah is to be a good soldier; his people are in conflict, and he must strive for them. The Philippian jailor was brought to his people, but they were in a strenuous campaign; they were all out on military service (see Philippians 1:7; Philippians 1:27-30). Epaphroditus was sent by Paul to them as a "fellow-soldier", and if the jailor himself was the "true yoke-fellow" of Philippians 4: 3, it is easy to see how the blessing of Judah was to be exemplified in him. It is good to be impressed by the fact that we are brought to our people, not simply to have a happy time, but to strive for them in holy conflict. But this militant striving can only be maintained by divine power; therefore the help of God is essential against the enemy. But, with that help, there is nothing in opposers to fear, and the fact that God is with His people is demonstrated (Philippians 1: 28).

Simeon is left out here to make room, as we might say, for the two sons of Joseph. But he would be morally included in Judah as having his portion in the land within the territory of Judah.

Prayer, and identification with God's people in their conflict, as seen in Judah, leads to the development of holiness and priestly conditions as seen in Levi. The word "godly" in verse 8 is the same as "holy" in Psalm 16: 10 and Psalm 89: 19, where Christ is spoken of as God's "Holy One". Trial (Massah) and contention (Meribah) are often God's provings. These were places where the people tempted Jehovah and contended with Him, but on His part He was proving Levi there. The naughtiness of His people generally is often a test for those to whom God is minded to shew peculiar favour. The testings of the priesthood are educational in view of God's intention to give them His Thummim and Urim. I gather from verse 8 that God will not give the

intelligence of His mind to unproved persons. It is not the mind of the Spirit to call attention here to Levi's failure, but to shew that priesthood involves dealings of God which are of a testing nature. His thought is to have a godly or holy one who, apart from natural or fleshly influences, can be entrusted with His Perfections and Lights, as fully known in Christ, and can regard His people according to the place which He has given them in the breastplate of judgment. Levi under divine proving (verse 9) was found free from natural influences. God's word and covenant governed him; he considered only for God; when Moses uttered the challenge, "He that is for Jehovah, let him come to me", the sons of Levi were ready to consecrate themselves, and to move contrary to all that was natural.

The blessing of Levi indicates a great development of spiritual possibilities. The Thummim and the Urim were additional to the law; they were a means of getting the mind of Jehovah (see Numbers 27: 21; 1 Samuel 28: 6; Ezra 2: 63). God makes His mind available amongst His people, and this in connection with all His own Perfections and Lights as they have been disclosed in Christ. How blessed to be possessed of them in such a way that there is present with us at all times the means of knowing how the people of God should act! It is the first great privilege of the priestly tribe. It intimates a spiritual intelligence which is not exactly derived from the Scriptures — though surely ever subject to them — but from personal intercourse with God. There is not always a text of Scripture for every detail, but the priest with Thummim and Urim would always have intelligence in the mind of God. There are principles in Scripture which would guide in every possible situation or difficulty, and the priest would be able to give light as to the principle which should govern in any particular case. They observe God's word and keep His covenant; they always have in view the scope of His revelation. This is a marked advance on the blessing of Judah, for it signifies a nearness to God in holiness which gives access to His secret for the benefit of His people in every crisis and difficulty. How covetable is such a favour!

Those who are possessed of it are the true teachers of God's ordinances and law. They do not teach like the scribes, who know only the letter, and with whom there is no authority, but they teach as those who have as present light, and in present communion, the original mind of God, and can bring it to bear in spiritual intelligence and power. Azariah told Asa that "for a long while Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law" (2 Chronicles 15: 3). Without a "teaching priest" there will be no true knowledge amongst the people of God of that which was in His mind from the beginning. And if this is absent, there will be little incense offered, and few burnt offerings on the altar. The work of the teaching priest as viewed here precedes

that of the offering priest, and this is the right order of Levi's service. Spiritual instruction must precede spiritual offerings; it is only an intelligent people who have capacity to minister to God according to His pleasure. In connection with Levi the thought of spiritual intelligence is prominent; he has the Thummim and Urim; then he teaches; and then he serves Godward in keeping with the spiritual light which he has. The blessing of Levi provides for a service maintained in holy nearness to God, by which His original thoughts are taught to His people, and the offerings suitable to His house are presented before Him. It is as the people of God are taught, in keeping with His original mind, that their prayers will take true incense character. They will bring before God what is fragrant to Him, desires that are in correspondence with His own pleasure. And it is only as thus taught that the praises of the saints will rise to an elevation that corresponds with how they are blessed of God in Christ.

The difference between a teaching priest and a prophet in Israel would be, I think, that the teaching priest brings before the saints all that was the true character of the dispensation from the beginning — the ordinances and the law as originally instituted; while the prophet, generally speaking, arises in a day of departure to set consciences in the presence of God with a view to recovery.

One can understand, in the light of all this, what "substance" (verse 11) Levi has, and how suitable it is to be blessed by Jehovah. "And let the work of his hands please thee". May we know more what it is to have the consciousness of moving in such a holy and spiritually intelligent way that the service rendered manward and Godward is pleasing to Him!

Where priestly conditions are maintained the affections of the people of God will be uncorrupted and in normal activity, and this is seen beautifully in the blessing of Benjamin. It is a lovely picture of complacent and restful love known in the closest intimacy; the language used reminds our hearts of those utterances of mutual and fervent affection which are found in the Song of Songs. Benjamin is "little", but he is Israel's ruler (Psalm 68: 27). God would have all His people to be ruled by what is set forth in Benjamin. Priestly intelligence is great divine favour, but it is to be accompanied by the consciousness of love.

"The beloved of Jehovah, — he shall dwell in safety by him; he will cover him all the day long, and dwell between his shoulders" (verse 12). I do not know that any scripture previous to this suggests such an intimacy of confiding affection between God and His people. Holy conditions having been secured in Levi, there is nothing to restrain the heart of Jehovah; He can convey to His people that they are His beloved, and that they shall dwell in safety by Him.

The more we are conscious of being loved by God the more we shall value preservation from every influence that would interfere with love's complacency. "He will cover him all the day long" shews how He delights to shelter and protect the affections of His saints. The Lord said, "Those thou hast given me I have guarded" (John 17: 12). How precious it is to be guarded in our affections! The "vineyard of pure wine" in Isaiah 27 speaks of the pure affections of God's people which are so delightful to Him. He lavishes care and protection on that vineyard! "I Jehovah keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any harm it, I will keep it night and day". Oh! that our hearts might awake to the precious reality of this! We are "beloved by God!" (1 Thessalonians 1: 4). If He calls upon us to keep our hearts "more than anything that is guarded" (Proverbs 4: 23) it is because our affections are of priceless value to Him. He delights to protect them, to promote their development, to keep them night and day. He concerns Himself about everything connected with us — our circumstances, weaknesses, difficulties, conflicts, temptations — but He has peculiar solicitude over our affections; He says of His vineyard, "I will water it *every moment*". The thought of it surely draws us to Him to dwell in safety by Him, for our hearts are only safe in nearness to His known and trusted love. We think of safety from enemies and evils, but the safety that is most to be desired is that state of heart which ever retains the consciousness that we are beloved by God, and responds affectionately to Him.

"He will cover him all the day long". The lovers of God are under His over-shadowing and cherishing continually. We keep ourselves in the love of God as we dwell in safety by Him, but it is by *His* keeping and covering that we are retained for the pleasure of His love. And this is in view of the last wondrous word of Benjamin's blessing being realised: "and dwell between his shoulders". Jehovah would dwell between the shoulders of Benjamin; an allusion, no doubt, to the place which Jerusalem would have in the territory of Benjamin, but suggesting spiritually how God loves to dwell in the strength of His people's affections. The "shoulders" speak of the strength of His people's love as the breasts denote its warmth and tenderness. The bride in the Song, referring to the Beloved as "a bundle of myrrh", says, "He shall pass the night between my breasts" (Song of Songs 1: 13). Tender affections cherish the Lord as known in His precious suffering love. But here Jehovah dwells between Benjamin's shoulders. It suggests a strength in His people's affections that will preserve a place for Him against every aggressor; He is defended by faithful love from every hostile attack. It is peculiarly touching to think of God committing Himself thus to His people that He may have a secure place in the midst of a world that is adverse to Him and to His Anointed. What a privilege, in a day when public opinion is more and more opposed to God as revealed in

Jesus, to hold Him defensively as against every attack! How multiplied and diverse are the attacks on Christ! His Person, His work, His offices all assailed, and even by those who profess to bear His Name! In the midst of such conditions we have the precious privilege of defending His holy Person, and every feature of His glory, not by argument, but in the strength of affection. While the great ones in the religious world are making more and more manifest that they do not love our Lord Jesus Christ it may be ours to maintain for Him a secure place in face of all His adversaries. To have Him dwelling between our breasts refers to the inward and private delight in which we cherish Him through the night of His rejection here. But publicly we are in a hostile scene, and the strength of the shoulders is needed to maintain a dwelling for Him. I remember asking an old man if he would have a gospel book. He looked me straight in the face, and said, "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is God over all blessed for ever?" I said, "Yes, I do", and he replied, "Then I will have your book". Something of the strength of the shoulders was there; his affections would safeguard the Person whom he loved.

The blessing of Joseph (verses 13 - 17) brings the inheritance into view, "for the birthright was Joseph's" (1 Chronicles 5: 2). The wide and varied scope of the "precious things" to be known as the blessings of Joseph's "land" is brought before us here in figurative language of great beauty. It raises the question of what our birthright really is; to what does it give us title? Are our blessings earthly or heavenly? It reminds us that we have to do now with a speaking from heaven (Hebrews 12: 25), and with Jesus as glorified at the right hand of God. Stephen saw Him there, and Saul was converted by hearing Him speak from heaven. The inheritance at the present time is in a heavenly Christ, of whom Joseph is a type.

The "precious things" are connected with "the good will of him that dwelt in the bush", and they are the portion of one who has been "separated from his brethren". God is presenting to us here the "precious things" which have come in as the fruit of His revealing Himself in grace, and which are found in the "land" of the true Joseph as the One separated from Israel according to the flesh. As having been refused by His brethren, Israel, Christ has sanctified Himself at God's right hand. Things have now got great enlargement, and this is strikingly set forth in Joseph's blessing. There are no limitations now, for God's good will determines everything, and that secures illimitable expansion.

The "thorn-bush" speaks of what came in by man's sin (Genesis 3: 18), but it shews that God would use the very consequences of man's sin to make known His good will to men through Jesus in full deliverance and blessing. To be in presence of Him who dwelt in the bush is to stand on holy ground. It demands

the profound reverence of which unshod feet are the appropriate symbol. The secret of all blessing is that God is what He is. "*I am that I am*". That came out when He dwelt in the bush. Then all His blessings at the present time have a peculiar and distinctive character. For the revelation of God in grace has not introduced earthly blessing; it has resulted in Christ being rejected by His "brethren" — even as Joseph was — and His taking a new place as exalted at the right hand of God. The whole character of blessing at the present time depends on this. Christ separated from Israel after the flesh, and from earthly joys, has a portion; He has a "land"; the boundless favour of God is known in a heavenly scene. God has blessed Him for ever there, and has blessed us in Him; our portion is in Joseph's "land". The "precious things" shew how varied is the wealth of blessing which rests upon it. Five times in four verses the Spirit of God has used the word "precious", and He has used a word for this which is only found elsewhere in the Song of Solomon as descriptive of the fruits which are found in the Bride for the pleasure of the Beloved.

There are "precious things of the heavens", and there is "dew" — which falls before sunrise, speaking of the Spirit given as heavenly refreshing before the day of glory dawns. And "the deep that lieth beneath" is surely figurative of the death of Christ as underlying all, and securing all in righteousness and love. "The precious fruits of the sun" would tell of what is brought forth under the shining of Christ (Ephesians 5: 14), and "the precious things put forth by the months" would have reference to the round of the spiritual year with its new and ever varied apprehensions of Christ. Compare Revelation 22: 2. Then "the ancient mountains" and "the everlasting hills" (verse 16) typify the stability of divine faithfulness, and of the promises of God, of which the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is the Yea and the Amen, for all are established in Him (2 Corinthians 1: 19 - 22). "The precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof" (verse 16) indicates that the scope of the inheritance includes the heading up in Christ not only of "the things in the heavens" but also of "the things upon the earth" (Ephesians 1: 10). This is known anticipatively by those who have the Spirit as "the earnest of our inheritance"; it pertains to the time when the true Joseph will be no longer the Nazarite, "separated from his brethren", but as having Israel restored to Him will share with them the joys of the kingdom of God. Every time we eat the Lord's supper we confess that all earthly rights belong to Christ; we shew His death until He comes to take them up.

Joseph's "land", with its present wealth and joy, is the portion of those who obtain inheritance in Christ. For it is to be occupied, according to this scripture, by "the myriads of Ephraim" and "the thousands of Manasseh". It will be remembered that Ephraim and Manasseh were born to Joseph as "separated

from his brethren". In having them he was made to forget his toil and his father's house, and he became fruitful in the land of his affliction (see Genesis 41: 50 - 52). They thus represent those who are given to Christ by God while He is separated from Israel.

And not only is there fulness of blessing for Joseph's myriads, but they have strength for labour and power to overcome all that is opposed to them (verse 17). None are so truly majestic, or have such invincible power, as those who are given to Christ in the present day of His Nazariteship. We may see it exemplified in a Stephen or a Paul. Paul had ox-like strength; he could do all things through Him who gave him power. And Stephen was stoned just because he was irresistible. Such have the "double portion" of Christ's Spirit as having seen Him "taken". See 2 Kings 2:9,10, and compare Acts 1:11. They have the Spirit of an ascended and glorified Man, which answers to the double portion of the firstborn. What an immensity of blessing is involved in this! May we ponder it well!

With such moral conditions, and such a wealth of spiritual blessing, as we have seen in Reuben, Judah, Levi, Benjamin and Joseph, there is a fine basis for evangelical activity, and this is set forth in Zebulun and Issachar. A divine testimony goes forth from the place where full blessing is known and enjoyed. It is an invitation to come to a mountain where they can "offer sacrifices of righteousness". It is, I have no doubt, in the mind of the Spirit, the mountain of God's house (Isaiah 2: 2). Zebulun and Issachar are blessed together, and it is not well to separate them. Zebulun goes out, and Issachar is in his tents. Both are united in inviting the peoples to the mountain, but Issachar has tents in which to entertain them when they come, and it is a serious defect to be without this. "Tents" are provisional; they are not permanent structures; and it seems to me they are suggestive of the local assemblies in which God would provide for the welfare and edification of those who are invited to the mountain. It is to be noted that Paul was a tent-maker, and this is mentioned in Acts 18 when he came to Corinth, in connection with which city God had in mind to develop the truth as to the assembly viewed locally. It is noticeable that two other tent-makers were brought to Corinth at the same time, one of them a woman, which would indicate that women have a definite place and service in view of the well-being of the local "tent". We may be sure that this is not recorded by the Spirit merely as a bit of interesting information about Paul and his fellow-labourers, but in moral connection with what God had in view in bringing them to Corinth. If Zebulun goes out with God's testimony of grace he is linked with Issachar who has tents. Paul was a great tent-maker in a spiritual sense. He set up tents in every city where he laboured in the glad tidings. The converts were housed suitably to God so that they might be cared

for, and might learn the mind of God in His assembly. It is unquestionable that when God's testimony went out at the first those who responded to the invitation were brought together and cared for in local assemblies. There they found "the mountain" — the moral elevation and holy privileges of the house of God, and were able to "offer sacrifices of righteousness".

The result of the going out and inviting is strikingly set forth in the words: "For they will suck the abundance of the seas, and the hidden treasures of the sand" (verse 19). The seas and the sand represent the vast multitudes of human beings on this earth. It is our privilege to contemplate the two thousand millions of the human race with the assurance that there is "abundance", and there are "hidden treasures" there for God. Not that there can be anything for God apart from His own working, but He would encourage us by the knowledge that He has worked, and is working, and will work, that there may be "abundance" for Him. He declares plainly to us that there are "hidden treasures of the sand", and He would have them all to be sucked out for Him. "The abundance of the seas" would suggest "the fulness of the nations" being brought in (Romans 11: 25). James speaks (Acts 15) of God visiting the nations to take out of them a people for His Name. That "abundance" and those "treasures" have to be *sucked*. There is a little more in this than merely inviting the peoples. It implies a power to draw forth what is there, an eagerness of desire to secure it, which has been exemplified in Paul making himself bondman to all, and becoming all things to all, that he might gain men and save some (1 Corinthians 9: 19 - 23). There was in him an intense desire not merely for the blessing of men, but to secure them *for God*. And when they had been sucked out they were set together for mutual profit and for God's glory in local assemblies.

Then Gad is marked by enlargement. This is the normal result of being brought into assembly conditions, and the evidence of enlargement is that there is spiritual power to act so as to set aside human activities and thoughts. I take this to be signified by tearing "the arm, even the top of the head". He has learned, too, that to provide the first part for himself he must reserve the portion of the Lawgiver. If we are spiritually contracted we may think that "the first part" is to secure our own comfort and benefit, and on that line things will remain contracted. But the effect of enlargement is that we become conscious that the way to truly provide the first part for ourselves is to reserve the portion of the Lawgiver; that is, to maintain what is due to the Lord.

In the New Testament 1 Corinthians would represent "the portion of the lawgiver". It is there that Paul says, "If any one thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him recognise the things that I write to you, that it is the Lord's

commandment" (1 Corinthians 14: 37). If saints are together in "tents" — that is, in local assemblies — the first thing to mark them is the setting aside of human activities, whether of arm or head, so that the portion of the Lawgiver may be reserved. The maintenance of the rights of the Lord must be the primary consideration. We are apt to forget that there is a Lawgiver; Christians very largely forget it, or practically ignore the fact that He has a portion which is due to Him. Where today do we see the portion of the Lawgiver reserved? We may see people doing much in their own way; the "arm" or the "head" are active in ways that have no place whatever in the statutes of the Lawgiver!

But in the local assemblies each one is by the Holy Spirit to say "Lord" to Jesus. If we all say "Lord" to Jesus there will be only one will. If I have a will and you have a will we shall probably not harmonise, but we can be harmonised by both saying "Lord" to Jesus. Then we have to remember that certain statutes and laws have been enacted; we are not left at liberty to devise things out of our own hearts. If the portion of the Lawgiver is reserved there will be the displacement of all that is insubordinate, and full scope for what is edifying. We shall find that we provide the first part for ourselves by maintaining what is due to Christ as Lord. The effect of subjection to 1 Corinthians was the wonderful ministry of 2 Corinthians; it was the result of the portion of the Lawgiver being reserved. We have to learn to distinguish between activities that are human and those which are spiritual. The latter are invariably marked by subjection to the Lord. There is such a thing as natural religiousness, and some minds have a natural aptitude to entertain religious thoughts. But if we are learning or serving with God there will be ever-deepening self-judgment. What is merely natural, even in a religious way, has to be judged as definitely as gross evils; it is only another form of flesh. It has, to use the figure of verse 20, to be torn in pieces.

Gad "came with the heads of the people; the justice of Jehovah and his judgments hath he executed with Israel" (verse 21). The "heads of the people" represent elements of spiritual leading amongst God's people. The reservation of what is due to the Lord will always carry that element with it; Paul expected it to do so at Corinth. And the result will be that what is right and according to God gets its place with His people; righteous judgments are maintained in His assembly.

"And of Dan he said, Dan is a young lion; he shall spring forth from Bashan". I believe the thought in this is the spiritual energy that will spring forth to possess the inheritance which has been figuratively set before us in the blessing of Joseph. Those who chose to remain on the eastward side of Jordan did not "spring forth from Bashan". Bashan means "the fruitful"; it represents

what is held in the Spirit as the fruit of victory over the flesh according to Romans 8 "Bashan" is the portion of a man who is justified, and has the Spirit, and who has proved himself to be superior to the flesh in the power of the Spirit. Some might be inclined to say, What more do we want than that? Well, in the mind of God that is only the platform from which to "spring forth" to take possession of the inheritance. There is a spiritual region beyond, which is opened to our view in Colossians and Ephesians. Spiritual energy is needed to "spring forth" into it, and that energy comes of love. If Joshua and the Ark have gone over into another region, are we content to remain in Bashan? For true lovers of Christ the decisive question would be, Where is He? Has He gone over Jordan? None of us can have any doubt about that. If He has gone to the other side are our hearts content to have their portion on this side? The ark was with the people for thirty-eight years in the wilderness, indicating how God would make Christ known to us in His greatness and preciousness as the One in whom is secured and preserved every thought of divine love. He has been ministering Christ to us in this way for a long time that He might bind up our affections with Christ so as to prepare us to go over Jordan with Him. It is the present will of God that we should go over in spirit now, and if we do not we miss His full thought for us in the inheritance.

Colossians views the saints as risen with Christ, and Ephesians views them as seated in the heavenlies in Him. The things which God has prepared for them that love Him are on that side; it is spiritual ground, and spiritual energy is needed to "spring forth" to take possession of it. This does not mean that we shall lose any of the good of Romans; on the contrary, those in the good of Ephesians would have the deepest and fullest enjoyment of all that is in Romans,. But they also know another region which is described typically as "the pleasant land", "a land which Jehovah thy God careth for; the eyes of Jehovah thy God are constantly upon it". The energy of Dan is needed to "spring forth" and enter into it.

Naphtali is seen as in possession of the inheritance, for he is "satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of Jehovah" (verse 23). I wonder if we really believe that God's thought for us at the present time is that we should be infinitely happier than Adam and Eve were as innocent in the garden of Eden? There was, indeed, everything in the garden of Eden to make an unfallen man happy, but it did not rise to the great thought of God for man, and so the tree of life was there as a testimony that God had something greater and better in view. His thought was that man should live, and be satisfied with His favour as known through Christ and in Christ. So that when sin and death came in God began to speak of Christ. As evil developed here God met it by promises that centred in Christ. What favour! Then in the fulness of time Christ came as the

verification of all those promises. God's own Son was amongst men — fallen and lost as they were — in pure divine favour. Then He went to the cross and bore the judgment of the fallen man, and came forth in resurrection that we might have eternal life in Him. For the "act of favour of God" is "eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6: 23). True satisfaction is there — no thirst, no hunger, no want of anything. The love of God expressed and satisfied in what He gives, and men brought to supreme satisfaction in receiving it! In the great supper (Luke 16) God is saying to men, I have provided everything; come and share my satisfaction in Christ! In Luke 15 we see how everything is furnished for us that we may come into the place of divine favour in perfect suitability. The favour and the blessing are there for us, the free gift of love, and they are to be enjoyed in God, and in His beloved Son, by the Holy Spirit. Deuteronomy 33: 23 describes life eternal as possessed and enjoyed; the words "satisfied", "full", "possess", convey a great deal more than having title.. The inheritance is viewed as acquired and enjoyed. The difficulties which many have had as to eternal life arise from the fact that the spiritual nature of that life has not been understood, and it has been assumed that one could *have* it without being spiritual, without sowing to the Spirit, or going over Jordan. Eternal life pertains to every believer as divine gift, but it does not mean much to any one until it is consciously possessed. Nothing could be more incongruous than for a discontented, carnal, and worldly-minded person to say that he has eternal life. His whole condition is the reverse of Naphtali's blessing — satisfaction, fulness of blessing, and conscious possession of ineffable divine favour.

The real difficulty is that the Lord's statements in John's Gospel are taken in the letter without any apprehension of the greatness of what they convey. Eternal life is supreme divine favour to men; it does not leave a question unanswered, or a need unmet. No element of happiness that God can confer upon men is lacking. We have to put all the promises together to get a true and full thought of it. It is the gift of love for all. Everything that Paul or Peter or John had in the joy of divine favour in Christ the Son of God is in God's mind for all believers to enjoy. One might say that it is in His mind for all men to enjoy. But let us see that, like Naphtali, we *do* enjoy it! Many of us need to be awakened to a sense of the greatness of what the love of God would give us as a present portion.

"The west and the south" suggest the most favourable position that can be assigned. The "showers of blessing" come from the west (Luke 12: 54), — spiritual ministry in refreshing power — and the south gets the full warmth of the sun.

In Naphtali we see a favour and blessing from God which abundantly satisfies. In Asher we see the result in being "blessed with sons"; the continued occupation of the inheritance is always to be in view. "The generation following" is always to be thought of; it is a great proof of spiritual vigour that we should have "sons". What joy it was to Paul to have in Timothy a "beloved and faithful child in the Lord", one who could be trusted to carry on the impression of his father's ways in Christ! It is striking to see the frequent references in Scripture to "generations", showing how great a place the thought of the continuance of things here has in God's mind. Things are not to die with the present generation at any time. One of the most distinct marks of blessing will be that there are "sons". I venture to say that older brethren have no greater joy than to see "the generation following" acquiring ability to take up things in a spiritual way.

"Let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil". This would intimate that happy relations with our brethren are essential to the enjoyment of eternal life. This is in keeping with Psalm 133, where we learn that it is as brethren dwell together in unity that Jehovah commands the blessing, life for evermore. We should covet to be acceptable to our brethren as having spiritual features, and moving amongst them in a spiritual way. The brethren, as partaking of the divine nature, know how to appreciate what is spiritual. They know the difference between natural amiability, and a walk which is the result of nearness to God. A man with his foot dipped in oil will move amongst the brethren in "kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control" (Galatians 5: 23). The roughness of nature will not be there to irritate, and to provoke resentment.

Then after all this spiritual wealth and blessing we get a remarkable word. "Iron and brass shall be thy bolts". As though to remind us that there are thieves about, and enemies who may molest, and spiritual wealth must be held securely against intrusion. "Bolts" speak of watchfulness and care on the part of those who are holding a priceless heritage in the presence of crafty and deadly foes, But they also speak of a divine security which no power of the enemy can break through. So that in the consciousness of this we may realise the closing feature of Asher's blessing: "And thy rest as thy days". God would leave upon our spirits as a final word of blessing the thought of rest — unbroken rest! — for it is "as thy days". Rest is, indeed, a prominent and characteristic feature of the inheritance. In Deuteronomy 12: 9 Moses said, "Ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which Jehovah thy God giveth thee". And the Spirit of God in Hebrews 3, Hebrews 4 has shewn us that the literal entering into Canaan was in nowise what God had before Him as true rest. He will reach it in the world to come, but He has already

reached it in Christ, and it may be reached spiritually in Christ by those who believe.

The last four verses of the chapter are a celebration of God as the Help and Refuge of His people. His eternal arms are underneath them, He will drive out the enemy, and they will dwell in unique blessing. These verses intimate to us that as the blessings of this chapter have place with us we shall become the true Jeshurun — the upright people, with whom there is nothing found but what is according to the thoughts of God. For His people are viewed here according to what they are by His grace and work, and not at all as in the flesh. One feature of blessing after another is added until the complete thought of God is reached. And, as remarked before, the tribes have all to be "gathered together" so that these different blessings characterise them as a united and collective whole. These last verses shew that God is pledged to support what is wrought by His own grace and power.

This chapter gives a fulness of blessing which has never yet been realised in Israel, but which will be realised in the day when all Israel shall be saved, and it is to be realised in a spiritual way by the grace and power of God in His people today. It is, most surely, the word of God to us.

THE BLESSING OF THE TRIBES (CAC 17)

Deuteronomy 33

There may seem to be a good deal of similarity between this portion of Scripture and Genesis 49, but really there is a great difference between them.

In Genesis 49 it is really more a history than a blessing, though it is said in verse 28 that "he blessed them". Judah represents the victorious power by which blessing is brought in, and Joseph is a type of Christ as the one in whom all blessing is established. It is true that we see in Gad, Asher, and Naphtali a figure of the blessing of those who are brought into the good of what God has brought to pass by Christ as the victorious accomplisher of His will (Judah) and in Christ as the risen and glorified One — the Administrator of all His blessing to men (Joseph). But, along with this, the moral ruin of man, and his entire failure even in presence of the grace of God, are fully developed — the first in Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, and the second in Zebulun, Issachar, and Daniel. All this gives Genesis 49 the character of a history — a history, indeed, of God's perfect and blessed ways in Christ on the one hand, but of man's ruin and failure on the other.

But in Deuteronomy 33 it is all blessing; every tribe gets a distinct blessing, and it is important to notice that it is "the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel", (verse 1). There is a great contrast between Jacob and Moses. Jacob was the man of experience — the man of ups and downs — the man who had proved in his own experience what the flesh was and also the recovering power of God's salvation. He was just the man to give the whole history of how the responsible man breaks down so that everything has to be established in Christ. But the man of experience cannot give the full and proper blessing of the saints; it needs the man of God to do that. Solomon was a man of experience, and he could write the book of Ecclesiastes to show that everything under the sun is vanity. But it needs a man of God like Paul to unfold a Person whose glory eclipses the brightness of the mid-day sun, and scenes of heavenly blessing which are above the sun. It is the man who is with God, and who knows God's thoughts, who can unfold those thoughts in all their blessedness. We see something of this in the chapter before us.

In the song of Moses in chapter 32 the responsible history and failure of the people is declared in a very solemn way. On their side all had been failure, and would be failure, that should result in their cutting off as in the flesh — which has actually come to pass. Then in verses 49 and 50 Moses is directed to go up into mount Nebo to behold the land of Canaan and to die there. Amongst

the people he could declare all their failure, and announce prophetically the judgment of God upon them. But when he went up into the mount he saw the whole range of blessing that was in the purpose of God for His people. If it was certain that the people according to the flesh would break down, it was equally certain that the purpose of God would not fail of its accomplishment. Chapter 33 is all on the line of Gods purpose and grace. Morally speaking, it is the people viewed from the top of the mount, according to the full height of God's blessing for His called and chosen people.

Verse 3 is the standpoint from which everything is viewed in this chapter. "Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words". From such a standpoint as this the saints can only be viewed as in full blessing.

In the first place, God loves His people. Nothing can change that sovereign love. We may have to learn what poor things we are — breaking down at every point — but the love of God knows no change. That love is not only the source but the security of our blessing. God is working to gratify His own heart, and will not fail to accomplish His purpose.

Then, "all his saints are in thy hand". Christ has secured every blessing for the saints by His death, and all the blessing He has secured is established in Himself, but He also holds every saint of God in His mighty hand; and in this way we are kept for the blessing. He not only holds the blessing for us, but He also holds us for the blessing. God has One to whom He has entrusted the maintenance of everything that is for the satisfaction of His own heart. If you have proved that everything fails in your hands, it will be an immense comfort to you to see how everything is maintained in the hand of Christ.

The sense of this draws us to Christ to sit down at His feet, and to receive of His words. The one that has heard and learned of the Father (John 6: 45) comes to Christ the Son to sit down at His feet and be instructed in the knowledge of God, and of all that subsists for the pleasure of God.

Three wonderful thoughts are thus presented to us! The love of God as the source of all blessing; Christ the security of that blessing, and of those on whom it is bestowed in infinite mercy; and saints in the attitude that becomes them — seated at the feet of Christ, like Mary (Luke 10: 39), to hear and receive those holy words in which He declares the Father's name.

Reuben comes first among the tribes, as in Genesis 49. There his wickedness is in view, but here we get the thought of sovereign mercy which would put away the sin. "Let Reuben live, and not die". When David was brought to repentance and confession after his great sin, the prophet's word to him was

"The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die", 2 Samuel 12: 13. So that it seems to me we get the thought of forgiveness in what is said of Reuben.

In Psalm 32:1-5 forgiveness is presented in a very blessed way, and also the exercise through which the soul passes on the way to it. Then in verse 6 we see that a man is forgiven that he may be godly. No one leads a godly life in this world until he knows that his sins are forgiven. "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared". The one whose transgression is forgiven comes out in a new character in this world as a "godly" man. He is set free in conscience to take this new course. The epistle to the Romans develops this very fully.

This leads on to the blessing of Judah (Deuteronomy 33: 7). "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou an help to him from his enemies". This corresponds with Psalm 32: 6, 7. Dependence becomes characteristic of the one whose sins are forgiven, and this finds expression in prayer, in answer to which God comes in with deliverance from all our spiritual enemies.

The soul is then ready for service and priestly approach to God, the thought of which is suggested in the blessing of Levi (Deuteronomy 33:8-11). Not only are our sins forgiven in view of a godly walk in this world, but in view of approach to God: This comes out in Psalm 6.5:3-5, which is very much on the line of the epistle to the Hebrews. In Romans the believer is cleared according to the righteousness of God, that he may walk in a godly way in this world; in Hebrews he is purged according to the holiness of God that he may approach God in the sanctuary. If you have forgiveness, God would exercise you as to approach.

The devotedness of Levi had been proved (verses 8, 9). We are not to be indifferent to the claims of natural affection, but superior to them when it is a question of the will of God.

Three things are connected with Levi which might almost be spoken of as three notes of the assembly — intelligence, edification, and worship. The Thummim and Urim represent intelligence in the mind of God; He made known His mind and pleasure in the Thummim and Urim. Then as being intelligent in God's mind they were to teach His people (verse 10), and this answers to edification. And, finally, they put incense before God, and whole burnt-offerings upon His altar, and in this we get the thought of worship. These three things are intimately connected with approach to God.

Many do not care to go beyond the thought of forgiveness, and a godly walk in the world, but it is God's pleasure to bring us as priests into His presence. In approaching God we get the knowledge of His mind, and then there is edification. This is a great comfort. All may not enter into the privilege of priestly approach, but those who do are fitted to edify the whole company. Thus all are helped on in the same direction. One may be used to present God's blessed things in such a way that all are attracted and encouraged to draw near with true hearts.

If we approach God it is entirely apart from all the imperfection of the flesh. We approach in all the sweet savour and perfection of Christ. "They shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar". It is as we are identified in affection with the perfections and acceptance of Christ that we can approach and worship.

Then in the blessing of Benjamin we get the thought of communion. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him". Communion is a matter of the affections; nearness is essential to it. Communications are not communion. Two hearts absorbed in one interest — that is communion.

John is very fond of the word "abide"; he uses it about forty times in the gospel, and about twenty times in the first epistle. In John 1 the two disciples ask, "Where abidest thou?" and He says, "Come and see". They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him. That is communion — to abide with Him. When a wife comes under the power of her husband's love her interests are merged in his, and then there is communion. We do not know much about communion because we have so many interests of our own.

In getting near the Lord we are taken out of our own interests, like John who only thought of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved". He knew something of what it was to be "the beloved of the Lord". It is a blessed thing to abide in the consciousness of the love of Christ, then we are protected from evil, and from the snares and wiles of Satan. To "continue in the Son, and in the Father" is the safeguard against all seductions. Some think they must know errors and heresies in order to avoid them. Do you think the Lord wants us to be acquainted with what is evil in that way? Not at all. We do not need to explore and know all the evil; we cannot afford to waste our time in this way. If we occupy ourselves with evil we shall in some way be coloured by it. The great thing is to be hidden in His pavilion. In this day of religious evil the only true preservative is to be kept near to Christ.

Then in the blessing of Joseph the prominent thing is fruitfulness. This is the outcome of communion (see John 15). If we abide in Christ every circumstance that arises is an opportunity to bring forth fruit. Trials bring out

fruit if we are in communion. Everything comes out perfectly in its season. It is said of the tree of life that it "bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month", Revelation 22: 2. Every changing season brought out its own precious fruit in Christ — a new kind of fruit in every new set of circumstances. God changes our circumstances — He allows the different seasons to pass over us — to give opportunity and occasion of bringing forth different manner of fruits.

How important then to abide in Him! We all know how it is practically. Sometimes in presence of the things that happen we are kept in patience, thankfulness, and peace. At other times we are impatient, we chafe and murmur. What is the secret of all this? Does it not lie in these words? "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing", John 15: 4, 5.

In Genesis 49 Zebulun was going down to commerce with the world for his own advantage, but here he goes out to call people to God's holy mountain. He still has to do with the abundance of the seas, and with the hidden treasures of the sand, but now it is for the glory of God. He is now in service for God.

Issachar wanted rest in Genesis 49 and sought it in a wrong way, but here he is seen in his tents. Taking up the proper character of a pilgrim he gets rest. Gad is enlarged and made superior to all his enemies. Dan — no longer a snake — is a young lion, bold for God. Mark, after running away from the difficulties of the service at one time, is eventually found identified with Paul in prison.

Then in Naphtali we see satisfaction, and in Asher a people divinely equipped for the wilderness journey. The time fails to take it all up in detail, but I think we see in all this a wonderful setting forth of the blessings of saints. Forgiveness, Dependence, Deliverance, Approach, Communion, Superiority, Strength, Satisfaction, Resource — all furnished to saints by the grace of God. If we meditate on these things we shall find in them a wondrous unfolding of the all-various grace of God.

HOW THE FULL TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL IS REACHED (JT 3)

Deuteronomy 33:1 - 25

My thought is to show that the blessing here outlined in regard to Israel's tribes may be viewed as a foreshadowing of the way in which the believer now comes into the full truth of the gospel; that is, that the blessing of each tribe sets forth some phase or stage of the blessings of christianity.

I take the liberty of using it in that way, knowing full well that it refers to God's people Israel. I am encouraged in doing so, knowing that the principle of His ways do not vary, and so His ways with Israel serve as a type of His ways with us. I shall have to take up the subject in a superficial way, for it is very great, and I can only give a very general idea.

First of all I remark, that it is the blessing of Moses the man of God. Jacob called his sons together, and he conveyed to them what should befall them in the latter days, and not in the way of blessing, although you cannot exclude that. But Moses speaks *only* of the blessing of the people. Moses is a figure of Christ. He is said to be a "man of God" (verse 1), and he was "king in Jeshurun" (verse 5). These two expressions apply absolutely to Christ. He is pre-eminently the Man of God, and He is the King. Having accomplished redemption, the Lord Jesus Christ is in the position of King, and hence He is able to bless. It is of all moment that we should apprehend Christ in this way. The Lord Jesus Christ when He came here carried out every divine thought, cost what it might, even unto death. He is "king in Jeshurun", not officially, but as indicative of the present moment. He is King to the tribes when gathered together. Well, He is there and ready to bless.

Now the blessings recorded in this chapter are what is in His heart for *us*. Christ has borne the curse, He has borne the full weight of God's judgment as due to the people for their wickedness and corruption. All the judgment due on that account fell upon Jesus. He went into death for it, and He glorified God in regard of it in every respect. Now the answer to that is the glory that shines out in the form of blessing. In this blessing of Moses you have the Lord indicated as in the position in which He can bless, and the outline of blessing is given in connection with each tribe. The first is "Let Reuben live, and not die". He deserved to die. The Lord Jesus Christ died, and it is in the mind of God that man should not die. Man became a fountain of corruption, but the Lord bore the judgment, and now the attitude of God towards man is *life*. "Let Reuben live, and not die". The Lord is in relation to man. He is the Son of man

and He has discharged every liability of man, and now His thought is that man should *live*.

The next is Judah. "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah". If the light of the gospel enters your soul, it will produce a *cry;* it will produce an articulation from your soul, for it is evident that God must begin there. It is like the state of creation when chaos marked it. If the light of God enters your soul, it reveals a state of corruption which is appalling, but it is with a view to life. God commands the light; the light is in the face of Jesus. If the light shines into your heart, you see the corruption, and you cry; hence in *Judah* you get "Hear, Lord, the *voice* of Judah". That cry enters heaven, and the hearing of it in heaven gives you recognition there; you are taken notice of; you are *known* in *heaven* as having cried. Repentance has taken place; you are undone; you have no hope save in God. That is the true effect of the light of the gospel. God, the source of the light, is the only One who can help you. Thus it is "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah". And what next? "Bring him unto his people". You want to be alone when you cry, but you do not need to *remain* alone. Isolation is only for the *leper*. The Lord Jesus Christ found a leper in his isolation and He touched him, and the leper was cleansed, and as cleansed he was fit for the congregation. No one need remain a leper; God goes out to the leper in His grace; the leper was outside the camp. Isaiah was a leper; he was "unclean" (Isaiah 6:5); but the seraphim flew *swiftly* to relieve his need. If you are exercised, God will hear your cry, and then the next thing is, God brings you to your *people*. You are cleansed, and you do not need to remain isolated. You had been a leper, but as cleansed you are to come to your *own* people.

So next we come to *Levi*. Levi has *found* his own people, and he disclaims his natural relations. God brings you to your people, and, finding them, you no longer turn to or regard your relations after the flesh as your people. Hence Levi is separated to God. You can see how that takes place in the history of the believer. You are not *asked* to drop your natural relationships, but you find another circle, so that you, in a sense, disregard natural relationships; you say to your father and mother, "I have not seen him". I do not dwell on that further. This is followed by "they have observed thy word". They value God's word.

Now I pass on to Benjamin, "The beloved of the Lord". Clearly we are advancing here. Levi kept God's word and His covenant, and hence Benjamin is the "beloved of the Lord". Is it not wonderful that you, a believer, should have that place? "The Lord shall cover him all the day long". Have you become acquainted with this phase of blessing?

It is more than merely "live, and not die", but that, as in separation to God and to the people of God, and as you are governed by His word, you come into the consciousness of what *Christ* is to God, and of what *you* are to God. He "shall dwell in safety by him". Safety is nowhere else; safety is in dwelling with God. God is the protector of His people; "God is known in her palaces for a refuge", Psalm 48:3. Who can touch you if you dwell where God is? "The Lord shall cover him all the day long". What a wonderful place to dwell in, the place of strength!

I can only barely touch on Joseph. "Blessed of the Lord be his land". There we have *the place;* heaven is touched. "For the precious things of heaven, ... the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon". The precious things of heaven and of the sun, that which flows from the sun in heaven, and of the moon; the good of it all is for the man who was "separated from his brethren".

Then you come to Zebulun. "Rejoice ... in thy going out". The believer is now prepared for testimony, and so he dwells in a *tent;* this latter is set forth in Issachar — "and, Issachar, in thy tents". That is what is suitable for those who are identified with the testimony. Zebulun and Issachar are at the source of wealth. They dwell on the seashore. They can "suck of the abundance of the seas" and "treasures hid in the sand". They were men who had great wealth, and they have liberty, they go "in and out". They are prepared to sacrifice too. "There they shall offer sacrifices", and they can *afford* to do so. They sacrifice the sacrifices of righteousness. A believer can give his body for the brethren, and if he has wealth he can place it at the disposal of his brethren.

The next is Gad. The blessing of Gad shows *enlargement*. "Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm". I do not venture to enlarge upon that save to show that as you advance on the line of the gospel you are enlarged. "He executed the justice of the Lord, and his judgments with Israel" (verse 21). There is power for righteous discrimination. Believers require what we get here in Gad. "In a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated" and "his judgments were with Israel". We require a Gad. The divine economy requires the spirit of judgment, not in the sense of government, but in the sense of discrimination. For that you require a Gad. "He came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the Lord". These things all came out in Christ. They are all wrapped up in the gospels, and what should mark the believer is the spirit of discernment.

Then see verse 22: "Dan is a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan". That is divine strength and agility which are very important in connection with the divine testimony on earth.

Then Naphtali comes to the *supreme* blessing. Put your own name in there. "O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord". Not only is every need of your heart met, but your heart is perfectly *satisfied*, and satisfied with *favour*. "O Naphtali, satisfied with favour ... possess thou the west and the south". Such a man is qualified to take up the inheritance, surely.

Then we come to Asher. "Let Asher be blessed with children"; that is multiplication. "Let him be acceptable to his brethren". This latter is a very important element. Children in the Old Testament were an evidence of divine favour, and will be so in the future. In our dispensation it is a question of *spiritual* fruitfulness. We do not want to cut across the consciences of our brethren. It is well for us that we have our brethren. They will take care of us; and it is well that we should be acceptable to them. 'Foot dipped in oil'; that is the evangelist; but you do not use your foot until you are acceptable to your brethren. The foot dipped in oil is the tread of a spiritual man.

It is well for us that we have our brethren; we want to be acceptable to our brethren. It is a wonderful thing to find the brethren and to study to be acceptable to them. It is a wonderful tread the step of a man whose foot is dipped in oil. The Lord Jesus is the true example of it. We read: "Jesus increased ... in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). No man in the world could walk like that. In Luke the point is how He *talked*, and in John it is how He *walked*. All His movements were acceptable. They were the movements of a Man anointed by the Spirit; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened upon Him. In John it is not how He talked, but how He walked. He was the true Asher. The Spirit of God begins with the *feet* of the preacher. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace", Isaiah 52:7. He goes after the sheep on the dark mountains. Christ was the true Asher and we may walk in His steps. I have no confidence in the preacher who has not "beautiful feet".

I have preached in view of a company of christians. I do not want you to stop short of one feature of what is in the heart of the Lord as blessing for you. If we are in the "fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:29) then our ways and our walk will be after the pattern of Christ.

May the Lord bless His word to each of us.

THE LEVITICAL PLATFORM (JT 7)

Psalm 50:5; Deuteronomy 33:8,9; Luke 9:17 - 20

My thought is to say a word to you about the tribe of Levi, the tribe which was specially selected from the tribes of Israel, and, as such, was typical of Christianity, of those who are partakers of the heavenly calling. I hope I maybe able to show how they suggest the thought of our being a kind of "firstfruits" of God's creatures. There is always something special about firstfruits; they refer to the early product of the Spirit as coming from heaven. The Lord having ascended to the heavens as man, proceeded to bring about a heavenly state of things down here, hence He gave the Holy Spirit in a peculiar and unique way to His followers, so that in the freshness and energy of the Spirit there might be brought about a heavenly order of things in a people whose calling is heavenly, and whose relationships are heavenly. In that way we have brought to light the sovereign acts of God referred to by James in saying, "Of his own will begat he us ... that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures". James 1:18. The sovereign will of God came into evidence in that which was begotten through the coming in of the Holy Spirit. There was the freshness and energy of the Spirit giving character to the disciples of Jesus, so that the sovereignty of God was apparent in it, and then He had something for Himself, the firstfruits. It is wonderful that we should come in, dear brethren, on that line, that we should have part in that which is called in Scripture firstfruits. Jesus was the firstfruits from the dead; we are the firstfruits of God's creatures, and our destiny is heaven; we belong to what is called "the assembly of the firstborn ones registered in heaven", Hebrews 12:23.

Now that is what the tribe of Levi pointed to. And I desire to call attention to the road travelled by us, as brethren, in order to get on to the levitical platform; not now the Levites of Numbers, but the Levites of the book of Joshua. The Levites of the book of Numbers are the same family of course, but they are referred to as God's servants, being in the service of God down here, bearing burdens, whereas the Levites in the book of Joshua refer to us as a priestly family. But before we get on to that platform there has to be sacrifice; and so I felt encouraged to read the passage in Psalm 50, because it refers to God's interest in a people who sacrificed. I do not say that God is not interested in us before, beloved brethren, for the word shows us that God *was* interested in me before the world was, and in you, and in every saint. Our names were known before the foundation of the world. Wonderful thought! The divine interest was there, not according to what our crooked history may have been on earth, but according to the great fruit of God's work in us,

answering to His principle of love; we are all of interest to Him in that connection. He delights in us; He predestinated us specially to sonship, that we should be to the praise of the glory of His grace, that we should be before Him holy and without blame. In His eternal counsels He had us in view according to the full fruit of His own work in us as set down in the heavenlies before Him. There will be a place for every one there, there will be no crowding there, beloved brethren; every one will be there according to the fixity of eternal counsels. But God has a great interest in our movements down here, and He takes account of our sacrifice.

The book of Leviticus is provision, divinely made, for voluntary sacrifice. But, alas! as far as Scripture shows, no voluntary sacrifice was offered in the wilderness. There were doubtless fixed ones offered by appointment through Moses and Aaron, but there is no evidence of voluntary ones, though provision was made for them. Yet before ever the people left Egypt, Moses ordered that the cattle should go, in order that there should be sacrifice. Pharaoh would detain them with the children, but Moses stipulated that the cattle should go in order that there might be sacrifice. But, alas the cattle once over, self retained them; and then the Gadites and Reubenites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, in their earthly mindedness, had much cattle. Had they sacrificed they would not have had "much cattle", but they had much, and their attention to the cattle became a snare to them, it attracted them to the Moabitish side of Jordan. Cheerfully they went over Jordan to give out the inheritance for others, but their work accomplished they returned to their wives and their children and their cattle. We have to beware of the increase of cattle, of worldly goods. If we sacrificed more we should have less cattle, but more spiritual power, more spiritual desire, more heavenly mindedness. They fell short in the way of spiritual energy and spiritual desire, they fell short of heavenly mindedness. No one ever goes into heaven without a heavenly mind. I take Moses to have been the most heavenly minded man in all Israel. No one spoke so fluently about the land as Moses, and he had it in his heart. I do not speak of the reason why he did not go in; his mind was there. He was not detained by his cattle.

Now I will tell you what cattle, what earthly belongings, tend to. They tend to natural links. Natural, family links are fostered most where there are most cattle. You will find history in Scripture proves this, and the great salvation for us is by sacrifice. So the Lord assembles His saints. We are all of those, I need not say, who are called out of the world; but we are not now simply His saints, but those who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice. He has made a covenant with us by sacrifice. Think of the sacrifice that the blessed God has made in order to establish a link in your soul with Himself. He gave up Jesus,

the Son of His bosom. What else did God think of? The cattle upon a thousand hills were His. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof". Psalm 24:1. He did not give the cattle for us; they were a small matter to Him, but He gave the Son of His love, He gave up Jesus. When I say "Jesus" I speak advisedly, for I refer to what He was as man down here amongst men for the divine pleasure. During the thirty-three years of His blessed life down here God's heart was delighting in Him, His eye was resting on the holy life of Jesus, that green spot. He was the green tree cut off in the midst of His days, His life taken from the earth. God gave it up, God made a sacrifice in order to establish a link between Himself and your soul. That is what the blood of Christ means "the new covenant in my blood". 1 Corinthians 11:25. The covenant referred to God, and Christ is the Mediator of it between God and the people. God made a sacrifice in order to establish a link between Himself and our souls.

Well now, He looks for a return of it, and He calls for an assembly of those who make a return, those who in their souls make a covenant with Him by sacrifice. Levi was not burdened with much cattle, but his sacrifice was much more than cattle; he sacrificed his father and mother, his brother and sister, he sacrificed his own children; Deuteronomy 33:8,9. He repudiated all on the ground of nature. How perfectly that, was seen in Christ! "Woman", He said, "what have I to do with thee?" John 2:4 and yet she was His mother. Have you not something to sacrifice? Are natural ties more to you than spiritual ties? If they are, you are not on the levitical platform; you are on the ground of nature. Levi's sacrifice was by the Spirit. Three times over it is said in the book of Joshua that Levi received no inheritance. First of all it is said that Moses gave him none on the other side Jordan among the two and a half tribes. His inheritance was connected with the tabernacle, with the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire. Moses valued such an inheritance. And in that connection I would just say a word as to the distinction between the inheritance given by Moses and that given by Eleazar and Joshua. The Spirit is given to us under Moses, but Moses could never give us a heavenly inheritance. He has commanded it for us, but to put us in possession of the heavenly portion did not belong to the ministry of Moses, that was reserved not for Aaron but for Eleazar the priest the son of Aaron, and Joshua the son of Nun.

Well, Moses gave Levi no inheritance because the sacrifice of the God of Israel made by fire was the inheritance of Levi. Think of that to begin with! Think of what you gain as making a covenant with God by sacrifice! But it is very evident that if sacrifices are not brought into the court, there will be none there. The sacrifices brought into the court to be offered to God were for the

Levites, they had their part in them. Think of what was theirs, it was no earthly inheritance, no land, but their portion the sacrifices of the God of Israel made by fire. What a holy portion to feed upon! And then, too, it is said, the Lord God of Israel Himself was their inheritance. Is it not worth while surrendering an earthly portion for that? The Levites thought it was.

Levi, you will remember, was the tribe that resorted to Moses outside the camp of Israel when the golden calf was set up there, when Moses said: "Who is on the Lord's side?" Exodus 32:26. How the Spirit of God would have that word come home to our hearts! Who is on the Lord's side? "Let him come to me". Exodus 32:26. They took the Lord's side. Let us ever remember in the hour of dilemma to consider for the Lord.

The true Levite ever considers for God. He takes the Lord's side. Depend upon it, difficulties will disappear if the rights of God are in your soul. It will entail suffering, but the suffering brings its own recompense. Levi had recompense. He suffered earthly loss for the Lord, because the Lord had His place with him, and the Lord said of him, "My covenant was with him of life and peace". Malachi 2:5. How God valued the sacrifice of Levi! He took the Lord's side and he sanctified himself, and from that point onward Levi is marked off as a privileged tribe in Israel. They would not suffer want or hunger; if you commit yourself to God's side you, too, will find your soul will be sustained. The Levites were sustained by the sacrifices made by fire.

Then they were dignified: they had God Himself as their portion: think of that! And then, as you will find later in Joshua 18, the priesthood was theirs. What a wonderful thing to have access to God, to be in the divine secrets! That was their privilege. The glory attaching to the breastplate of the high priest was theirs. In that breastplate were all the names of the tribes, and the Urim and the Thummim. Think of the privilege! Who is there upon earth that has divine secrets? Only the priests! The family of the Levites was in possession of all the divine secrets, they had access into the holiest. The high priest had access, at any rate once a year, into the holiest of all. In this way we have outlined the great privileges that belong to ourselves as a levitical family on the ground of sacrifice.

In Joshua 21 they come forward and claim their own proper heavenly portion. Added to what they had in the wilderness, when you come to Joshua 21, we see their desire to have cities to dwell in. In the wilderness, in connection with the tabernacle, they had firstly, the sacrifices of the God of Israel made by fire; secondly, they had the Lord God Himself for their inheritance; and thirdly, they had the priesthood. But they could have had no cities in the wilderness. A city is a divine thought. If man built Babylon, God would call Abraham out and

point to another city, not on earth, but in heaven. He has prepared for His people a city, and that is an heavenly one. So the Levites had forty-eight cities, a number which is, doubtless, typical, though I cannot dwell upon it, but they had forty-eight cities and they claimed them all.

You will find that the book of Joshua is a book of claims. God loves claims. Caleb had a claim; the daughters of Zelophehad had a claim; in fact, all the nine and a half tribes had claims. But why? Because divine counsels had given them a portion. Think of what the divine counsels of God thought of for us; think of the allotments made in the counsel book of God for us! The book of Joshua is a book of claims. God loves to see His people come forward and lay claim to their own heavenly portion; have you made *your* claim? It is all given to you in divine purpose and you will get it, but let us be on the lines of Scripture, which shows us how we can enter the inheritance by claiming it. The Levites claimed theirs and they received every city that was promised, forty-eight cities. Now I take that to be the highest teaching of the levitical position.

The seventy whom the Lord sent out in Luke 10 were, so to say, levitical, corresponding to what is presented in the book of Numbers; they were servants, and most acceptable ones. It is a poor thing if we are not servants in some sense; and as taking up service with purpose of heart we are sure to be supported. The Lord will support us. The seventy were wonderfully supported, and they returned to the Lord flushed with victory. The Lord would not take away their success, for these seventy men, having been over the cities of Israel two by two, had brought the kingdom of God near to men. That is the idea of service, to bring the kingdom in the way of men down here. That is to continue; it is wonderful service, but we are not to rest in that. So the Lord said, "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven". Luke 10:20. In other words, Do not rest in what is yours in the book of Numbers, wonderful as it is, as showing the carrying out of divine service here in the wilderness, but rejoice in your part in the book of Joshua. Let us rejoice that our names are registered in heaven. We are to put in our claim. God loves us to do that. There is the true Joshua at our disposal, the true Eleazar; he comes first in the book of Joshua in the portion of the inheritance. It is a holy inheritance, not one that the flesh seeks for. Eleazar gives nothing to the flesh. Are we in possession of our heavenly portion? The Lord loves to set it before us plainly, and so the Lord meets His servants, the seventy missionaries, with these words, "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven". Luke 10:20. Think of that! Think of having your names in the heavenly roll! Can anything touch it? Peter tells us that an inheritance is reserved there for us, reserved

and bespoke; and there is no crowding there. The inheritance is there, reserved, and we have a place in it; "for you", Peter says.

Now there is just one other word in regard to assembling. In Psalm 50:5 it says, "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice". That is the position which is to mark us down here. We have made a public committal to God. We have committed ourselves to public relationship to God by sacrifice. He has committed Himself to us, and now we commit ourselves to God by sacrifice, and He calls for an assembly of such saints as these. How one loves to be in such an assembly as that. Presently there will be another assembling. The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with an assembling shout, not then to gather us together in public. Our public position is now and is demonstrated by sacrifice. We are committed to God on the ground of surrender. Without that there is nothing established as the result of separation. But when the Lord descends with an assembling shout the dead in Christ shall rise first, and then we which are alive and remain will be brought all together; we shall be thus assembled.

In the same epistle the apostle speaks of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our "gathering together unto him". 2 Thessalonians 2:1. There you come to the great private assembling, but morally if you are not in the public one on the ground of sacrifice, you are not fit for the private one. I do not say you will not be there, but loyal hearts would like to have part in the public assembling. God is not ashamed of those who have given up and surrendered for Him. Christ's death was public, but He went into heaven privately. We go out of the world publicly in our baptism, and our fellowship is outside of it. Baptism means that you are committed to an outside position, but how poor the position is without sacrifice! God has pleasure in sacrifice, that is what marks the public position. The private one is alluded to in the passage I quoted, "our gathering together unto him" 2 Thessalonians 2:1 not now in His name, but unto *Him*; the last great assembling on earth is private. We gather together, beloved, to be translated, to be brought in actuality to our levitical portion. We have it before our hearts, but in the meanwhile the Lord would have us come forward and claim the inheritance, and in claiming it to make it our own, take possession of it and live in it.

As we are living in our heavenly portion, we become an influence. A levitical city was found in every tribe, not only in Canaan, but in the land of Moab. The point is that God would influence all by heaven, so that *our* influence, for every one of us has some influence, should be a heavenly one, and that we should influence others in a heavenly way.

May the Lord grant that we should know these things better, that we might be in our proper heavenly portion. Our names are there, but we need to take possession.

WHAT THE ASSEMBLY IS TO CHRIST, AND WHAT IT IS TO GOD (JT 11)

2 Corinthians 11:2,3; Genesis 49:1,2; Deuteronomy 33:1 - 5; Psalm 122:3,4

I want to say a word about the assembly, in regard to what it is to Christ and what it is to God. The subject is necessarily large, but I shall confine myself to certain features which I trust may be of present service to the saints, and what I would remark at first is the object the apostle had in his service in Corinth. John the baptist heard the voice of the Bridegroom, but he did not undertake to bring in the bride for Christ. That was not his service. It remained for the Lord to make His own selection as to who should bring in the bride by his ministry. So Paul comes in especially for this service. And in going to Corinth he had this in his heart; in ministering to the Corinthians he had before him to espouse them to one Man, that he might present them as a chaste virgin to Christ. He had other thoughts, but evidently this thought was nearest to the Lord's heart, that their affections should be undivided, and that they should be a chaste virgin to Christ.

The Lord had said to Paul at the outset of the work in Corinth, "I have much people in this city", (Acts 18:10). He had, like the master of a multitude in Song of Songs 8:11, much people there, and would form those people into an assembly; for the master of a multitude in the Song of Songs is the former of assemblies in Ecclesiastes. The Lord would have the much people that He had in Corinth formed into an assembly, and this the apostle had before him in his service; and that assembly was especially singled out as God's assembly. But then at the same time these saints were taken up and regarded and served by Paul as specially belonging to Christ. The great point is that we should not be of double heart, that the heart should be undivided; one Man is to control it, and the heart being His, one is kept in regard of Christ in a virgin state.

The apostle expresses his anxiety as regards the Corinthians, and well indeed he might; he says, "I fear lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craft, so your thoughts should be corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ". He was jealous, and the Lord is jealous; you will recall that in 1 Corinthians 10 it is said, "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" (verse 22) These questions refer to our relations in our several pathways of responsibility in this world. The Lord's supper is a challenge to our hearts as to where they are; in other words, the Lord would say to us in it, This is what I have done for you, now what are you for Me? Can I trust you in My absence? It is His absence that is the test.

The book of Proverbs refers to the marriage relation, as the book of Ecclesiastes refers to the assembly. The preacher in Ecclesiastes is a former of assemblies, but the speaker in Proverbs is a man of love. He is nurtured in his father's and his mother's affections, and he says, "Who can find a woman of worth?" (Proverbs 31:10) In Ecclesiastes he intimates that such a woman had not been found. Proverbs raises the question as to who can find her, and I think that when Paul went to Corinth he had in mind to find her, and that he certainly found her at Ephesus; a woman of worth, whose price is far above rubies, one of whom it could be said that "the heart of her husband doth safely trust [or confide] in her". (verse 11) The question is, Can we be trusted? I often say, Can I be trusted when I am not in sight of the brethren? Am I true to the fellowship? I am to be true, and not to compromise them in any way by my associations or conduct.

But then there is more than that in the fellowship. The love of God is in it. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16) What is that blood? It is the life of Christ which He has given up for us. God has given it up. Can I trifle with that? "My dearly beloved", he says, "flee from idolatry" (verse 14) — FLEE from it. Anything that disputes the rights of God in my heart is idolatry. The love of Christ in the Supper is a test to us. "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" He took that body in order to carry out the will of God, and that body has been devoted to us, for He died in that body. The love of Christ is in the fellowship; and then finally the love of the brethren is in it. "For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread". (verse 17) Now where are we in our affections? He says further, "Ye *cannot* be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of demons". And then he adds: "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" (verses 21,22)

These are solemn questions. One would love to be able to put them to every professed believer on earth, for they refer to every such one. Jealousy is the rage of a man. We should see that there is nothing to provoke Him to jealousy; that we might be as those that are espoused to one Man: that the heart should he undivided; that there should be freedom from corruption, and that we should be a chaste virgin for Christ. That is, I believe, what the Lord is set for now; that at the end of the days the assembly might appear in its virgin state. Let us seek to be among the wise ones, by the recognition of the Spirit, and the avoidance of all that which would provoke the Lord to jealousy. Let there be nothing that would in any way dispute His rights in our hearts.

Now in turning to the Old Testament, I want to show that we have in the parental interest of Jacob a foreshadowing of the Lord's parental interest in the disciples. The gospels afford much evidence of His parental interest in and care for them. Indeed, the institution of the Supper was in connection with a household position. The Lord was in the position of a householder; He was the Head. And so I call attention to Jacob for a moment; he says, "Gather yourselves together". Our position here is a very humble one as regards this world: we are disciples of a rejected Christ, and it is as such we come together. At the institution of the Lord's supper, the Lord was, as it were, the Head of the house, but He was going to die. Do we take that to heart? Murder was outside, the air was rife with it, and within the traitor's hand was on the table. Think of the dreadfulness of these circumstances, but yet there was parental interest in the heart of Christ for His disciples, and that remains.

Jacob called his sons, and said, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father". You will notice that he speaks of gathering twice: first, "that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days". The Lord has left nothing untold. The history of the assembly involves much that is painful in the extreme, but it has all been told. Do we know what He has told us? He that has an ear, let him hear. But the second verse says, "Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father". The word *gather* in that verse is really *assemble*. It suggests our position in the assembly, and in the assembly we are to hear, we are to hearken. The preacher says, "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools". (Ecclesiastes 5:1)

The first verse of Genesis 49 is what Jacob would say to them as to what would befall them in the last days. In love the Lord has told everything beforehand, and it is a most humiliating record on the one hand, but on the other hand it is fraught with every encouragement, because the history recounts what He is to the assembly. Were it not for that, she could never come out at the end as she does. For the end is that "the Spirit and the bride say Come". That is, there is full affection and intelligence in the assembly at the end, in spite of the terrible things the Lord had to speak of. But then there is also "Assemble yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father". I would urge on you the importance of listening to what the Lord is saying. "Hearken unto the voice of Israel your father" is suggestive of the parental interest that marks the Lord's care for the assembly. Let us pay attention to that. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Lord says, and what the Spirit says. Here it is what Jacob their father says, but it is

the voice of Christ typically, and the sons are to hear. Let us have exercised ears. Many are unable to distinguish sounds. You remember how that when Moses and Joshua came down from the mount and merriment was going on in the camp, Joshua said, "There is a noise of war in the camp". (Exodus 32:17) He had an unexercised and an inexperienced ear. But Moses said, "The noise of them that sing do I hear"; (verse 18) he discerned the idolatrous voice in the camp. I refer to that because of the great importance of having exercised ears, so that we might discern the Lord's voice, and what He says.

When we come to Deuteronomy we have the other side; that is, to the period following upon the gift of the Holy Spirit typically to the people. And so it is said that, "Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob". I invite your attention to the reference to the law in that passage; it is a spiritual reference. The law is holy, just, and good, and it is regarded as the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. Psalm 119 is the appreciation by the godly man of the commandments of the Lord. "And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together". They were now typically in assembly order, and viewed in that light Christ is King in Jeshurun, that is, He is enthroned in the affections of the saints. As Mary says, "They have taken away my Lord"; (John 20:13) that is, affection's Lord. Not *the* Lord, but *my* Lord. And so Thomas says, "*My* Lord and *my* God". Do we regard the Lord in that light?

In Psalm 122 you have the saints together typically in assembly order in relation to God. These psalms are called "Songs of degrees"; they refer to certain spiritual movements in the people of God. You observe it says, "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together"; and then it says, "the tribes go up". Now I take this to be spiritual movement. In Deuteronomy 33:5 the Lord has His place in our affections as gathered together. I wonder whether we know anything about that? And then, further, do we know what it is, as gathered together, to move upwards, to move Godward in assembly order? I do not think for a moment the Lord ever gives up the thought of the assembly; nor does God. So when I come together with the brethren, I would have the thought of the assembly before me as the Lord has it before Him, and I would be there, so to say, in the order of the tribes. The words "unto the testimony of Israel" may be read "Israel's custom". What is the assembly custom? Well, the Lord inaugurated a custom: "When they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives"; (Matthew 26:30) they went in a certain spiritual order.

Luke says, "he went according to his custom to the mount of Olives", (Luke 22:39). It was an ascent. It was a movement the Father understood. There

are customs the Lord has enjoined to govern us, and which should not be disregarded. They are spiritual customs which are not our own. As we are spiritually educated we understand them, and we go up "to give thanks unto the name of the Lord". (Psalm 122:4) That is what God looks for. I believe that today there is a revival of things as they were, in measure, and I refer especially to what is due to the Father. It is a custom that the Holy Spirit has revived and would revive, and I hope will be maintained, that Christ and the Father may have their portion in the saints in these last days. May the Lord bless His word.

THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL (8) (JT 16)

Deuteronomy 33:6 - 29

FL What is the contrast between the blessing of Moses and the blessing of Jacob?

JT The blessing of Jacob is parental and contemplates the *general* history of the people, including the bad as well as the good. Even apostasy is noted; still the tribes are all blessed and go through. Genesis 49 is a prophetic announcement; though the tribes had no history as *tribes* at that time. The word 'tribes' appears first in Genesis 49:28, where it is said they are blessed; the blessing would come in in spite of what would happen. Jacob's sons and their immediate families had histories, of course; but the tribal history had not properly begun; therefore the chapter is, in the main, anticipative. This blessing in Deuteronomy 33 is after they had had a long tribal history in a scene of contrariety, and they are seen as blessed characteristically; that is, after the wilderness history — showing that God can bring us through. The blessing here is regardless of what *had* happened; the blessing of the saints viewed from the standpoint of the purpose of God. In Genesis 49 it is generally in spite of what *would* happen. Deuteronomy brings out what God has done. "What hath God wrought!" (Numbers 23:23) The chapter presents what God had been to Israel and what they had been to Him, and, founded on this, the thoughts and desires of the Mediator for the people.

ANW That explains why, in closing, he eulogises the God of Jeshurun.

JT That is the idea, the God who loves an upright people. His people are that characteristically; so that this chapter is the victory of God in His people after the wilderness journey is over. It looks backward; that is to say, it contemplates what has happened, that nothing has been passed over; but still, the saints are blessed. It is a question of the Spirit in us, so that after the well is celebrated in Numbers 21, they move on from point to point until they come to Pisgah, from which "the surface of the waste" is viewed; that is, it is a retrospective view.

FL I was wondering why Simeon is left out in this chapter?

JT I suppose it is to test out our stamina, as to whether we can stand being left out; I mean, the work of the Spirit in us enables us to accept being discounted; that God has His full number without me, which is a searching thing. Of course, other things enter into it. When we come to the next book we find that Simeon is not left out. He has a place in Canaan.

FL Simeon is not left out in Revelation 7, but Dan is.

JT I suppose the same sort of thing might come into it. Dan would say, 'I deserve to be left out'; he having first set up tribal idolatry; but he is not really left out. When you come to Revelation 21 the names of the twelve tribes are there, and Dan must be one of them; when the twelve tribes are mentioned without being specified by name, they are regarded as all there, as in the breastplate. They are not specified by name on the breastplate, but they are all there. In this respect we must always keep Genesis 49:28 in view: "*All these* are the twelve tribes of Israel".

FHL That is in principle what we must all learn — that the time may come when we may be left out in this way. Simeon is the first mentioned on the mount of blessing (Deuteronomy 27:12), but here he is left out.

JT It tests you if you are left out, or if you seem to be ignored at any point. One has often found that if you are with God you can say, 'God can get along without me'. He will on an occasion do this, but He brings us in in His own time. If I am omitted at one time, God will bring me in to my advantage at another.

CAM We might overrate our service, but we cannot be left out characteristically, can we?

JT That is what I was thinking. "All these are the twelve tribes of Israel", and the blessing is that wherewith their father had blessed them; "the gifts and the calling of God are not subject to repentance", (Romans 11:29).

Levi and Joseph get the greatest mention here. These variations express the mind of God and it is for us to understand. In almost every full mention of the tribes there is variation from what appears elsewhere. It surely is a question of God's seeing everything, so that if Reuben is in his family place, as here, you may expect that there is some reference to what marked him in this connection. "Thou shalt have no pre-eminence", was earlier said of him; (Genesis 49:4). That is not lost sight of, so that here it is just "Let Reuben live, and not die". There is an allusion, I suppose, to the poverty of the tribe, spiritually.

WGT His history under Moses was not much to his credit, any more than his history in Genesis. He is also linked up with Korah's rebellion.

JT He does not seem to have gained much. Many start out well; others start out ill. Reuben did not start out well; his history at the outset was discreditable, and under Moses he did not prosper much, spiritually; then he settles down on the wilderness side of Jordan, as content to be *there*.

AFM Simeon and Levi in Genesis have "instruments of violence"; here, Levi comes out in a wonderful way. Would it show that recovery had come in?

JT The history of the wilderness is in view — what has been gained. Reuben did not gain much; whereas Levi gained immensely. He came out well in a crisis. It is a question of how a brother gets on in a crisis. Levi shone well in a crisis; that is what is alluded to here.

FL Reuben in the wilderness seemed to show the haughty pride of the first-born in linking himself up with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

JT That should be noted. An alliance of that kind comes where there is proximity to one another; that is to say, meetings near each other linking on in a sectional way lose the universal side. Reuben had an advantage in the wilderness. Next to Judah, he had the best place; that is, the *south*. But instead of profiting by it, he lost ground and joined up on party lines with Korah.

CAM That is very sorrowful; so that a man having an advantage is not always the most reliable. We might lay hands on such a man as having this favour; but it would be a mistake.

JT Quite; you have to wait and see. It says: "Lay hands quickly on no man". "Of some men the sins are manifest beforehand ... and some also they follow after. In like manner good works also are manifest beforehand, and those that are otherwise cannot be hid", (1 Timothy 5:22 - 25).

TA Barnabas made a wonderful start, but he did not continue.

JT Quite; but apparently he got back again. God may give us a good start, as under favourable circumstances; as young men, for instance, who were brought into relation with Paul and listened to his oral ministry. God gave them an advantage; whereas others have had to get on without it and have been obliged to work out their own salvation in this sense. God gave Reuben an advantage which he did not profit by. This is a warning. Those who led in dividing the saints in 1890 had been companions in service with Mr. Darby.

FHL Did not Reuben show the spirit of a brother more than the others at the outset in connection with Joseph?

JT Quite so; he did; he and Judah showed *some* feeling, but this did not clear them of the guilt of selling their brother.

WGT Would it be the fruit of Reuben's lack of energy that his men were few?

JT According to the footnote in the New Translation, "few" implies that they are countable. They are *men* ("full grown") worthy of count; let them be this,

was the desire of Moses. This seems the meaning. "If any one love God, he is known of him", (1 Corinthians 8:3). Such would have a place in the divine reckoning. If Reuben is to live, let him have *men*; let them be persons of known character who are worthy of mention. Although having the advantage of being first-born, Reuben had failed seriously in his youth, and Jacob said to him, "Thou shalt have no pre-eminence"; and he lost the birthright — all this would enter into Moses' prayer for him.

AFM Would "live" here be something like Romans 8, living in a potential way?

JT Quite; living actually, instead of dying. The Lord said to Simon, "Thou shalt be called Cephas (which interpreted is stone)", (John 1:42). That would mean that the name would express him in the character of a living stone.

AP Scripture indicates that those who have spiritual life are few. "For narrow the gate and straitened the way that leads to life, and they are few who find it", (Matthew 7:14).

JT Evidently the idea is not that you should have only a few men, but that they are to be worthy of count, like the one hundred and twenty "names" in Acts 1.

AP Is the teaching here in the way of spiritual characteristics, progressive in these twelve tribes?

JT I think so; the teaching is constructive. The first thing is life. You can understand that in its application to ourselves we are to live and not die. Then the next thing is — "Hear, Jehovah, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people, may his hands strive for them; and be thou a help to him against his oppressors". That is like one in fellowship, brought to his people. All these features apply to every Christian.

AFM This is not addressed to individuals simply, it is rather collective.

JT Yes; they are really features of the saints as a whole.

AP Are they not features that should mark any locality, or the people of God at any time?.

JT I think that is just the idea. These features ought to mark us so that we live; we are brought to our people; we are on spiritual lines; as in fellowship we are priests unto God; then, in Benjamin, we are loved of God. God dwells amongst us; He dwells between Benjamin's shoulders.

WGT How would the voice of Judah be known among us?

JT It would be the voice of need — prayer. Constructively, this fits here, leading on to Levi. There is much prayer from Judah — David, Solomon,

Hezekiah, Daniel, Jabez and others of that tribe in the Old Testament were marked as representing the voice of Judah. Also our Lord Himself. Judah suggests the gathering idea: "Bring him unto his people".

AFM Is there not great lack of what is priestly?

Do not these verses, with regard to Levi, set out wonderful thoughts of what should mark us as priests?

JT Yes; they deserve special consideration; and we should have clearly in our minds what has been remarked, that this chapter alludes to earlier history, and so to the way that Levi shone in a crisis.

CAM The word 'characteristic' that you used is of great help in looking at this chapter. The truth is worked out in a sort of review, so that the people have actually shown that the tribes are, in some sense, what is stated.

JT These traits, we may say, have come out already; but are to be enlarged; whatever is of God that has come out in your earlier history, however little the measure, this chapter shows that it is to be enlarged. The fulness of the divine thought is in view; that you should increase more and more; that is what the true Levite would see in this. So that you have — "And of Levi he said, thy Thummim and thy Urim are for thy godly one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; who said to his father and to his mother, I see him not, and he acknowledged not his brethren, and knew not his own children; for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thine ordinances, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thy nostrils, and whole burnt-offering upon thine altar".

All these things have come out, you might say. Now the next thing is: "Bless Jehovah, his substance, and let the work of his hands please thee; crush the loins of his adversaries, and of them that hate him, that they may never rise again!"

There is a prayer in this instance attached to the blessing.

AP One of the great moral qualities of Levi was that the natural was disallowed in him at a very crucial moment.

JT Yes. This is seen in Exodus 32; he slew his own brethren.

WGT Why is his proving by Jehovah connected with Massah?

JT Moses and Aaron were tested at Massah and Meribah; (Exodus 17; Numbers 20). Levi would be represented in them. Such testing develops priesthood.

CAM The fact that there is a prayer in the blessing shows that there is more to follow. As you said, these things are to be enlarged.

JT It is looking on to perfection. Every man of God is looking for more for God.

FL Would not what is said of Levi be to emphasise the great importance of the priestly function?

JT Exactly. What is in view is his service Godward, not the carrying side. It is what is for God, for the nostrils of God, also the burnt offering, so the highest priestly service is contemplated. Besides, Israel was to be taught by Levi, "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and at his mouth they seek the law", (Malachi 2:7). A principle running through this chapter is that however much we have done, or however great our development in the knowledge of God, we are to increase more and more.

JTJr The Thummim is first here. It is a question of the *perfection* that God sees in Levi.

JT That would be in keeping with what we have remarked, that the things were already seen in him; here perfection was there.

ANW I suppose the apostle Paul in writing epistles to the various companies would have a distinctiveness of each company in his mind, and the exhortations have in view that what he approved should increase more and more.

JT That is very practical, and it should come home to us; however much faithfulness there may have been in service, or however much growth, there must be increase.

AFM The word 'substance' is a good one. Of Levi it is said, "Bless, Jehovah, his substance". Levi, having spiritual substance and being blessed, would become more useful in the disposition of it.

JT "Bless, Jehovah, his substance, and let the work of his hands please thee". There was evidently need for improvement on that line. The work of our hands is to be pleasing to God. So that when you are getting on in the service of the Lord, you are thinking of pleasing Him — not only of the success or results that may be attached to it, but pleasing the Lord in what you are doing. The evening is to be equal to the morning, as is indicated in the morning and evening lambs. The Lord was as vigorous in the evening as in the morning in His services, as the Gospels testify. And every service should yield not only something for God, but also something for the servant, so that he is sustained; he gets something out of everything; he is sustained in a sense in

what he is doing by itself. The Lord said, "My food is that I should do the will of him that has sent me, and that I should finish his work", (John 4:34).

JEH We can say that it is the evening of Moses' life here; yet he is in great vigour. In the next chapter he *goes* up to the top of the mountain.

JT The history of Levi shows how substance is acquired. I believe that Aaron is the characteristic Levite — a man who was not mentioned by name until he was very old — about eighty-three — but what he was, was well known to God. He had had history with God, and in that way had substance. Priesthood is that feature of the Christian to which all else in him and his circumstances are to minister. The common person and the Levite (all referring to the same individual) minister to the priest.

ANW If a man is serving pleasurably to God, does that not carry with it its own peculiar support?

JT It does, as was remarked. For example, you get a letter of enquiry from someone and find it difficult to answer; the suggestion arises that you should not be burdened with it. But you look into it and try to find out what is wanted and as depending on the Lord you will not fail to get it and, besides, get something for yourself in the toil. That is, I think, the idea. The servant gets food in his work, and thus he increases. The Lord's work is not unprofitable drudgery even to the worker. The general principle is that the servant increases as he goes; he does not lose ground by great toil.

JTJr "Thy Thummim and thy Urim are for thy godly one". What does that mean?

JT It is creditable to Levi that the Thummim is first here; it indicates that what corresponds with it had come out in him. I suppose the godly one would be in accord with what Peter said, "And we have believed and known that thou art the holy one of God", (John 6:69). Aaron was "the saint of Jehovah"; figuratively, he was Christ.

FL In Paul's addresses to the assemblies, would the Spirit of God indicate characteristics such as come out here in the twelve tribes?

JT The features we are dealing with are worked out in the epistles. The application is to the saints now; so that "Thy Thummim and thy Urim are for thy godly one" would bear on us. Romans leads to holiness; and in Ephesians the new man is created in truthful righteousness and holiness. The Thummim and the Urim, of course, are in Christ as High Priest, but the saints are said to have the mind of Christ and hence correspond with them. Thus problems may be solved amongst us.

JS In line with what you were saying, that a servant increases as he goes along, would you view Moses as having thus reached a high spiritual plane here?

JT Exactly. At the end, he shone brightest. The book is "the words which Moses spoke" after the wilderness journey was over. It is his own work, as it were; his love for Israel and personality generally enter more into it than they do into his other books.

JS He was able to analyse what was wrought of God through the wilderness in each tribe.

JT Yes. Then he wrote the song of chapter 32 at the direction of God, to be laid up for Israel as a testimony amongst them. In all this we see what Moses was capable of at the end of his days. "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated", (Deuteronomy 34:7). In all the vicissitudes of the wilderness, the reception of divine communications, joys, sorrows, ministrations, and conflicts, he gained as he went, and lost nothing.

FHL Would you say that about Stephen; he started by serving tables, but he ended as an asset to the testimony?

JT And Philip, too; they went on obtaining "for themselves a good degree, and much boldness in faith which is in Christ Jesus", (1 Timothy 3:13).

AP Is not the adversary taken account of here in relation to that which is spiritual in verses 7 and 12? The two are somewhat different. In the end of verse 11 the prayer is that the enemy should be crushed; evidently by God Himself apart from the instrumentality of Levi; whereas, in connection with Judah, he was to be helped against his oppressors.

JT Yes; that is, Judah (pre-eminently in David)

is in the conflict, and the enemies of Levi are to be crushed. This would be illustrated in David's overthrow of the enemies of Israel and the release and enlargement of priestly service in his kingdom. Whilst you are in the conflict, God helps you against the oppressors; but as you serve God in the sanctuary, He takes account of our enemies and would set us entirely free.

WB-w Do you think Moses would have worn himself out if he had not taken Jethro's advice? (Exodus 18).

JT There may have been something in Jethro's advice; but Moses, as a true Levite, would know what to do.

AFM Would you say there is a link between "thy godly one" in verse 8 and "the beloved of Jehovah" in verse 12, as showing that the chapter is

progressive?

JT "Thy godly one" answers to God in holiness; it would have to do with the sanctuary. Benjamin, "the beloved of Jehovah", is a very fine thought, alluding to the dwelling place, Jerusalem. Benjamin, as representing love and hence the condition for dwelling, rightly follows Levi.

AP He had a peculiar place in love. Does that correspond to John's place in John 13?

JT Just so. Benjamin was looked on as a lovable personage in Genesis; he had no part in the attack on Joseph. As we were saying, it is a retrospective view here in the tribes — what arose in their history. He is the beloved of the Lord. Judah refers to him in speaking to Joseph as the object of his father's love; thus the thought of dwelling comes out in him. God dwells with those whom He loves. He that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him; *dwelling between his shoulders* would mean that God dwells between Benjamin's shoulders; that is the idea, alluding to Jerusalem, but really to the strength which love affords in His people providing dwelling conditions.

FL I was going to ask about the royal tribe. It was of Judah; but the royal city is of the tribe of Benjamin.

JT I think that brings out what we ought to see — the working of love among the saints. Benjamin makes no complaint, as Jerusalem came practically into Judah's hands. It shows that Benjamin was affected by love and made full room for his royal brother. The King, Christ, came out of Judah. Normally the saints will make room for Christ; indeed, they will make room for true kingly qualities in whomsoever they may appear.

AP In the end of Ezekiel, Judah is on one side of the sanctuary and Benjamin on the other side.

TA A scripture of this kind must have been very sweet to the apostle Paul; he came from the tribe of Benjamin.

JT How readily he would give way to others if necessary, if love and wisdom required it! I think the tribute here is to Benjamin; from his earliest days he was the object of love. If God dwells in Benjamin through Judah, Benjamin is content because he has a dwelling place with God; that is enough. If the dwelling comes to him through another greater than himself, it is God nevertheless who dwells.

CAM Benjamin puts himself out of sight and others come into prominence; it goes with this thought of love in dwelling.

JT That is what I thought; that we might get help on these blessings, for they imply that if I am seemingly at any disadvantage, so long as God gets His way through it, well and good, I shall not lose. God *is* getting His way, for, after all, He is dwelling between the shoulders of Benjamin. Although the temple was built by David and Solomon, it was in Benjamin's territory. God would never lose sight of that.

FL When the test of division among the tribes came, after Solomon's death, Benjamin remained with Judah.

JEH Would Mephibosheth fit in here? He was a Benjamite. He said, "Let him even take all, since my lord the king is come again in peace to his own house", (2 Samuel 19:30).

JT See how beautifully he spoke about David. As long as the king comes back, let Ziba take all. In him Benjamin owned the worth of David. It was David who said, "Until I find out a place for Jehovah, habitations for the Mighty One of Jacob", (Psalm 132:5); but spiritually the dwelling would be between the shoulders of Benjamin.

CAM There is something in a brother effacing himself that has more of an edifying effect, possibly, than anything else; such as the case of John the Baptist, a man who was content to disappear to make way for Christ.

JT That is how we get the good of these meetings, as we see in these touches that what is of God comes to you; even if it comes through another, it is still of God, and you are getting the benefit of it.

AFM Do you think these suggestions are illustrated in Peter and John in the early Acts? Peter is in the forefront and John in the background.

JT You mean that John is second to Peter and hardly ever says anything; but he is getting the good of what is coming out, and sharing in it all. Love is content, as God's work goes on. Judah has an advantage as to Jerusalem; but in the next book he is giving up to Simeon, making room for Simeon in his territory; so there is equality continually, and God is glorified as love makes room for this.

FL In what sense is it said in the Psalms, "There is little Benjamin, their ruler", (Psalm 68:27)?

JT It is a diminutive thought. Benjamin was generally small. Numerically, and especially after the dreadful reduction of the tribe in the time of the Judges; but this Psalm speaks of him as "their ruler", which would imply that, although small, he had acquired moral power, which involves a spiritual principle. It had expression in Paul, who was a true Benjamite in this sense. Small in his own

eyes, less than the least of all the saints, yet he exercised, under the Lord, more moral authority than anyone. The book of Judges and the history of Saul bring out the sorrowful side of Benjamin, but he was not lost sight of; in the Psalm referred to he is still a tribe and a ruler.

CAM What impresses one is that these tribes could not do without each other.

JT That is what comes out in the history of Benjamin; he was nearly wiped out, but his brethren began to think of him with affection and saved him.

JEN Like the weak brother for whom Christ died.

JT Well, after you get the *dwelling*, the next thing is the *wealth* of the position, so that much is made of Joseph. "Blessed of Jehovah be his land, by the precious things of the heavens, by the dew, and by the deep that lieth beneath, and by the precious fruits of the sun, and by the precious things put forth by the months, and by the best things of the ancient mountains, and by the precious things of the everlasting hills, and by the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof. And let the good will of him that dwelt in the bush come upon the head of Joseph, upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren". I think we are on Ephesian ground now, but as always, the links go backward. In the one "that was separated from his brethren", we are directed back to Genesis.

WFK Is he a type of Christ here?

JT Yes; but it is more Christ worked out in the saints. After God finds His dwelling-place, then you have the richness of the place.

WFK There is more said of Joseph than of any of the others.

JT Because there is more of Christ worked out in him. Our mind is directed to Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, which bring out the spiritual wealth of the Christian position. That is what we may see in Joseph. The wealth and sources of the wealth here are unlimited. In "the precious things of the heavens, by the dew, and by the deep that lieth beneath", you are reminded of the height and depth. In verses 14 and 15 you are directed backward "the ancient mountains, and by the precious things of the everlasting hills". The sources of wealth are immense; they are universal, including heaven and earth.

CAM This seems to have a great connection with our spiritual emotions. I was thinking of the expression "him that was separated from his brethren"; these great things are not attained without deep spiritual emotions.

JT "But that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth?" (Ephesians 4:9) That touches the heart — "into the lower parts of the earth". Love led Jesus down there.

FL I was thinking of these three epistles which are so rich. They emphasise greatly the sacrificial love of Christ, and bring love into exercise.

JT The ancient mountains would refer to the outstanding strength and stability of divine purposes and promises. All are now yea and amen in Christ, and so link on with the everlasting hills, the latter stretching into eternity. Transcending thoughts lie in these connections and they should ravish our hearts. You get mountains in Genesis; they run right through Scripture; each represents some great principle, and all contribute to the spiritual wealth of the saints.

The high mountains were topped by the flood; hence they all came up out of death. Take Ararat, for instance; what thoughts are there! The ark rested there. What history is connected with Ararat!

AFM This vast wealth you have spoken of, in verses 13 - 16, seems to connect with God's good will, which was to come "upon the head of Joseph, upon the top of the head of him that was separated from (a Nazarite) his brethren". So that Christ, while rejected by His brethren, was thus entirely separated to God.

JT We are directed backward in all these references, as well as forward; that is, to the *roots* of things.

CAM So that the ancient history of the people of God impresses you as a very wonderful thing.

JT Especially the history of mountains. Genesis opens up much in connection with mountains, and so does Matthew.

WB-w Moriah was one of the mountains where Isaac was offered up.

JT "On the mount of Jehovah will be provided" (Genesis 22:14), is a principle laid down in Genesis. I suppose such ancient things are what the Lord in Matthew 13:52, speaks of as "things new *and old*". Then the "everlasting hills" would be the hills of Matthew, of which there are seven, bringing out the great principles that enter into the assembly and are everlasting; all contributing to the wealth of the saints. Then you have the one great mountain called the "holy mountain" by the apostle Peter. He spoke by the Spirit of "being with him on the holy mountain", (2 Peter 1:18). I suppose that is in effect one of the everlasting hills.

WB-w The "ancient mountains" go back to the past; the "everlasting hills" go on to the future.

JT That is right; all contributing to the wealth of the saints.

APT I notice the word 'precious' occurs frequently in this portion. Do you think it answers to the high level of Ephesian ground, to the great things of God?

JT "Precious" is one of Peter's choice adjectives. He was near to Jesus, and knew the intrinsic excellence of Jesus and His things.

AFM That is why he speaks of the mountain as "holy".

JT That is what it was to him when writing about it, not what it was to him when he went to sleep on it! I suppose the way he speaks of it in his epistle shows that it is by the Spirit we understand things. The word 'precious' here appears five times in verses 13 - 16. It is a remarkable recurrence of the thought in relation to the wealth of the saints. It calls attention to the idea of treasuries which David specified in his building.

JEH What is the meaning of the middle part of verse 16, "And let the good will of him that dwelt in the bush come upon the head of Joseph"?

JT It is to again bring forward past events; and was of great moment — "the *good will* of him that dwelt in the bush". Good will attaching to anything carries its own relative meaning. "The good will of him that dwelt in the bush", is God coming down into such lowly circumstances; Moses knew Him in that way.

JS You feel that Moses would now understand what all this was, for God appeared to him in the burning bush.

JT The suggestion is that if you bless the saints or wish the saints well, you are not simply thinking of God as He is abstractly represented in Scripture, but as you know Him. This is the God that Moses knew. The impression he received at the bush governed his whole life and service.

TA I suppose when he stood on the mount of transfiguration, he had all this accumulative knowledge.

JT He had; and carried forward the wealth of the ancient mountains into the results of the everlasting hills!

JS Was it not figurative of Israel's being oppressed in Egypt; the bush was burning and yet not consumed?

JT Yes. God burns up all that is contrary to Him in His people, but in His good will He will see that nothing of Himself or of His work in them is lost; all that

will be preserved. This also marked His discipline of Israel in the wilderness.

WGT Is this to bring out the anointing — what comes upon the head?

JT It would be involved in it, and recognises Joseph's distinguishment and dignity.

ANW Is that emphasised by the next statement, "Upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren"?

JT Quite so; the top of the head emphasises what is meant. It is definitely on him. His person sustains it, too. Compare the reference to the Lord's head in John 20.

AP Joseph, although separated from his brethren, was the means of bringing them together again. He is distinguished as carrying the idea of the twelve through.

JT Quite; as Christ *was* separated from His brethren, but this chapter regards Him as among them. Then his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, I suppose, would allude to the saints *in* Christ in the two tribes, and there were thousands and myriads of them. It would be the fulness of the redeemed in blessing and those who are blessed in Christ.

HSD What is the idea of pushing the peoples unto the ends of the earth by Joseph?

JT That would be, I suppose, a feature of Christ in His millennial power; the saints will be used to execute this in the millennium.

CAM What you said about these two tribes would help us to see that the thing is enlarging, and becoming very glorious.

JT Yes, the number — the myriads of Ephraim and the thousands of Manasseh allude to the position in which we are in Christ.

CAM So the men may be few at the beginning, but the thing enlarges immensely at the end.

JT Quite, and then that will be used in the future. The saints will be used in conflict — "His majesty is as the firstling of his ox; and his horns are as the horns of a buffalo. With them shall he push the peoples together to the ends of the earth".

JS We have reached the full height of the position spiritually in the blessing here.

JT I think in Zebulun and Issachar we are branching off to another line of things -"Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and thou, Issachar, in thy tents!

They shall invite the peoples to the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness; for they will suck the abundance of the seas and the hidden treasures of the sand". The allusion is to their position at the sea side: "They will suck the abundance of the seas" would be evangelisation. Gad would be the government of the assembly.

"Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad! As a lion doth he dwell, and teareth the arm, even the top of the head. And he provided the first part for himself; for there was reserved the portion of the lawgiver; and he came with the heads of the people; the justice of Jehovah and his judgments hath he executed with Israel". I think this alludes to the government of the house of God.

TH He received instructions from God and they were carried out in the assembly.

JT Yes; in the care meeting, doing justice. God does not spare the enemy. It says, "And teareth the arm, even the top of the head". The head refers to the wisdom the enemy had, the arm to his power to act; God deals with both the arm and the head.

JS This is more Corinthian territory.

JT I thought that. It is very important if you get the saints together through evangelisation, to have rule and government.

APT Paul speaks of his authority, the authority vested in him as an apostle. "The lawgiver" here corresponds.

JT "He provided the first part for himself; for there was reserved the portion of the lawgiver" which means, he values law; he does not despise it. Of course, the allusion may be to Moses' grave, but that is not the point for us. The lawgiver is important in the territory of Gad. For us, 1 and 2 Corinthians correspond.

TA "And they persevered in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, in breaking of bread and prayers", (Acts 2:42).

JT That is right — "the teaching of the apostles" — implying authority.

APT It says in the Psalm 105:22, "And teach his elders wisdom". As a rule, you feel that elders know everything; that they have not necessarily to be taught, and we must be open to any light presented to us by them; for things open out as we are subject to the Lord.

GG If we are in the good of the wealth of Joseph here, we can invite others to the mountain.

JT Quite so. I think Ephesians is the platform of evangelisation. You do not have evangelists mentioned among the gifts in Corinth, which is significant, but they are found in Ephesians, as if with Joseph conditions, so to speak, prevailing, you have something to invite people to. After Zebulun's and Issachar's services, who invite people to the mountain and bring in fresh material, there must be a coming under rule; that is what Gad is here.

FHL That seems to be dependent on dwelling as a lion.

JT Which is said of Gad. You cannot touch him with impunity. He stands for the rights of God in government. He will not give way. He turneth not aside for any.

WGT Dan is a young lion.

JT That is another thing. He leaps from Bashan. That is a brother who can get out of a position in a spiritual way.

JS Would you bring the care meeting in under Gad?

JT I would. Then Dan is a question of spiritual power. A man in a false position can get out of it. Bashan is not his territory. His place is in the land. It shows that it is another view of Daniel In Genesis 49:16, it says, "Dan will judge his people as another of the tribes of Israel".

JT Naphtali fits in here in right order — "Naphtali satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of Jehovah, possess thou the west and the south".

They are there ready to possess the west and south, like a person who is spiritual; you can entrust him with things; you can enlarge him.

WGT He is satisfied with it; he is not grumbling.

JT That is the kind of brother to entrust with things. A satisfied man can be trusted; a dissatisfied man is apt to satisfy himself at the expense of others.

AFM The blessing of Asher is a fine winding up to the way Moses blessed the tribes.

JT "Asher shall be blessed with sons; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil". It seems to fit in to the end that there should be *sons*. "Let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil". There is not much said of him as to himself, but he shall be blessed with sons, and that is a fine suggestion. God's thought is *sons*. We have to look at it in a broad sense; it is increase of what is delightful to God, and in which the saints share. You can understand how his name — Asher — fits in well at the end. "Happy art thou, Israel!" The chapter indicates that all is in spiritual order,

each tribe fitting in with others, according to whatever his history would furnish.

AP Do the last four verses apply generally as apart from any tribe particularly?

JT Yes, verse 28 shows what was in mind, and expresses God's thoughts of Israel in relation to these lovely features.

THE INHERITANCE, PRESENT AND FUTURE (JT 18)

Colossians 1: 12; Ephesians 1: 13, 14; Deuteronomy 33: 4

There is that which we have in the way of inheritance *provisionally* and that also which we have *eternally*. It may help if we look at the subject in these two connections.

Would you give us an idea of what the inheritance means first?

The idea of the inheritance came in with Abraham, and it is connected with the gospel. The Lord said that those who believed should receive an inheritance, and it is that which renders us independent of what we may have, or what may be in prospect, as after the flesh, setting us up in spiritual independence. Ephesians speaks of *our* inheritance, meaning that we who form the church have something altogether to ourselves — a special portion that belongs to us; and besides that we have what others will have, and we have that in the meanwhile in a provisional way.

Is the inheritance a gift?

Well, in a way it is, but it comes in rather through relationship. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ". That is how we come into it; but then there is an inheritance which we come into through redemption; the Lord said to Paul when He told him for what purpose He had appeared unto him, "That they may receive remission of sins, and inheritance", without specifying what it is.

Would the idea be that of the great woman of the Old Testament who said, "I dwell with my own people"?

Well, she dwelt among her own people; that was sufficient for her. We are wonderfully well off if we only knew it. One thing to be noted is that we know more about God *giving* than we do about *receiving*. It is what I receive that benefits me directly.

I was going to ask if you were referring, when you spoke of receiving an inheritance, to Acts 26, when the Lord said to the apostle Paul, "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me"?

That is what I was referring to. That is connected with the gospel. I may have large estates, but unless I take possession, and work them, they do not yield.

You said just now that we receive the inheritance provisionally now, and, I judge, you mean that in the future we shall receive it in all its fulness?

Yes, that is it, and what we shall have in the future we have only the earnest of now — "the earnest of our inheritance", Ephesians 1: 14. But the earnest is the Holy Spirit. Then there are things that we have not in the way of earnest merely, but in their totality — such as the covenant, the commandments, etc. The Holy Spirit sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts.

Was the birthright that Esau despised the inheritance really in figure?

Yes, it was. He despised it.

Is there such a thing as right to the inheritance? I was thinking of Jeremiah — "Thine is the right of redemption, to buy it", Jeremiah 32: 5 - 15.

Well, I think the Lord has taken that up and has secured the inheritance for Israel through redemption. We come into it now in a spiritual way, for we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

So in that way it would be a birthright?

It is a birthright, and there are evidences of the purchase. In Jeremiah there were the evidences of the purchase; there was that which was "sealed" and that which was "open". Both writings of the purchase were to be placed in an earthen vessel. Everything is rightly secured, and what is open is for us and what is sealed is for Israel in the future, but both writings are in the "earthen vessel", that is, we are in possession of the evidences of the purchase. *We* could not have purchased the inheritance; Christ has done that, but we have the testimony of the purchase, so that we have everything in possession in the earthen vessel. Now, what use are we making of that? We certainly can take up the open evidence that is not sealed, but really there is nothing sealed to us. We see that everything in the way of inheritance that there is for every family is already secured and we may make use of the things now, and yet we have a portion of *our own* of which we have only the earnest. Ephesians opens up the latter.

Would you say what is meant by the expression, "Holy Spirit of promise"?

I think it refers to what God had intimated in the Old Testament.

But that is not exactly the Holy Spirit personally, is it?

It refers to Him, of course. The apostle said to those Christians, "Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?" He refers to that. They said they had not even heard about it, and the apostle baptised them and laid his hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, and, of course, is much more than the earnest of our inheritance; but among

the other great things made good in Him down here is the earnest of our inheritance.

He is presented as the Holy Spirit of promise in that connection. I was wondering whether the promise had to do with the inheritance?

Yes, I think it has. The Holy Spirit had been promised, and the Gentiles now had received Him. We do not know how wealthy we are, even in what belongs to others, to say nothing of what belongs to ourselves. The covenant belonged to Israel primarily and the apostle says, "Whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants ... and of whom, as according to flesh, is the Christ", Romans 9: 4, 5. Now we have part in these things.

Is it as children of God that we have the inheritance?

I think so. "If children", it says, "then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ", so that whatever comes to Him comes to us.

You mean that being children the inheritance is ours, but we may have but a small apprehension of the greatness of it?

Yes. Generally we have a very poor apprehension of the wonderful wealth we have come into as children of God. Everything that Christ has in the way of inheritance we share in it — "joint-heirs with Christ".

John speaks of those who have the right to become the children of God; does he in that way distinguish between what we have title to and what we have really?

John introduces that at the outset. "He came to his own, and his own received him not". Had they received Him they would have come into all this. He says further, "as many as received him, to them gave he the right to be children of God" that is, the right to take that place. Then in the epistle he says, "Now are we the children of God; it doth not yet appear what we shall be". I take it that our inheritance is connected with what we shall be, but the provisional inheritance comes in now in connection with our position as children in this world, so that we are wonderfully endowed. Everything that came to Christ (whatever family it belongs to) is now ours in a provisional way.

Will they revert to those to whom they belong?

Yes, surely; the types show that Israel comes into his inheritance in the year of jubilee. Everything reverts to its original owner, but in the meanwhile Israel has forfeited all title, and the inheritance is available to us. Of course, the Jews will come into a material inheritance — what we have is spiritual.

And that in a way is sealed, but is open for us?

It is sealed to them, but known to those who have the Spirit now. (Compare 2 Corinthians 3, 2 Corinthians 4.)

Is the thought included in the cup?

Yes, I think so. The Lord said as to the passover cup, "Take this and divide it among yourselves". The principle remains, what we have is to be divided amongst ourselves. It is our heritage now. In Numbers 26 it is said: "Unto these shall the land be divided". Then in chapter 33 Moses said, "When ye pass over Jordan into the land of Canaan ... ye shall take for yourselves the land as an inheritance by lot". The cup suggests what we have as a common portion down here.

Do you mean to say that we have to get at what is sealed before we come into what is really open?

Well, I think for us they go together. We have the secret of everything by the Spirit. We know what Israel's part is. We have part in it now, only in a higher way. We have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. Wonderful portion! But then we have the "law". That is the reason why I referred to the book of Deuteronomy, because there the law commanded by Moses is called "the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob". You do not get the idea of the congregation in Colossians or Ephesians, because our *heavenly* portion is in view. The idea of a congregation is what we are down here; and as a congregation we prize the law — I refer to the law typically.

Deuteronomy is more the *spirit* of the law. Moses began to unfold this law — it is an *unfolded* law in Deuteronomy, meaning that behind it is the love of God. He says, "What great nation is there that hath righteous statutes and ordinances, as all this law which I set before you this day?" (Deuteronomy 4: 8.) It is not a question of the legal requirement leading to bondage, but of the love that is behind it.

You are connecting the law with the inheritance?

Well, you see, the scripture says it is an inheritance. If we take account of the nations of the world it is a wonderful thing to have a set of principles such as we have got. We ought not to be afraid of the word 'law'. "Oh, how love I thy law", one said. Psalm 119 confirms fully what we are saying, "Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage for ever".

The inheritance of the congregation of Jacob is presented in Deuteronomy. This book furnishes motives to induce the people to love Jehovah and to go into the land of promise in a fitting way. The law was not against them; it was

an inheritance. He through whom it was given was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together.

Do you connect it with the covenant?

Well, it is that, but it is also that which regulates us. The more you take up church matters and see what the congregation of Jacob really means, the more you will value this heritage. Let us take this country for instance — the law has been handed down; it is one of the greatest heritages. Society could not last a day without the law of the land, nor could the universe continue to exist without law; the principle of law governs. And so the congregation of Jacob was given a law. In regard of the multitude that came out of Egypt, what they needed was just what was given — the law.

What is the thought in "the congregation of Jacob"?

I think the saints viewed in their *responsibility*. What do you think of that?

Yes. I was wondering if the epistle to the Romans would bring in the individual.

I think so. I think that Romans is Jacob and Corinthians is Jacob. Romans is the believer in his individual responsibility up to chapter 12; Corinthians is collective responsibility. It is the congregation, but viewed as in localities and refers to our position here in our present condition. I think "the congregation of Jacob" refers to the saints in that light.

At the end of this chapter in Deuteronomy we have, "Thou shalt tread upon their high places"; would that be the assembly connected with the land? Is this the result of Moses getting his place as head among them? "The congregation of Jacob" recognises the need of headship and then you get the reference to our full spiritual portion.

Yes, exactly. Hence, in the passage in Deuteronomy, Moses was king in Jeshurun when the heads of the people and the tribes were gathered together. Jeshurun means the "upright people", I understand. Every upright person rejoices in law and rule. If you meet a policeman, to use a figure, he is not your enemy if you are an upright person. It is a great thing to have a law and a law given by no less a Person than Christ, whom you love. He is King in Jeshurun. He is King in our affections.

Would you carry the thought of the law as far as Timothy?

I would. 1 Timothy is included in the law — "the law of the house".

It is, as it were, the law of his mouth, which is better than thousands of gold and silver; Psalm 119: 72. Nowadays there are legislators, but primarily the

king made the laws. Moses became king. By the direction of the lawgiver the well was digged; Numbers 21: 18. As indwelt by the Holy Spirit you value the expression of the will of God. The righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

The law brings about subjection, so that room is made for the Spirit. The well was dug by the direction of the lawgiver. You come into the gain of the Spirit practically in the acknowledgment of the will of God in that way.

What is the difference between "the congregation of Jacob" and "the tribes of Israel"?

The tribes represent the family side. Though in the division of the inheritance each was to receive a portion according to his requirement, according to the size of his family, yet that was to be balanced by the land being divided by lot, according to the names of the tribes. Each tribe was to get his portion so that the tribes were to be maintained intact. In that way even if a tribe were small he must be recognised. See Numbers 26: 52 - 56.

Would John 14 come in in regard to this: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me"?

Yes, that is right. It runs with the first epistle to the Corinthians.

I think all you have been saying with regard to the moral meaning of the law is of the utmost importance. Believers are not lawless. The righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in those who walk after the Spirit; they delight to do it. It is no hardship, for the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. Those who love God seek to do His will; "His commandments are not grievous", 1 John 5: 3.

You said something just now that I do not quite understand — that Jacob was the responsible man and that it was with Jacob and not with Israel that the inheritance of the law was connected. I wish you would make that a little clearer.

Romans takes you up as you are — just as you are in the world in your ordinary circumstances — and justifies you, but then as justified, and as having received the Spirit, your responsibility remains. As seen in Romans, you are set up in relation to God and to others like yourself; it is as thus set up, as I apprehend, that saints are referred to as the "congregation of Jacob". We are responsible in our locality, we are responsible in regard to *all* the saints in the locality, and we can go to any of them and say, "*We* are given a wonderful heritage". In 1 and 2 Corinthians we have principles given of God by which we are to be governed and held together, so as to become independent of the

social and political elements of this world. The first great thing is to look into these and see how we can be regulated by these principles. Josiah found the book of the law. Jeremiah, referring to this, says, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by thy name, O Jehovah, God of hosts". He was being regulated by the word, as he further says, "I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor exulted; I sat alone because of thy hand", Jeremiah 15: 16, 17.

Would you say that if saints take up their portion as individuals, as unfolded in Romans, it would lead them on to Corinthians?

Yes. In Romans 12 we are said to be "one body in Christ", meaning that we are not bound together in the flesh nor are we so many units independent of each other. Romans thus prepares us for the principles taught in the epistles to the Corinthians; these are intended for the assembly during the absence of the Lord.

What an inheritance these epistles are!

It is a great thing to see the working out of them — how if a few of God's people are together, the principles of the house of God may govern.

Is there any connection between what you were saying and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus?

Every relation in which we are set is governed by a law. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets us free from the law of sin and death.

"The assembly of God which is in Corinth ... with all that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours", 1 Corinthians 1: 2. That would bring in the King in Jeshurun; every truly upright person in the world will set his seal to the first epistle to Corinthians, but there are, alas, many of God's people who disregard it. They are not governed by the law that is to govern the saints that the King in Jeshurun has formulated; and there is no use in professing to love Christ unless His commandments are kept. "He that hath my commandments, and *keepeth* them, he it is that *loveth* me".

Would what you have been saying be governed by the lordship of Christ?

Yes; when the heads of the people and the tribes were gathered together. I think this is seen in 2 Corinthians. The first letter brought about repentance and a return to the recognition of the authority of Christ as represented by the apostle. Paul was greatly encouraged over it. (See chapter 7.)

To us there is one Lord. The full acknowledgment of this does away for ever with religious independency; we *cannot* partake of the Lord's table and the

table of demons, we *cannot* drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. The principle that governs us is that we are not to do anything that is *inconsistent*; inconsistency carries its own reprobation; and we provoke the Lord to jealousy. Are we stronger than He? The Lord can enforce His will and He will enforce it. Paul says, "If any one love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema". A terrible word!

I gather that you make a very strong point of the lordship of Christ in connection with law, as you are speaking of it?

Certainly. He is the One who formulated the law. He was typically King in Jeshurun, and that is what 2 Corinthians effects. 1 Corinthians asserts His rights, and in the second letter we see that the saints came to recognise them.

We may see in the first letter to the Corinthians that they had not valued the inheritance brought to them in the apostle's ministry. "I have received of the Lord", he says, "that which also I delivered unto you". They had been disregarding the instructions he had given, and so he was forced to repeat them, adding admonitions and warnings. The first letter made room for the Spirit. It is at the direction of the lawgiver that the well was digged; Numbers 21. The Holy Spirit came down, but the *springing up* is the result of the Holy Spirit working in us. Apart from subjection to the Lord there can be no possibility of entering into the inheritance.

Psalm 119 should be studied if we really love to do the will of God. The Lord came out of heaven with that: "I delight to do thy will, O my God", Psalm 40: 8. The true cry of the believer is, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man", Romans 7: 22. It says in Psalm 119, "Great peace have they which love thy law and nothing shall offend them". What was in the heart of God for man in giving the law is there still. What was behind it was the love of God.

Psalm 119 brings us to the Songs of Degrees. I do not think any one begins to *ascend* until he is adjusted on the earth. The Songs of Degrees lead *up*. "The tribes go up".

You really do not reach the thought in the tribes unless the Lord is known as Head. The tribes are in family relation. The inheritance is divided by Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun. But part of it was given by Moses. The latter would answer to Romans, but that given under Eleazar and Joshua corresponds with Ephesians. What comes under the *authority* of the Lord is that part of the inheritance that Moses gave. What Eleazar and Joshua gave is wholly spiritual. Ephesians speaks of the earnest of *our* inheritance. That is, to my mind, not to be *defined* — it is to be *enjoyed*. We have been speaking about things that are our own — eternal things. The scriptures do not define

them strictly — they are to be entered into. You cannot define *love*, so far as I can see. What I see is that the Holy Spirit is the earnest and He opens the heavenly door and *brings you to it*.

Is there any difference between "*our* inheritance" and "the inheritance of the saints in light"?

I was going to make a remark about that. Colossians is *entering*, Ephesians *you are in*. The word 'inheritance' I think in Colossians is "portion", but the difference is very little, because it refers to the same thing, only the point is, what is *in the light*. You are made fit for the portion of the saints in light, which is an important thing in view of entering — that is, everything has come under the light. God will not admit anything that is inconsistent with the light.

So in that way we have our inheritance allotted to us?

That is it. The Lord Himself spoke about Jehovah being the lot of His inheritance. He says, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places" — "lines" meaning the measures by which the land was divided. The Lord said further, "I have a goodly heritage". He does not define what it is, but we know it must be delightful.

So we have an inheritance while we are here and waiting? Our rich portion here is to have the light of God to direct and control us, also the love of God?

That is it.

So you speak of the love of God as being the provisional portion?

Well, it is an eternal portion, but you are not said to have the earnest of the love of God — you are not said to have the earnest of the Father's love. We have these things *actually, so* that the inheritance of which we have the earnest must be one that is ahead of us. It is wholly spiritual because we are constituted spiritual. Material things cannot form our inheritance. If spiritual we must enter a spiritual portion.

Is the inheritance in Colossians a present portion? I think Colossians contemplates that you enter on it now and the Father makes you meet for that; it is the portion of the saints *in light*. It is connected with the translation of the saints from the authority of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love.

There is an undoubted connection there with the King in Jeshurun. This refers to the place He has with us; the Son of the Father's love speaks of the place He has in the Father's heart. One point in Colossians is *thanksgiving*; there is a power of appreciation, and so there is thanksgiving. It is a very important

matter that thanks should be given to the Father. There is no true thanksgiving apart from appreciation.

Pages 273 to 387 — “The Work of God”. Belfast. April, 1923 (Volume 60).

THE CARE MEETING (JT 18)

Deuteronomy 33: 20 - 29

ANW Is there a clear sequence in all these blessings?

JT I think so. The tribes here are not taken up according to birth, but according to their spiritual settings. We noticed, the last time, that Joseph represents, in a sense, the end reached in the chapter, which is *fulness* of blessing; "the myriads of Ephraim" and "the thousands of Manasseh" (verse 17), correspond with Ephesians, and suggest the idea of our *full* position in Christ. What is said of the remaining tribes is the filling out of this. Zebulun and Issachar represent the exercise of love in hospitality, and they offer the "sacrifices of righteousness". "They shall invite the peoples to the mountain", it says, which would mean that there is hospitality, but above the level of the natural, for they invite "to the *mountain*". "The abundance of the seas" and "the hidden treasures of the sand", would represent accumulated spiritual wealth. With Gad it is a question of enlargement — the commandments and lawgiving would be the mind of God governing us authoritatively, so that the *care meeting*, as we speak of it, gets a setting in connection with this tribe.

ANW Had you evangelising in mind in speaking of enlargement?

JT Yes; we have the evangelising spirit in Zebulun, and the wealth that comes in in relation to both Zebulun and Issachar.

ANW Then is the enlargement due to numbers?

JT Well, it is due to more than that. If enlargement is attached to Gad, it is safe, because it is a question of the law which will not allow of any extraneous material.

TA Would 2 Corinthians 6: 13 fit in here? "Let your heart also expand itself".

JT Yes. Enlargement is in good hands, for Gad regards the will of God, and he has courage and energy. "As a lion doth he dwell, and teareth the arm, even the top of the head. And he provided the first part for himself, for there was reserved the portion of the lawgiver", verse 20, 21. That means that he made provision for the lawgiver. There is respect for the law; then it goes on: "And he came with the heads of the people; the justice of Jehovah and his judgments hath he executed with Israel", verse 21.

BTF What is the power of the arm?

JT Tearing the arm would rob the opposer of *power*. The arm and head refer to power and wisdom, I think; tearing these would deprive the opposing

elements of their means of offence. How this comes about now, has to be understood; applied spiritually, it is a question of taking counsel with the brethren as to how to meet opposing elements, thus depriving them of their power and wisdom. The first epistle to the Corinthians is the full amplification of this; it shows how the apostle deprived the opposers at Corinth of their strength and wisdom.

ANW Paul writes the first epistle as the lawgiver; in the second epistle enlargement is in view.

TH Why is "Sosthenes the brother" introduced with the lawgiver?

JT That is the modifying element; "the *brother*" would cause authority to settle down in our souls acceptably. Of course, Paul was not wanting in brotherly feeling, but the mention of Sosthenes as the brother assures us that it entered into his letter.

CAM Moses was the lawgiver. There are times when law is needed. Lawlessness is a terrible thing, and it comes very close to us, does it not?

JT Yes, one feels the danger of that in one's self.

To answer to what is seen here in Gad, to be qualified for taking counsel and part generally in the government of the house of God, one has to govern one's self. It says, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, *and he that ruleth his spirit* than he that taketh a city", Proverbs 16: 32.

CAM Yes, it is not just laying down the law; in bringing in the requirements of justice the apostle could entreat the Corinthians "by the meekness and gentleness of the Christ", 2 Corinthians 10: 1.

ANW I thought that was largely the suggestion as to Sosthenes. The apostle could lay down the law by himself, but the association of a brother with him would temper what he wrote. The apostle might have written more severely, using his apostolic authority, than he did with the presence of Sosthenes, the brother.

JT That is the idea. We speak of a *brothers'* meeting, but more correctly it should be an *elders'* meeting. The elders wear crowns (see Revelation 4: 4); if I wear a crown, it shows that I have acquired something in myself — that, amongst other things, I have gained a moral victory over myself; I am free from personal feeling in all the counsel I give, or moral weight I may exert. I think all that enters into Gad, because he reserved a portion for the lawgiver, alluding, no doubt, to Moses' grave which is said to be in the territory of Gad, but the point is, he valued the lawgiver.

CAM Psalm 110: 22 speaks of Joseph teaching Pharaoh's elders wisdom. I suppose the idea of elders now is the same thing in principle, but the legislative bodies of the nations would not think much of what we seek to maintain in this way, and yet it is the most powerful thing on earth; so that we should be very dignified in connection with it.

JT That is good; we should be dignified in a spiritual sense, as having to do with the things of God. The Lord indicated the present moment when He said, "It is as a man gone out of the country, having left his house and given to his bondmen *the authority*" (Mark 13: 34); it is a question, therefore, of how it is used — whether the bondmen are equal to the exercising of it.

ANW So that the care meeting is not a place where each expresses his personal opinion or feeling about a thing?

JT No. He should be totally disinterested, as far as he is concerned, since he is considering for the rights of God, and I think that is what Gad means here. He reserved a portion for the lawgiver, and "he came with the heads of the people"; that is, he is one who came with others, but it is "with the *heads* of the people". Headship, suggesting wisdom, enters into it; so that one can come *with* the brethren. *Coming with them* means that I go as one of them. Paul in speaking to the Corinthians of Timothy, says, "... for I expect him *with the brethren*" (1 Corinthians 16: 11); that is, he is not exercising any distinction among them, he comes with them; so here, Gad comes with the heads of the people; then it says, "The justice of Jehovah and his judgments hath he executed with Israel".

BTF The thought has been advanced that it is good for younger brothers to be at the brothers' meetings, because of the experience they would gain.

JT That is right. While it is a question of "the heads of the people" yet the younger brothers should be present; as there in a becoming manner, they learn how things are done, and can say, "Amen", to what is done.

WSS Would there be the thought of Gad moving in the sense of the support of the heads? There would be a waiting to move and go forward with others.

JT I think that is right. "With" shows that I have the mutual feeling. We read that "in the multitude of counsellors there is safety", Proverbs 11: 14. I think Gad would join in with the brethren. However distinguished as to tribe, he would be mutually with the heads of the people.

EB Would it link up with Proverbs 31: 23: "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land".

JT Yes. Sitting among the elders is a most interesting thought. He is one of them. The same feature is seen in the book of Ruth; we have, "Thou, such an one, turn aside, sit down here", chapter 4: 1. You are not in a hurry. When you have matters of judgment before you, deliberation is necessary, therefore you "sit down", instead of rushing things through.

FHL Such a one as Gad, coming with the heads of the people, is already qualified, and they recognise it.

JT It is important to sit down with the brethren, for however distinguished you may be, you recognise the others; God loves variety, and would bring out what everyone has.

WSS Paul came to Corinth, and took a very small place; in principle, he dwelt in a tent. He did not come as a great man, did he? In connection with what has been remarked, it is said in Ezekiel 44: 24: "And in controversy they shall stand to judge: they shall judge it according to my judgments; and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my solemnities". The sons of Zadok here would represent those who are qualified.

CAM After Joshua the high priest had been clothed with "festival-robes", it was said to him, "If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts; and I will give thee a place to walk among these that stand by. Hear now. Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee — for they are men of portent", Zechariah 3: 7, 8.

JT That is very helpful in relation to that which we are speaking of; how we get a place among those "that stand by" — those who are standing by what is of God. Then it is further said to Joshua, "... thou and thy fellows that sit before thee — for they are men of portent". They were men as signs, and signified something distinctive, as in the position indicated. These things are of great importance in relation to the house of God. Then you have the results: God executed "the justice of Jehovah and his judgments ... with Israel". "With" is brought in again — it is a *joint* matter.

ARS Things are not on individual lines at all.

JT That is a very important thing to have before us in our meetings. The word 'care' is very appropriate; it says, "But if one does not know how to conduct his own house, *how shall he take care of the assembly of God*?" 1 Timothy 3: 5. What a charge it is! In Acts 20 the elders were enjoined as to it. They were overseers of the flock, and were to shepherd the assembly of God. This has to be continued, and dignity in our deliberations is of great importance, also impartiality and moral weight in what we may say.

BTF It is said, "The law was given by Moses grace and truth subsists through Jesus Christ", John 1: 17. There would be a measure of grace in connection with the care and government of the assembly.

JT Surely. This is the dispensation which is marked by the reign of grace. It is worthy of note that in Numbers 21 the digging is under the direction of the lawgiver, and is typical of the *power* of the Spirit of God by which the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled (see Romans 8: 3, 4).

TH Would you say that I might not be qualified to actually take part, but I am there to give my "Amen" to the thing?

JT The *Amen* is important. Not everyone can say, "Yea"; that is, indicate what should be done, but anyone should be able to say "Amen" and so confirm what is done.

ANW Will you distinguish for us between justice and judgment here?

JT I suppose justice is a general thought. Judgments are more specific. The point is that there should be justice in all matters of adjudication amongst us; in view of which every item of evidence should be weighed. There is in this country, the Department of Justice; that is a great general thought; but there are thousands of cases that have to be dealt with by it, and the question is how that is done. The Judge of Israel was smitten on the cheek (Micah 5: 1), meaning that justice had fallen to the ground. The high priest was in the judge's seat, and Christ was at the bar; they smote Him on the cheek, but from that point you have laid down the great principle of judgment. The Lord says, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" John 18: 23. The Lord's "if" and "why" mean much here. The high priest was unfit to execute judgment.

WSS In Lamentations 3: 30, we have typically, the Lord giving His cheek to the smiter. I suppose we need to take up the same attitude.

JT I think that if you are at the bar, before false judges, you will show the spirit of judgment in your demeanour. The Judge of Israel was before the high priest. He sets out the great principle of judgment, saying there, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" Paul in similar circumstances (Acts 23) failed somewhat in his language to the high priest,

yet in his remarks, maintained the authority of the law.

WSS Hosea 6: 5 says, "My judgment goeth forth as the *light*". That is what should characterise judgment.

JT Just so; so that the elders' meeting as illuminated by the light of God, reaches a right judgment, and this characterises the pronouncement, and the execution of it by the assembly.

RDG With regard to being impartial, 1 Timothy 5: 24 furnishes a scripture for us: "I testify before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, that thou keep these things without prejudice, doing nothing by favour".

JT Very good! It is so difficult for us to avoid having respect of persons, in judgment; whereas, the bench must be impartial, being concerned about the law, the evidence, etc. Of course, the persons have to be taken into account, but in adhering to the evidence of the case and the law governing it, one cannot be partial.

BFT Would you introduce, in any way, the principle of the "little child" of Matthew 18: 2?

JT Well, it was a question there of who is greatest in the kingdom of the heavens. The Lord had been pointing out the great thought of sonship, and the disciples had not grasped it, but were concerned about the *greatest* place in the kingdom of the heavens, so He brings in a little child, as if to exhibit the spirit of that kingdom. There was one whom the Lord could call; He cannot call some of us, because we are not always characteristic listeners.

ANW It is remarkable how administration follows on in that chapter.

JT Yes. After you get the spirit of the kingdom, then it is a question of how it works out. If I am trespassed against, do I carry out the spirit of the kingdom toward the one who has trespassed against me? It becomes a test to one — I am brought into the Judicial Department, so to speak, through being trespassed against. It is a question not of reparation, but of gaining the brother, and is a great contrast to the world's way. If I fail to gain the brother, I am to take one or two besides; and "if he will not listen to them, tell it to the assembly" (Matthew 18: 17); so that we reach the final court of appeal.

GSO If that spirit were more in the care meeting, such would be more effectual.

JT Yes; and the results, as stated in the assembly for administrative action, would be strengthening and dignifying, although in some instances humbling, rather than irksome or depressing. It is *the King's business* carried out in His most august assembly.

ANW It is a beautiful expression: "The justice of Jehovah and his judgments".

JT The "judgments" are exercised by the *assembly*. The brothers' care meeting has not authority for this; it can only bring findings; authority belongs to the assembly.

WSS I was thinking of the little child. Solomon had the distinction of sitting on David's throne, but he took the place of a little child; God gave him an understanding heart, and then he exercised right judgment.

JT A little child knows to whom he should turn. Solomon is a very beautiful example in that way — he asked Jehovah for wisdom. He did not know how to go out and to come in, but he asked for wisdom, and obtained it.

WSS What follows (1 Kings 3) about the two women and the living child is very interesting, and Solomon's knowing how to use the sword, which I suppose typifies the word of God, sheds light on the situation.

JT He brings to light the *mother of the child*.

WSS Is not that what is needed in all local exercises? We need the *light* of the assembly, in order that the thing may be solved in a spiritual way.

JT The mother yearned over the child; the motherly feeling in the exercise of judgment comes into evidence and it is of immense importance.

WSS Would it not be very helpful to always approach these matters on the line of what we have here about Gad, for every question that arises is an opportunity for enlargement?

JT I think that is the point. If there is to be enlargement among us, it is not simply the adding of persons, but God *enlarging Gad*, meaning that the enlargement is in keeping with the principle of justice and judgment, and that is a safe enlargement.

The next feature here is Dan, then Naphtali, and finally, Asher. We have these three tribes to consider: It says, "Dan is a young lion". It is said of Gad, "As a lion doth he dwell". He is in a set position, with the courage of a lion. Dan is a *young* lion; it says, "He shall spring forth from Bashan". That is a good word for young brothers. It is a question of what *spring* they have, and *where* they spring from; Dan sprang from Bashan.

BTF With an object in view?

JT Yes, but he sprang from a certain place. His tribal position was not in Bashan. Why then should he spring from that place?

CAM We know from Psalm 22, that Bashan was a place where the animals were remarkably strong.

JT Yes: "Many bulls have encompassed me; Bashan's strong ones have beset me round", Psalm 22: 12. Dan has ability to spring from that position,

as showing that he could get out of any unsuitable position in a spiritual way.

WSS You mean it was a position which would be calculated to overcome him, but he was not overcome by it.

JT That is the idea. One can spring out of a given position, which is not one's own (as Bashan apparently was not Dan's position) — I can spring forth from it in power. It is a question of seeing that I can give up anything, in power. It is a great thing if we can thus leave a position, glorifying God, and not leave it reluctantly, as Lot's wife looked back toward Sodom. I do not know that you can make much of Bashan itself, but Dan had power to spring forth from it. We are not told where he sprang to.

ANW As soon as Og was overcome, there was a remarkable impetus given the people, was there not?

JT Just so. The overthrow of Og would mean that one overcomes the *big I* which is one's natural conception of one's self, and hinders progress; one is free then to go forward.

RL Was there not strength shown in the death of Christ? "And Jesus, having again cried with a loud voice, gave up the ghost", Matthew 27: 50.

JT Yes; what happened as the Lord died led the centurion and others to say, "Truly this man was Son of God". He comes forth in power out of the grave, too.

RL He showed His power in giving up His life. We do not give up our lives as He did.

JT He cried with a *loud* voice. John (chapter 19: 30) uses a word not found elsewhere in the same connection, to record the Lord's death; it says, "He *delivered* up his spirit". It was an act of power, showing that although His was real death. He did not experience the ordinary process of dying.

ANW We are not told the object of the spring,

but the power of it, by which he springs out of Bashan.

JT Nothing more is said. It is enough for the young Christian to realise that he has this power in the Spirit. He can thus get out of anything not according to the will of God.

FHL Would Stephen suggest it? He went out in strength.

JT Yes. You can see divinely given strength in Stephen. He cried with a *loud* voice in asking for mercy for his murderers, and then fell asleep. But falling asleep is not delivering up one's spirit; this is said of the Lord only.

RDG Would Paul be an example of this, in speaking to Ananias? He said, "God will smite thee, whited wall", Acts 23: 3.

JT After he called the high priest a whited wall, he *immediately* righted himself. It was a question of power in Paul's soul.

BTF Why is Dan introduced here?

JT I suppose, as we were remarking, this chapter is constructive, and one of the features is to have power to spring from certain circumstances.

BTF Is not antichrist associated with Dan?

JT Yes, but not here. In Genesis 49: 17 it is said, "Dan will be a serpent on the way", etc.; it is indicative of an antichristian attitude. Dan is not mentioned in Revelation 7; but this chapter is God's own setting of the tribes. If Simeon is left out here, that is God's way of acting — one brother left out here, and another left out somewhere else, but brought in here. We have to leave with God the place each of us is to occupy. As regards Dan's position in Bashan, you might say to a brother, "Get out of that position". Well, he may see that it is right he should, but is he in the Spirit so as to have power to act accordingly?

WSS The light would show the need to spring out.

CAM But it is the *movement* that would result in blessing.

JT A lion is a stately creature; Proverbs 30: 30. A person getting out of an inconsistent position is stately. You are not doing it in a legal way, but with a spring.

WSS It would bring us into being "satisfied with favour", verse 23.

JT That is next. You may be in a position that is questionable, but you leave it and come to one where you are "satisfied with favour". What is said of Naphtali is: "Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of Jehovah, possess thou the west and the south".

WSS That is what we are to spring into. What an encouragement for all young people, to move into such a sphere!

JT The word to Asher completes the blessing "Asher shall be blessed with sons" (verse 24); that is, increase of the family, but in the most dignified way. There is remarkable variety in the blessing here: Zebulun sucks the abundance

of the seas; Naphtali is satisfied with favour, he gets territory in the west and the south; but Asher has sons. Sons going on into eternity, as applied to us, is the great thought of God.

CAM Mordecai was a remarkable family man. He was accepted of his brethren, and he spoke peace to all his seed; Esther 10: 3.

EB Samson was of the tribe of Dan.

JT Yes. Power came into evidence there. We are told that "the Spirit of Jehovah began to move him at Mahaneh-Dan, between Zoreah and Eshtaol", Judges 13: 25.

EB He is seen later getting out of a false position, in power; Judges 16: 3.

FHL Perhaps the sons of Asher correspond with the myriads of Ephraim.

JT I think so, in the sense of family dignity. Joseph has numbers, and there are the myriads of Ephraim, and the thousands of Manasseh. There will be immensity of numbers, for Christ is first-born among *many* brethren, and *many* sons are to be brought to glory. The book of Revelation stresses this thought. One idea of sons is dignity, here the increase of family in Asher is in this sense. The passage goes on to say: "Let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. Iron and brass shall be thy bolts; and thy rest as thy days. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun". We reach, in verses 26 - 29, the final thought of blessing, as marked by the presence with us, and care of God Himself.

WSS I thought about dipping the foot in oil, in connection with the hymn we sang:

> "Jesus, Thy footsteps ever show
> The path for every child". (271:1)

What beautiful footsteps they were! The dipping of the foot in oil would suggest spiritual movements which would be helpful thus to the brethren.

JT Feet dipped in oil are brought into correspondence with Christ's feet. In Peter, we are to "follow in his *steps*" (1 Peter 2: 21), and in the Song of Songs we have "the footsteps of the flock", chapter 1: 8.

WSS We find Him by following the footsteps of the flock.

GVD It says, "If we live by the Spirit, let us *walk* also by the Spirit", Galatians 5: 25.

TA Anna was of the tribe of Asher, and was very active in speaking of the Lord.

THE KING AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART (JT 27)

John 18:33; Genesis 14:18 - 20; Deuteronomy 33: 4; 2 Samuel 23:1 - 4

My intention is to present kingship as it is seen in Christ, and I believe it is brought before us in these four scriptures. I think it is necessary to present this subject, on account of the general trend towards lawlessness in the world, and also on account of the negligence of the saints with regard to the commandments of the Lord. The apostle Paul said that he was "legitimately subject to Christ" (1 Corinthians 9:21), and that the proof of spirituality is seen in that we recognise the things that he wrote to the Corinthians as being "the Lord's commandment", 1 Corinthians 14:37. "If any one thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him recognise the things that I write to you, that it is the Lord's commandment".

In the passage which we have read in John, Pilate asks the Lord: "Thou art the king of the Jews?" Jesus answers with another question: "Dost *thou* say this of thyself, or have others said it to thee concerning me?" This answer is in keeping with the character of John's gospel: "Dost thou say this of thyself?" Being developed spiritually, as the result of the work of God in us, we are able to form thoughts of Christ and to communicate them. Too often Christians repeat what others have said to them. It is true that we ought to learn from one another; but even in that case there is the result of the work of God in the believer. To quote an example, in chapter 9, the man born blind was "of age", and was able to speak concerning himself; he could express himself by himself. It is of all importance that we should learn to speak by ourselves. You will find other examples of it in the gospel, such as the words of Philip to Nathanael, and what the Samaritan woman said to the men of the city.

Pilate had no personal knowledge of Christ; he possessed nothing himself. This is true of professors, and even, alas! of many believers. The work of God in us results in our being able to speak by ourselves. On the objective side, there is that which God presents to us to be believed; afterwards, there is the intuition which the work of God produces in us. It is by the Holy Spirit that we say, "Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 12:3); and it is by the Spirit that we cry, "Abba, Father".

But I wish to speak of the King. Christ was born to be King: "I have been born for this", He said. The magi enquired concerning Him who was *born* King of the Jews, "Where is the king of the Jews that has been born", Matthew 2:2. Nimrod is the first king mentioned in Scripture, but he was not born king. It is said of him that he "began to be mighty on the earth", Genesis 10:8. He acquired power: it is the principle that supports every human king, while Jesus

was born King of the Jews. "I have been born for this, and for this I have come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth". He was born King, and He showed that He was King by exercising the power which was His. All who were enlightened and had right instincts according to God, saw the King. Nathanael said, "*Thou* art the king of Israel" (John 1:49); and later on, even a brigand by His side upon the cross, discerned the King. Those who have right spiritual instincts will not be deceived by the king who is to come; he will come in his own name, claiming to do great things. But Jesus came in His Father's name; He came in meekness. "Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy king cometh to thee, meek", Matthew 21:5. It is essentially important that Christians should have a right idea of the King who was born in order to bear witness to the truth. The magi had a true conception of Him they followed His star to the place where He was and they did Him homage. "Every one that is of the truth hears my voice", He said. Pilate was outside of all that, and he asks: "What is truth?" Such is the question that unbelievers present. Christ Himself is the truth; so that, from John's point of view, everything is expressed in His Person. He is the King; and the whole truth of the kingdom is manifested in Him.

In the Old Testament we have illustrations of what is presented in the New Testament. Kingship according to man is seen in Nimrod and in Saul. Nimrod made *himself* king; Saul was made king *by the people*. There are thus men who establish themselves kings, and others who are established kings by others.

In contrast with Nimrod, "a mighty hunter before Jehovah" (Genesis 10:9) we have Melchisedec, king of righteousness, king of Salem (that is to say, king of peace). Nimrod, a mighty hunter, had no scruple with regard to his neighbours; he was independent, a lawless man, using God's creatures solely for his personal pleasure. He went out towards Asshur and built Nineveh. He continually advanced to extend his empire, having only his personal greatness in view. He is a type of the great warriors and conquerors who appeared after him; he is also a type of him who is yet to appear, who comes in his own name. But Melchisedec is "king of righteousness"; and being king of righteousness he is "king of peace"; then he is "priest of the Most High God", "Possessor of heavens and earth". Nimrod and all whom he represents must disappear; but Melchisedec remains; he is the king whom God has established. In Melchisedec we see the thought of God concerning the king. He brings out bread and wine; he represents the grace of Christ which meets the needs of our souls. The League of Nations would like to establish peace, but righteousness is necessary first; the rights of God and the rights of men must be recognised. David recognised the rights of all when he said to Araunah, "I

will in any case buy them of thee at a price", (2 Samuel 24:24) and he bought Ornan's threshing-floor for the full price. That forms a striking contrast with Ahab and Jezebel who took possession of the vineyard of Naboth, the Jizreelite, after having killed its rightful owner.

The king according to flesh is presented to us in 1 Samuel 8:10 - 18. He gives nothing, but exacts this and that. Melchisedec gives; he brings out bread and wine; he encourages and refreshes. By such a king, men are helped; they are delivered from the power of Satan, protected and fed. They are secured for God; they glorify Him and worship Him. It is thus that having brought everything to pass for God, Christ delivers up the kingdom to God, that He may be all in all; 1 Corinthians 15:24 - 28.

In the first book of Samuel, we have first of all the desires of Hannah, and the answer to those desires in Samuel; in the second place we have the desires of the people, and the answer in Saul; in the third place, we have the desires of the heart of God, who brings in His King. God brings in His King according to His eternal thought. In the book of Ruth (which immediately precedes that of Samuel), we find the royal line, the genealogy of David, his ancestors, before he himself comes on the scene. So, in creating Adam God had Christ before Him. In the first book of Samuel, God is occupied with David, who is the man after His own heart, the king according to His counsels. At the outset, Samuel was not ready to discern the king: Samuel would have chosen Eliab, looking on the outward appearance; in that case, he was not at the height of divine thoughts, so that Jehovah reproved him. When David appeared, ruddy and of a lovely countenance, then Jehovah said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he", (1 Samuel 16:12).

I pass now to chapter 33 of Deuteronomy. Moses "was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together". Moses had commanded a law to Israel; it was not a law of irritation. Someone has said that the world is a mutual irritation society; but the law of God did not produce that effect. Never was there such a law commanded. The law commanded by Moses was "the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob". It was based on love."Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy understanding. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". There is nothing there which could irritate. In Deuteronomy 6:5, where we find this quotation, the law is presented in its spiritual import; even a bird's nest was not to be disturbed (see Deuteronomy 22:6,7). In chapter 11, it speaks of days of heaven on earth, "as the days of the heavens which are above the earth"; we enjoy them in so far as we are subject to our Moses

— Christ — and understand the kingdom of God exercised by Him. Men speak of making the earth habitable, while the opposite is taking place. The law of Moses made provision for all; it was concerned even with a bird, as I have said. It was the "*inheritance* of the congregation of Jacob". Those who understood the law and appreciated it regarded it as an inheritance.

The law-giver was "king in Jeshurun". Jeshurun means "Uprightness". Moses was king in the affections of the people of God; he was accepted as such by those who were upright in heart. If one had asked the people: What do you think of Moses? the answer would have been: Moses has given us such a law as there had never been, a law which has had no equal, and we love the law-giver; we love Moses. Nothing was passing: all was solidly established. When the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together, Moses was recognised as king: "he was king in Jeshurun".

In Psalm 119, we see how the law was loved. If the law was so precious, what feelings of affection it must produce towards him through whom it was given, towards God who gave it! By the power of the Spirit, the law is fulfilled in us. "His commandments are not grievous", 1 John 5:3.

In 2 Samuel 23, we have the description of the true king, the impression which David received of the king. "The ruler among men shall be just, ruling in the fear of God; and he shall be as the light of the morning, like the rising of the sun, a morning without clouds; when from the sunshine, after rain, the green grass springeth from the earth". David himself did not answer to that. In Christ alone do we see perfectly David's conception as to the king. He is the King after God's own heart, and He will sit as Priest upon His throne; Zechariah 6:13.

May God lead us all to know Him thus, and bless His word to us!

Substance of a Reading with J.T. at St. Etienne, 1st May, 1926, morning.

THE BLESSING OF MOSES (JT 32)

Deuteronomy 33:1 - 25

Reading the greater part of this chapter, I have no intention of enlarging on all the blessings; each of them would furnish sufficient substance for an address. My thought is that in reading this chapter. God may come before us and bathe our souls in the richness of His thoughts of us and for us, through the varied blessings indicated; for it has to be borne in mind that these blessings are for us all. It is not that you are to be blessed with one blessing and I with another: God's blessings are the outcome of His love, and He is not a respecter of persons in showering them upon us. We are all in His mind: indeed, as believers, we were in His mind before the world was, and the Spirit of God says that He has blessed us with "every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ", (Ephesians 1:3). We have not only every spiritual blessing that any of the blest families shall have, but we have them, and more besides, where some of them will not have any, that is, "in the heavenlies".

Now that is what I have in mind, dear brethren, so that my hope is, not only that we may have a word from the Lord, but that there should be a sense of the richness of divine blessings; that our souls may be, as it were, touched and bathed, in them. I am encouraged to go as far as using the word 'bathed' because in the gospel of Luke, heaven came down in volume and encircled the shepherds who were keeping their sheep by night; they were evidently the objects of heaven's interest. It is said that "an angel of the Lord was there by them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them"; they were thus honoured by a heavenly visitant, and encircled with the glory of the Lord. But as if that were not enough the Holy Spirit goes on to tell us that "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host" — heaven, as it were, brought down in volume to encircle these honoured ones, and the heavenly visitants were saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men". They were made to breathe the very atmosphere of heaven, and to hear what heaven was saying — what angelic companies *were* saying: they were speaking about divine glory, and that that was now brought within man's range. It was there in One born unto them, not here born unto God, but unto *them* "a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord". That was the great fact; and the heavenly companies came down and surrounded these shepherds, speaking of this great event, that it might saturate their souls. That is what God will do for us, deal-brethren, for He is lavish; His thought is pouring out. As the apostle says "which he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ", (Titus 3:6). Heaven's wealth comes down in a mediatorial way through our Lord Jesus Christ, so as to *fill* our souls, as it says

in Acts 2, "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit". It sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, for He fills every available vessel; and they "began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave to them to speak forth".

Now this chapter is on that line. You will observe it opens with: "And this is *the* blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said ...". He does not begin with the children of Israel, he begins with God; as you might expect, for he was "the man of God". The more we know of God the more we love Him, and the more we love to hear about Him; not only of our own blessings but about Him, for our blessings are all bound up with the knowledge of God; all our blessings centre in the knowledge of God, and we would not have it otherwise. So Moses begins with God. "Jehovah came from Sinai, And rose up from their unto them; He shone forth from mount Paran, and he came from the myriads of the sanctuary". That is to say, we have God in His own setting. We are all prone to bring Him into ours: our horizon is in all at best, but God's horizon is infinite, and He presents Himself, as revealed, in His own setting. It is a foreshadowing of God coming out in Christ; He "came from Sinai". It is not here a question of the demands or terrors of Sinai, but of God making selection of a group of positions from which He would shine out. "And rose up from Seir unto them"; Seir was His too. Whatever part Esau had in it, whatever the faithlessness of the brethren in it, it was God's possession, it had been given to Esau. Then it says, "He shone forth from mount Paran". I only refer to this, to call attention to the divine setting, how God would set Himself before stances in which He shines out. Let us not attempt to go beyond revelation; that is to say, God coming out according to His pleasure. He dwells "in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen, nor is able to see", but He has come out in revelation; thus we are baptised "to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit". That is the setting; and it is in that setting all our blessings lie both for time and for eternity. So here in Deuteronomy 33 you have the coming, and the rising, and the shining, and then the law of fire. There is Sinai, and Seir, and Paran and the sanctuary, with its 'myriads'. Whatever there may be in this world of wickedness there are the "holy myriads": God has got them. Enoch saw Him coming with them. Here He shines forth from them. Then there is "a Jaw of fire", doubtless alluding to the pillar of fire that guided them.

The love comes next. "He loveth the peoples, all his saints are in thy hand, and they sit down at thy feet; each receiveth of thy words". What a beautiful setting we have here both in regard of God and in regard of His people! He loves us — that is the wilderness position. "He loveth the peoples", or the

tribes, meaning, in type, the saints in assembly but in the wilderness, not yet in the heavenlies. How God, as we learn in the Psalms, shone out upon them! How He would look out with affection on those tribes as they were set around His habitation, according to the directions of His wisdom! He would look east, or north, or west, or south, there they were, as Balaam saw them, in their tents, in all their spiritual perfection which God alone could rightly value. He loved the people, and they sat at His feet and heard His word. You can understand, dear brethren, that God is not now speaking of our fleshly conditions; He is looking at us in this blessing entirely from the standpoint of His own work in us. You are characteristically one that is loved as in your own local setting; standing in relation to your tribe; and God regards you thus as sitting at His feet, and hearing His words; for as Moses went out and spake the words of Jehovah, He is regarding them here, as listening.

Then the passage goes on to speak of the law, "the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob", verse 4. You see it is an inheritance; the law is not presented here as exacting, or as bringing the knowledge of sin, but with spiritual significance, as conveying the thoughts of God. It is "the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob". God is in His place and we worship Him there; we are reverential towards Him as He is there. We are in our place and He loves us there: that is. God is God, and man is man. God loves man and man loves God. That is the eternal setting of things. It is from this setting we have the blessing; and I wish to speak of these blessings as bearing on us all, each of them referring to us all.

The first blessing is life. It is not exactly what we speak of eternal life, but life as the power of movement, that which shews itself in our movements, so that instead of dying, instead of being irresponsive to God, we are alive — "Let Reuben live, and not die". God loves life; He loves it in its fruits in its movements. Our Lord Jesus was said to "grow up before him as a tender plant": that was what delighted Him. "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted", says the Lord, "shall be rooted up". (Matthew 15:13). We are identified with Jesus in the likeness of His death, as He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so that we should walk in newness of life. Then "Let not his men be few" should read, "Let his men be few", which would appear to be inconsistent, but it is a question of Quality. In the creation there are "living things innumerable"; but "Let his men be few" alludes to quality and capability of being counted; that we are not to be a mass, an unordered crowd, but easily regulated, or as in assemblies that can be counted — assemblies in which we know one another by the marks of life in each other. So that spiritually developed persons can be counted. One of the features of the wilderness is counting, hence the book of 'Numbers'.

The next blessing is for Judah, whose voice is to be heard. These meetings are very largely for young people, and the first thing, dear young people, is this movement of life, as seen in Reuben; not natural energy which goes in for sports and other pleasures of this world. Such evidences of natural life are not marks of the blessing of God; but belong to Esau's world, for he was "a man of the field". "Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents"; he was indeed spiritual, as his history shows. He did not develop sporting energy or skill, that was not his aim; he belonged to the spiritual family, the family of faith, and he dwelt in tents. There dwelt with him one of the most honoured men in the Old Testament, his grandfather Abraham who "dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob". You get no such company as that in the field, or on the tennis court the man of faith did not go there; that was Esau's place and he despised his birthright. "Let Reuben live, and not die"; the blessing here is life. The movements of the man of faith are delightful to God; he is in a place of obscurity in this world, not in a palace,

but dwelling in tents, in movable abodes. The men of faith were sojourners here, but they were heirs together of the same promise; the promise to Abraham was the promise to Isaac and to Jacob.

But I have got to Judah: "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people", verse 7. This, no doubt, has a dispensational bearing, but I am not speaking of that, but that you, dear young people, should be brought to *your* people. The world does not afford your people. Ruth says: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God". That is the idea here. Then "may his hands strive for them", as it may read. Now, you see, you are brought amongst the saints. Is there anyone here who has confessed the Lord who has not put out his hands for fellowship with God's people? There may be some of such here. You have the movements of life maybe, for the Spirit of God is given to those who believe on the Lord Jesus, and there are the consequent movements of life, but the next thing is to be brought to your people. They will be ready, no doubt, to put their Hands upon you, as Ananias did upon Saul, as you seek to identify yourself with Him. "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah"; that is those prayers in your closet to God for guidance, for spiritual companionship — these are heard. You remember how Saul's praying was his commendation: the Lord said "Behold, he prayeth", and surely his voice was heard. He says, too, that Saul saw in a vision a man coming and laying his hands on him. The Lord knew all that was going on in Saul's heart, as well as his voice, and he was brought to his people. He got strength, having taken food, and was with the disciples certain days. They were his companions; great man though he had been in Jerusalem, he is now a companion of the lowly followers of Jesus, in Damascus; and he soon moves his hand to help

them, for he begins to preach that is the next thing. The next blessing is that of Levi. We are led on in this wonderful chapter from blessing to blessing, one blessing added to another, increasing as it goes; the next after Judah, is Levi. Levi is the spiritual side. You can understand that the blessings of Reuben and Judah, combined in one would make a man spiritual; he would think for God and help His people; of Judah it is said, "May his hands strive for them". We have no past history in Reuben nor in Judah here, but in Levi you have past history: there can be no levitical service without past history. The typical Levite is Aaron; he was eighty-three years old before we hear of him by name, and that implies past history with God. "Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy Holy one", God knows that you are holy now that you are beginning to think for Him, and becoming a priest; in your prayers you are priestly, you are thinking of the saints, of the honour of God in His people, and God says as it were 'I will trust him with my Thummim and my Urim' — which is perfections and light. They were set in the breastplate of the high priest. Levi includes the priesthood. It is the priestly family. It says of him here "Whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah". He is proved, he has past history with God. As soon as you begin to make spiritual history. God loves to go over the ground you have covered. As soon as one repents he begins to make history in heaven, and surely history is begun in his own soul as well. The history of our souls is kept in heaven, and God loves to go over it; it reflects the operations of His grace in us.

Levi said to his father and his mother: "I have not seen him". You say, should not we honour our father and mother? But when you come into the fellowship of God's Son you stand in relation to God and His assembly; as in the assembly father and mother have to be left, outside — all family links have to be set aside. Many a sorrow has been brought in because this history cannot be recorded of us; we have sought to carry our family links and affections into the assembly of God. Judging these things you are as Levi, of whom it says, "They have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar". Now, you see, you are honoured. God is taking account of your spiritual history. He can trust you, and you have a place among the holy myriads; you put incense before God and whole burnt-offerings, that is to say, you are not half-hearted. You are like the widow in the gospels; she had two mites and she put them both into the treasury, she might have conveniently kept back one. "Whole burnt-offering" refers to wholehearted appreciation in the offerer. There is a complete thought of Christ.

The next is Benjamin. You can understand now the place you will have with God, you will be "the beloved of the Lord". How precious to be the beloved of the Lord who dwells in safety by Him! It says: "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders". You come now into the enjoyment of the love of God. "The beloved of the Lord" you might say, was an expression that refers to Christ but the expressions that refer to Christ are very largely applicable to us as related to Him. We are blessed in Him; as He is the delight of God so we are the delight of God; as He is the beloved, so are we. "Accepted in the beloved" — think of that! What an incentive, to go on on these lines, and come into the things that are open to you! And then the next thing is "He shall dwell between his shoulders". I have no doubt that this refers to the position of the temple in the territory of Benjamin, because the temple was literally built in his territory, Jerusalem being one of his cities at the outset. Much might be said about that, as to how it came into Judah's hands but the point for us is that as we dwell in safety by Him, *He* dwells between our shoulders — meaning that we support the dwelling place of God. Is it not indeed that we should be strengthened with might by the Father's Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith? (Ephesians 3:16). It is a question of strength; not only of life but strength, so that we can afford a dwelling place for Him. "That the Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ... that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God".

Then next is Joseph; and now we come to the supreme position After Joseph it is a question of service or activity. Joseph and Levi have most notice, and you can understand that, for as we come to Joseph we come typically to Christ, and to the saints in Christ — "the myriads of Ephraim" and the "thousands of Manasseh". That refers to us, to the saints viewed as in Christ. Joseph here is thus Christ; but the division of the tribe into two, makes way for the saints as viewed in Christ. It is an Ephesian position. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing, in the heavenlies in Christ — that is the thousands of Ephraim and the thousands of Manasseh. Now you see, beloved, where you are brought to — look at the range of the blessing! It says: "For the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top

of the head of him that was separated from his brethren". You can see the position. The whole range of the divine realm is brought into view, and every blessing is centred in Joseph, all must shower upon Joseph. Think of the wealth that was poured upon him! and, not the least, "the good will of him that dwelt in the bush". That is a touching reference. In commercial circles we hear of 'good will', sometimes it is sold at a high price; but there is nothing tangible, its tangibility is assumed to be realised later, and may not be. But think of the good will that fills this whole realm of blessing! It is wealth in itself — for what will not accrue to us, as having the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush? God coming in in such lowly circumstances has proved His love. His good will is indeed the outcome of His love. Think of being here for that good will! It is everlasting, eternity, beloved, will prove its full results. We are already heirs to it in Christ, as it says here, "the ten thousands of Ephraim, and the ... thousands of Manasseh". We are all in that; it is the full height of the blessing for us; it typifies Ephesians, and all that it discloses, and the testimony that follows, in the remaining tribes, should be worthy of it. The testimony of a Roman Christian merely, is not the same as the testimony of an Ephesian Christian. Ephesians presents the full divine height, and so conveys the fulness of the blessing.

What follows corresponds with this: Zebulun is to rejoice in his going out, and Issachar in his tents. "They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand": you have invitation, sacrifice and abundance. They draw on the wealth of the seas, the allusion, doubtless, is to their position in the land; for these blessings anticipate that position. They were by the sea-shore, and they sucked the abundance of the seas, and hence their hospitality. What is mentioned is something like what we enjoy now, and like that which some of us have shared elsewhere during the week: we have been invited to the mountain, and there it was that the wealth of God was poured out. All this comes in after Joseph, that is, after the Ephesian position.

The next after Zebulun and Issachar is Gad, which is the enlargement. You can understand, dear brethren, that enlargement on God's part is not simply adding numbers. Numbers of unspiritual people being added is not enlargement according to God. Enlargement according to God, is the outcome of our apprehension and entrance into what He is in Christ, and the domain of blessing opened up in Him. Gad is enlargement, following upon Zebulun and Issachar: those who suck the abundance of the seas, who call the people unto the mountain, and offer sacrifices righteousness. In connection with that you may be sure of enlargement. Where there is hospitality and sacrifice, and where wealth is collected, as it were, from the seas, then there is

enlargement, which is Gad. There is one thing about him, that he had reserved a portion for the lawgiver — that is that Moses was buried in his territory, meaning spiritually, that the lawgiver is valued. (Psalm 119). In the enlargement we do not disregard the commandments of God; we are more concerned for the commandments of God than for increase of numbers.

And then there is Dan, who leaps from Bashan — not, from his own territory but from territory that had been given to the two and a half tribes. It is like Romans. Romans implies the coring, that is, the Spirit in the believer; this is not only justification and peace with God, but the Spirit as the spring in the Christian. Dan is not here the historical apostate tribe as he is elsewhere; he is spiritual, and leaps from Bashan.

Naphtali comes next. "Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of Jehovah", verse 23. As I said. God would impress us and bathe our souls by the Spirit with these thoughts. Whatever was written beforetime was written for our learning, and in Hebrews the Holy Spirit speaks to us by quotations from the Old Testament. And so here, saints are to be satisfied with favour and full of the blessing of the Lord.

After Naphtali you have Asher. Naphtali possesses the west and the south, and Asher is said to be blessed with children. That is to say, you have a spiritual generation now contemplated. "Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil". He carries all the blessings, for the last, as it were, carries all the others. A spiritual generation is there contemplated, and his foot is to be dipped in oil.

Such, presented in a very brief way, are the rich thoughts contained in this wonderful chapter. May God help the young, and indeed all of us to get into these thoughts, and live in them, and bathe our souls in them, by the Spirit of God, so that we may come out here with our feet dipped in oil, walking in the grace of the Spirit, and acceptable to our brethren!

ENLARGEMENT (JT 33)

2 Corinthians 6:11 - 18; Deuteronomy 33:20,21

The epistles to the Corinthians are greatly stressed in current ministry, indicating that what is needed chiefly among the people of God is obedience and order. What is needed by us severally is what is found in Romans; that epistle and the two to the Corinthians run together, although the former is not corrective, whereas the latter two are. In the Corinthian epistles, prominence is given to the paternal idea, as over against that of the mother in Galatians. In the former, the apostle says, "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel", (1 Corinthians 4:15). To the Galatians he says: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you", (Galatians 4:19). Galatians is intended to deliver the people of God from religious bondage and darkness, Corinthians being rather to deliver us from worldliness. It is obvious that the authority of the father is greater than that of the mother, although the mother may have more influence over the children. Galatians contemplates the kind of person that the people of God may be associated with religiously — Ishmael. Genesis 21 contemplates that Isaac and Ishmael were in the same house — so far it was the household of faith, the house of Abraham. This marked the Galatians. But unless the bondwoman and her son were cast out, faith would cease. So the apostle, referring to himself from the maternal point of view, urges what scripture says, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son", (Galatians 4:30). This scripture, although primarily a word of Sarah, refers to religious association, which is governed by such a woman as Hagar, i.e. "Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children", (chapter 4:25). All that comes under the beggarly elements of the world is Hagar, but Sarah is the free woman, corresponding with "Jerusalem above", which is our mother. "Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman", (verse 30). Abraham was to hearken to this word of Sarah. So the apostle proceeds to say that we — all true believers — are children of the freewoman, that is, the church viewed as Jerusalem *above*. The church is morally above the current level of religion, and she is free.

But the letters to Corinth emphasise the paternal side of the truth, as I said. The Corinthians were disorderly children, doing as they would, corresponding with general conditions today among the people of God; independency, strife, and partisanship prevail. For this condition the word of authority, which a father can give, is needed. Of old, God called the attention of His people to Abraham: "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bore you",

(Isaiah 51:2). As in natural things, so in spiritual, paternal and maternal features run together. The Corinthian letters present the former authority. The Corinthians were Paul's children, and so he writes with authority, threatening a rod. But he calls them 'Corinthians'; he is not addressing the saints as in heavenly places, or in a universal way; they are viewed locally. It is well to be reminded of our local setting; as a name of a locality is mentioned, I have to think of its peculiarities, and in view of correction, these have to be kept in mind. The Corinthians were amenable to correction. And so the apostle says, "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged"; his affections are no longer restrained, and so he can speak to them more freely. Those who minister among the people of God know what this means. His first letter had done its work, and he says, "I speak as unto my children, be ye also enlarged". What can be of more value to young believers than a true father? There are not many fathers. The apostle took advantage of his peculiar position as the instrument through whom they were converted. But it was not this only; he loved them, as he says: "Though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved", (2 Corinthians 12:15). He was only waiting for their hearts to be opened, so that his affections might flow towards them as before. "Now for a recompense in the same (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged". How few there are among the people of God that are being ministered to, who have any sense of recompensing! I am not speaking of what is monetary — that is a small matter — but of the sense of obligation. At the outset of his stay in Padan, Jacob served Laban in family affection; afterwards his service was purely mercenary. When he saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, he went near, and watered the flock. There were other flocks there; he told the owners what to do, but he did not do it; but when he saw Rachel, he served by love. Then he remained a whole month in Laban's house. He is carrying on his service, and Laban says, "Shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be?" (Genesis 29:15). It was only righteous that he should get something for his service. In the same sense, the apostle had a right as a minister to recompense. But it was a question of response to his love. He says, "I seek not yours, but you" (2 Corinthians 12:14); he was putting on them the obligations of love. How many of you young people feel obligations? I do not mean in a monetary sense, as I said, but spiritually. Do you come to recognise those through whom ministry comes as worthy in this way to be esteemed "very highly in love for their work's sake" (1 Thessalonians 5:12 - 13)? "Be ye also enlarged". He says, "Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels". As soon as you begin to recognise spiritual obligations towards those through whom the ministry comes, you will become enlarged. There will thus be definite committal to the Lord, so that it can be said that

you are "married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead", (Romans 7:4). Laban recognises his obligations to Jacob, and what follows upon that is the marriage of the latter to his daughters.

Worldliness worked at Corinth, as our chapter indicates; I note this, because it creeps in so insidiously. So that, as soon as the apostle speaks of their being enlarged, he says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers". There is nothing whatever in common between the two, and your spiritual prosperity hinges on the maintenance of separation. There is to be no fellowship with unbelievers, or with unrighteousness, whatever form it may take. "Wherefore come out from among them". God said that He would walk among His people, and dwell among them. This is not only when we are together, but also in our everyday relations. He goes into our houses, our businesses; He is *walking* among us. So He says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate ... and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters". It is the Fatherhood of God in relation to our ordinary circumstances. He takes up our cause in times of distress; indeed He is a Father to us in every way, considering for us in every circumstance. God provides for a separated people; they are at certain disadvantages because of their separation from the world, but God's care more than balances this; thus we are maintained in the enjoyment of what is spiritual, and not damaged by the cares of this life. To this end He says, "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters". He takes up this relation to us, so that we are protected and cared for as we could not be otherwise.

In the passage in Deuteronomy, Moses takes account of the sons of Jacob in their different features, beginning with Reuben, down to Asher. We have the different features of the blessing, and amongst them that of Gad.

It is of this I wish to speak. Gad answers to 1 and 2 Corinthians, and on this account, among other things, there is the enlargement of Gad, although his name does not signify enlargement. Japheth's name signifies enlargement. You will all remember how the Spirit of God refers to the enlargement of Japheth. When Ham exposed his father, Japheth and Shem took a garment and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father, and then we have the blessing of Noah on his sons. It enters very forcibly into what I am saying. It was a question of respect due to a father. Ham mocked his father; he exposed him. That is, in principle, what the Corinthians were doing. Some of them said of Paul, "His bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible", (2 Corinthians 10:10). There was a Canaanitish element among them, and it was on Canaan the curse fell, (Genesis 9:25). Thus the apostle

says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha" (1 Corinthians 16:22), which means that he will be cursed when the Lord comes. How solemn that this should be said to a company of christians! The curse of Noah is not a question of black people in Africa; it is Canaan, the son of Ham. Canaan does not mean black; "Ham" means black, but it cannot be shown that all his posterity were so characterised. The curse would refer to the seven nations in the land of Canaan. Five of their kings were hanged upon a tree; the curse of God was upon them. We have Canaan mentioned before we get the curse at all. But I am referring to Japheth; of him Noah says, "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant", (Genesis 9:27). It was that principle of which the apostle was speaking at Corinth. Enlargement marked the blessing of Japheth. It is the outcome of his respect for his father. The enlargement of Japheth, in the ordering of God, prepared beforehand for the setting up of the church; in the main it is drawn from his family.

I come back to Gad; like Japheth, the instruction connected with him in this passage enters into the letters to Corinth. "Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad". Why should he be enlarged? Because he bore the feature of regard for authority. "He dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head". That would mean spiritually that he had the courage and strength of a lion. This marks Christ, who is "the lion of the tribe of Judah", (Revelation 5:5). It is a question of government, of power in government, of courage in government; and so he tears the arm with the crown of the head. That is what came out in 1 Corinthians — the opposing arm and head were dealt with. These have often to be dealt with among the saints. The head refers to natural, mental ability, and the arm the power by which it would prevail. We are apt to rely upon natural ability, but it will fail us in the things of God, and in time will turn to opposition, and this brings in the judgment seen here in Gad.

Then the scripture goes on to say, "And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the Lord, and his judgments with Israel". The New Translation reads, "There was reserved the portion of the lawgiver". Gad reserves a portion for the lawgiver. In spite of Paul's severity, those of the spirit of Gad in Corinth would love him. And is it not so? Where there is love for Christ in keeping His commandments, a portion is reserved for the lawgiver. It is a question of the lawgiver, so to speak, in Corinthians, "the law of the house", (Ezekiel 43:12). We need not shrink from it; to those who love Christ it is the perfect law of liberty as governing the assembly down here. If there is no room for the lawgiver in a meeting, it is

not honoured of God. People talk about being gathered to the Lord's name, but what about the lawgiver? There is no moral value attached to any meeting in which there is not a portion reserved for the lawgiver. In this way "he provided the first part for himself". It is in considering for Christ that we serve our own interests best, and if I impose something on others, I must impose it on myself. How can I have weight with my brethren if I am not governed myself by the commandments I seek to enforce? Deborah dwelt under her *own* palm tree; that is victory over herself. It is thus she had power with her brethren; they came to her for judgment. If one does not rule himself, he is of no value at all in the house of God. As soon as a brother is seen ruling his own spirit, the brethren give him room. It is the enlargement of Gad.

"He came with the heads of the people". He is not a king; he is not like Adonijah; he comes with the heads of the people; he recognises others who are exercising rule. If God has graciously been pleased to give ability to another, it is a matter of community; the wealth of one is the wealth of all; the wisdom and love of one are the wisdom and love of all. He is not envious of the other heads; he is marked by the features of a brother.

Then "He executed the justice of the Lord". How much that is needed! It enters into the care meeting — that is, where the heads are together. Young brethren may come to this, to learn how to reach a true judgment, which in the assembly is executed. The apostle speaks about the least in the church settling secular matters, showing what any christian may do; as having the Spirit of God, he has, potentially at least, more judicial ability than the Lord Chancellor! Gad comes with the heads of the people; that is the care meeting; they execute justice and judgment in Israel. I am speaking of principles; it is a question of how things are done, and whether justice and judgment in Israel shall prevail, or whether there is to be wrangling, and things are left without anything being accomplished. It is the principle of the thing — that is to say, whether justice and judgment are executed. The brethren come together, they investigate, they weigh facts, and present things impartially to the assembly, where, according to the wisdom from above,

that is first pure, without partiality and hypocrisy, justice and judgment are executed. What is thus shown in Gad is the ground of the enlargement that is needed, as indicated by the apostle in his letters to the Corinthians.

May God bless His word.

Pages 105 - 197, "The Spirit of Judgment", Readings and an Address, Rochester, U.S.A. 1931. (Volume 108).

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST IN THE ASSEMBLY (3) (JT 43)

Numbers 8:5 - 26; Deuteronomy 33:8 - 11

JT The passage read in Numbers 3 at our last reading shows how the Levites, as qualified according to what we have in Exodus, are taken on by Jehovah. It says in Numbers 3, "Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him; and they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole assembly, before the tent of meeting, to do the service of the tabernacle. And they shall keep all the utensils of the tent of meeting, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. And thou shalt give the Levites to Aaron and to his sons: they are wholly given to him out of the children of Israel. And Aaron and his sons shalt thou appoint that they may attend to their priest's office; and the stranger that cometh near shall be put to death" (Numbers 3:5 - 10), And then it goes on to say, "I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn" (Numbers 3:12). And then again, "and the Levites shall be mine"; and again, "On the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both of man and beast; mine shall they be: I am Jehovah" (Numbers 3:12,13). And then they are numbered and their names are given.

It will be observed that there were three families of the sons of Levi: the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites. The remaining part of chapters 3 and 4 is taken up with their services; they were to be subservient to the priests; that is, those of us who serve, and of course, all the saints are serving. It says, "To each one of us has been given grace according to the measure of the gift of the Christ" (Ephesians 4:7), this having our service in view. But we are subservient to the priests. The anointing is of the priesthood, and the Levites are united to Aaron, so that they come in subordinately; there is thus to be no independency in our service. Paul, the most exalted servant, viewed in this light, is the servant of the saints, as he said, "ourselves your bondmen for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5). The directions given keep those who serve in their proper relations; then in the services appointed in chapter 4 Kohath is put before Gershon, showing that the sovereignty of God enters into this matter of service; whether our service be small or great, it is a question of God's sovereignty, but on the moral line, all being based on qualification; it means that we have qualified in coming to the Lord at the gate of the camp, with our weapons of war. And then the service is being effected as in chapters 3 and 4.

The three chapters intervening between 4 and 8, namely, chapters 5, 6, and 7, have to do with conditions amongst the saints, so as to make way for the service of the Levites. Hence all impurities in the camp are dealt with, and all lepers are put out, all trespasses must be dealt with, also all unfaithfulness to Christ, as in the woman whose husband becomes jealous of her. All that is seen in chapter 5. The nazarite's vow comes in in chapter 6, which is another side of the position, suggesting entire devotedness to the testimony; then comes the unity of the tribes in their substantial giving, included in which is the provision for the Levites: all this is to have its fixed place in our minds. We are thus prepared for being presented to God, as in the chapter we read. It is said the Levites were to be offered up. "Aaron shall offer the Levites as a wave offering before Jehovah" (chapter 8:11). Prior to this, they were to be cleansed as has been noticed. "Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: sprinkle upon them water of purification from sin; and they shall pass the razor over all their flesh, and shall wash their garments, and make themselves clean" (verses 6,7). So that now we are set before Jehovah, and offered as a wave-offering, but as cleansed; not washed exactly, but sprinkled for public service. Moses is to do that, and they were to shave themselves all over, meaning that in our external appearance, what we are in life, everything is to be purified; whether it be ourselves, our business, all is to be purified.

CAM This matter of purification is stressed in 2 Corinthians 7; we are to purify ourselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit. The matter of jealousy you referred to, in the intervening chapters, seems to have been met at Corinth in the first epistle, so that levitical service can be stressed in the second.

JT I think that is good. The apostle is relieved in the second letter, so that he is freer; his mouth is open to them. So long as the conditions at Corinth were as before Paul wrote his first letter, there was but little room for the exercise of ministerial service. What helps in chapter 5 of Numbers is that in the camp of God — as we might say, in the assembly — nothing is to be left unsettled. It says first, the lepers and other unclean persons are to be put out; and then it says, "And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying. Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any of all the sins of man to work unfaithfulness against Jehovah, and that soul is guilty, then they shall confess their sin which they have done; and he shall recompense his trespass according to the principal thereof, and shall add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed" (Numbers 5:5 - 7). This is a very practical direction. In leprosy, of course, it is a pronounced thing that you can take account of easily, but there are those who can take account of gross things, but cannot detect sins that are directly against God, and His

commandments; or it may be a trespass against another. These are apt to be minimised or made nothing of; that is to say, there are those of us who can take account of things that happen which even natural conscience can take account of, but the passage speaks of "any of all the sins of man": "When a man or woman shall commit any of all the sins of man to work unfaithfulness against Jehovah" (Numbers 5:6). It may be primarily against a brother, but it is really against Jehovah, and it cannot be left because such are guilty. They shall confess.

AP Would you think that Matthew 18:15, "If thy brother sin against thee", would come in under this heading?

JT Yes. Of course it would be a big list to go over "all the sins of man", as seen here. Man has learned to sin since Adam's time. Some people say, 'The thing was not so bad'; but Adam's was not so bad from that point of view, he only took some fruit, but it was "against Jehovah" directly. Shimei in Solomon's time was told to build a house in Jerusalem and stay there, under penalty of death were he to go outside Jerusalem. But two of his servants ran away to Gath, and Shimei went and brought his servants from Gath. People might say, 'Why should Shimei not go after his servants, they were his property?' But he forfeited his life through doing so. The idea is of man disregarding the command of God, whether it be a small sin or a great sin. It is *an act of will;* so here it is, "any of all the sins of man ... against Jehovah" (Numbers 5:6). Man has acquired a great ability to sin, from Adam down to the present time. I believe they are learning to commit new sins all the time, but all sins will be taken account of, and we must not say of any that it is not much. The sinner has to judge it, whatever it is. He is to *confess* and add the fifth part thereof, too.

JTJr Confession mainly settles the matter, does it not?

JT The fifth part is required too. He "shall add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. And if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, the trespass which is recompensed to Jehovah shall be the priest's" (Numbers 5:8). So that the priesthood and the saints are enriched by this fifth part. We are richer brothers and sisters afterwards than we were before the thing happened.

JTJr Does the fifth part indicate that the confession was not merely an acknowledgment, but that a spiritual process has been gone through in the soul and the exercise which enables the person to bring in something that is profitable for the saints?

JT Yes, it is given to the priest. In result, it makes us all richer.

ABP Why is it a fifth part?

JT Well, I suppose it is not so much as you might add if you were a spiritual man. It seems to be a light tax. Zacchaeus said he restored fourfold, and the Lord immediately said, "He also is a son of Abraham" (Luke 19:9). He was very liberal in what he did and the Lord honours that.

ABP I wondered whether the fifth part might also indicate the recognition of our weakness.

JT It is a reasonable demand, and the addition shows that you really judge the trespass. It does not say. If you are able to do it. The idea, I think, is that you *are* able. Wealth is assumed.

AFM And then verse 7 shows that you give the fifth part to the brother against whom you have trespassed. There is a personal transaction between them. Sometimes we are slow in that; we confess, but do not measure up to the requirement of the fifth part.

JT I think when a tax like this is imposed, it is understood that you can pay it. God is crediting you with that, and I am sure if you face the thing, you find that you have ability to pay. The very facing of it makes you rich enough. If you are an honest man you want to make reparation, so there is no shade of doubt now about the trespass being fully recompensed.

APT Is Psalm 51 like the fifth part? David goes over the ground fully, so that he really judges the sin, and says, "Behold, thou wilt have truth in the inward parts" (Psalm 51:6), showing what God would get from the burnt-offering.

JEH Is not sinning against a brother also trespassing against the Lord? If one were helped to look at the matter from that standpoint it would not be so hard to make confession to the brother. In Psalm 51:4, just referred to, David says, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned". As a matter of fact, it was against a brother, but the sense came into his soul that it was against the Lord.

JT The psalm is certainly an evidence of genuineness in the man, of how thoroughly he dealt with the sin. He was quick to note it from Nathan's parable, and to say what should be done to the "rich man"; and Nathan says to David, "Thou art the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7). He does not at all excuse himself, but says, "I have sinned against Jehovah" (2 Samuel 12:13).

CAM As to Numbers 5, do you not think it results in comfort to the man who trespassed, when the fifth part is added to the principal? Also there is really gain to the priestly element amongst the saints?

JT That is the thing to be noted; we are not impoverished by trespasses of this kind. There is sorrow connected with them, but through reparation being made the saints are enriched. I believe the assembly was enriched by the outcome of Peter's guilt. He went out and wept bitterly, we are told; then the Lord, as risen, appeared to him. The saints were enriched, when as gathered they were speaking about this very thing; saying, "The Lord is indeed risen and has appeared to Simon" (Luke 24:34). They were enriched in the sense *of grace*.

AP The spoil which emanated from David's exercises at Ziklag, he sent round to the elders of Judah. Is that not right?

JT Quite so. There had been failure there too with David. Then we have the secret of unfaithfulness typified in the woman whose husband became jealous of her. That is the next thing in Numbers 5: she is made to feel the thing inwardly in drinking the water, corresponding to what happened at Horeb. She has to drink what is called "holy water"; perhaps, the only place in Scripture where you get that term. It is a very remarkable thing that the system that speaks much of holy water is the very system that is in mind in this type as being unfaithful. This water is mixed with the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle, and it brings to light whether she is guilty or not. There is in the tabernacle, in the presence of God, the means of disclosing secret unfaithfulness to Christ. And that being dealt with, we have the Nazarite, a man devoted to God; he is in renunciation of all natural rights, which is a most essential thing in service to God. He thus ensures the continuance of the testimony, which goes on to the end. Then we have the riches seen in the offering of the princes in chapter 7.

AFM Does not the end of chapter 6 morally follow chapter 5, where, referring to the law of jealousy, the woman, if proven to be immune from guilt, bears fruit, which takes form in nazariteship? The chapters evidently connect.

JT I am sure they do; the blessing is secured through the Nazarite in chapter 6: "Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying. On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel: saying unto them, Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee; Jehovah make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them" (Numbers 6:23 - 27). The nazariteship of Christ thus secures a wonderful result.

ABP Does Paul confirm this in 1 Corinthians 6:12 "All things are lawful to me, but all things do not profit;

all things are lawful to me, but *I* will not be brought under the power of any"?

JT That is the idea. You renounce your natural rights, and as chapter 5 is gone through, spiritual riches will ensue. Under these circumstances, recovery to faithfulness being restored, we have conditions of great wealth; this is seen in these spiritual men, who are heads of the tribes, and shows that they are united. It is very practical, underlying the unity of the Levites. The service of these princes is spread out. Twelve days are given to the service, and each of these men stood up for a whole day offering these rich things to Jehovah. The scene typifies a great product of the work of God among the saints resulting in wealthy men. Their wealth is not making them independent or rivals of each other, but uniting them, and all culminating in Jehovah speaking to Moses from off the mercy-seat. And then the Levites, coming through in that way, are presented to God, being offered as a wave-offering (chapter 8:11); that is, they are constantly before His eye as pleasing to Him even as Christ was on the banks of the Jordan.

JTJr Does David exemplify what is seen in chapter 7, in that he failed, yet at the end of his life he offers great wealth?

JT Yes; although 1 Chronicles does not give his great failure as to Uriah, it does give his failure in numbering the people; there was no doubt pride of heart in doing this; he thereby dropped to the level of worldly kings around him and would be inflated as well by the large number of people under him. That was a grave failure on his part, and God so regarded it; but David judged it thoroughly, and was accepted of God, as we learn in chapter 21 of that book. Then in chapter 22 you have a disclosure of the most remarkable wealth, seen in David's ability to provide *one hundred thousand talents of gold*.

CAM The priesthood in Chronicles is a testimony to this spiritual wealth.

JT Yes; your soul is moved as you go through chapters 21 to 29: the wealth of David and the wealth of the princes. That is what we may see here also; that is, as we judge sin really, bringing God into it, and offer our fifth part, the saints are enriched. And then the bearing of seed, as the woman is cleared, as has been remarked, and then the Nazarite, and the blessing, and then these twelve princes with their wealth. I do not think we should hesitate in facing all the sorrowful matters that come up constantly among us, if the thought of God is that there should be the *accruement of wealth*, and that it should promote unity and richness in the house of God.

AFM Then the thought of Moses going in to God at the end of chapter 7, when God, so to speak, anticipated him by speaking first, and then Moses speaking; would that be the order of events, that being so wealthy we are enabled to approach God according to His own greatness and dignity?

JT Yes; *we get communications*. It says, "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" (Numbers 7:89).

ABP There is such a thing as wealth that divides. I was thinking of Lot and Abram.

JT That is a humbling suggestion. They were sundered by their great property; the same thing appears with the two-and-a-half tribes; their wealth held them back on the east side of Jordan; but here their wealth is utilised in unity toward God, for the enrichment of His house.

AP Is it because they were prepared to hold their wealth in relation to the *altar*?

JT Quite so; it was "the dedication-gift of the altar" (Numbers 7:88).

RWS Barnabas was a Levite who sold his land and brought the money and laid it at the feet of the apostles.

JT Barnabas is a good illustration of a prince. The Spirit of God gives him that place, I think.

AR These princes come forward after the tabernacle is set up. Why is that?

JT You can understand that it has in view the recognition of the tabernacle. It says, "And it came to pass on the day that Moses had completed the setting up of the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and hallowed it, and all the furniture thereof, and the altar and its utensils, and had anointed them, and hallowed them ..." (Numbers 7:1). Now, if you connect that verse with the end of Exodus, you see that it synchronises with the glory coming in. It was when Moses had done everything and each part was in its place, and functioning, that God would say, 'I will take all that over', and He comes in in the cloud and fills it with the glory. You can see what a scene it was as the tabernacle is filled with the glory, and covered with the cloud — how God was pleased with all this spontaneous giving. One would connect it with the assembly, where each of us in his place is functioning. There is no need for Moses to serve; for *all are subject*. God is saying, 'This is pleasing to Me'; and He appropriates it. What follows is this spontaneous giving by the princes, during the twelve days; then God says, 'I will speak to you now'. I think all this is very great and blessed.

You will notice in the beginning of chapter 8, Jehovah says, "Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick. And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps

thereof over against the candlestick, as Jehovah had commanded Moses. And this was the work of the candlestick: it was of beaten gold; from its base to its flowers was it beaten work; according to the form which Jehovah had shewn Moses, so had he made the candlestick" (Numbers 8:2 - 4). In these opening verses you have the light of the seven lamps being caused to ascend, so that the quality and beauty of what bears it is displayed; hence the whole scene is typically wonderful.

GMacP Is the unity of the Spirit worked out amongst us in the light of chapter 7?

JT Where there is spiritual wealth amongst us, it promotes unity.

FNW What is the difference between what the twelve princes contributed here and what the people generally contributed in view of constructing the tabernacle itself?

JT This is additional. There was no demand upon the princes. The material for the tabernacle was asked for, as you will remember, in Exodus 25; then in Exodus 34 and 35, where the law is given a second time, and Moses came down with his face shining, in principle with the new covenant, Moses again puts it on the responsibility of the people that they bring the material for the tabernacle, and it says they departed from before Moses and brought it; meaning, I think, what Paul had in mind in telling the Corinthians to put by for the poor saints on the first day of the week at home, that there might be no collections when he came. That is, he wished their giving to be the outcome of love operating in their own hearts, and it is again referred to after the new covenant ministry was introduced in the second epistle.

The people departed from Moses, each man to his tent, as you might say, in Exodus 35, and brought the things required in great abundance. I think the idea is to show that under these conditions demanding was not necessary. The people would go to their tents and say, 'I will give this much', and they gave remarkably well; in fact, Moses had to restrain them from bringing;

it was too much! There was nothing of that character here. The twelve princes are not asked to bring anything. The giving was out of spontaneity — they gave of their spiritual wealth; and how pleasing it was to God!

WGT Would the "beaten gold" suggest exercise?

JT Quite so, it refers to discipline.

AR Does the tabernacle represent a system of love, and the princes in correspondence with that? Their movements were permeated with love.

JT That is right. There were the evidences of it there; anyone that looked at the tabernacle would see that it was a product of love.

NP Will you tell us why they all gave the same things, and in the same quantity and quality?

JT I think it is to emphasise the perfection and the unity. Philippians 2:1,2 says, "If then there be any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and compassions, fulfil my joy, that ye may think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking one thing". I think we have a remarkable expression of unity illustrated in the offerings of Numbers 7.

ANW I was thinking of the Spirit's care in giving through Moses seventy-nine verses; writing the details of what the princes offered twelve times.

JT I have often thought of it; each prince having his day for twelve days. Each of these men is thinking the same thing: it is Christ filling their hearts. They are not in rivalry with one another; they are not devouring one another; they are living on Christ!

AR I was wondering whether the spirit at Antioch was characterised by the features that we have been speaking of. It says, in Acts 11, they were first called Christians in Antioch; then later, "As they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2). The true levites came to light under these circumstances.

JT That is right. We may regard that as the antitype of this, we are given there the names of five persons who were ministering to the Lord and fasting. That is, they were denying themselves. What good times they must have had at Antioch! Upon that the Spirit says, "Separate me now Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 13:2), showing He had entire confidence in them.

ABP The very word "separate" seems to emphasise the unity.

JT Just so; He contemplates, I think, that there is no rivalry, or disposition to get rid of any of the brethren. They were not an obstacle there. The brethren were reluctant to let them go on their anticipated work.

AFM Chapter 8 goes on to speak of the Levites being offered as a wave-offering before Jehovah; is that a result of what the Levites have passed through experimentally? They are now a wave-offering to Jehovah, in view of His service.

JT That is the next thing as showing how we are viewed as in service. It is a subordinating thing, something that subordinates me to others, but God is pleased with me there. I believe that Christ Himself sets out the great levitical thought in that sense. He came up out of the Jordan as about to enter upon His service, and heaven's voice says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight" (Matthew 3:17). His service was in view.

GMacP Is that how we understand the wave-offering as linked up with the oblation and the meat-offering as seen in Him?

JT Yes; the wave-offering and the heave-offering suggest spontaneity. The wave-offering gives evidence of what God specially likes. What is waved before one attracts the eye. The wave-sheaf (Leviticus 23:11), is Christ in resurrection occupying God's heart. Here the Levites are offered by Aaron as a wave-offering.

JHE Would the day of Pentecost answer to that?

JT The two wave-loaves are typical of the saints — what came out of their houses. The point is what comes out of our houses, and whether what happens in secret in our houses is pleasing to God; does He delight in it?

WGT Would what Paul presented at Corinth be the wave-offering — Jesus Christ, and Him crucified?

JT Quite so. That is what he presented; the wave-offering is of course presented to God, and as presenting Christ to the Corinthians, he would present Him to God also as speaking to Him.

JTJr Is the thought that we must be acceptable to God before we can minister?

JT That is the idea; you cannot be effective among the brethren unless you first are pleasing to God. I believe that is what was seen at the Lord's baptism, as coming up from the water when the Father's voice is heard, for Christ was infinitely pleasing to Him. The Father speaks *of* the Lord in Matthew, and *to* Him in Mark and Luke. In Matthew it is, "This is my beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17). In Mark and Luke it is, "Thou art my beloved Son" (Mark 1:11 and Luke 3:22). The first, what others should know. The second and third, what is between the two Persons.

AFM Does the idea of God's committal to Christ enter into His baptism? The Spirit came down upon Him in bodily form as a dove. Then in regard to ourselves, I suppose, God commits Himself to us in view of our service; in both cases the end in view is fruitfulness to God.

APT The Lord says of Paul, "Behold, he is praying" (Acts 9:11).

JT In that Paul corresponded to Christ, who was praying when the heavens were opened upon Him.

JTJr The word, "in thee I have found my delight" (Mark 1:11 and Luke 3:22), being directed to the Lord Himself in Mark and Luke, would correspond with the Nazarite, as seen in Numbers 6. It is what God found in Christ as measuring up to His own thought of service.

NMacC Does it always follow that because your service is acceptable to God it will be acceptable to your brethren?

JT That is the order normally. If in ministering to the Lord we are fasting, we show we are self-denying; that is what went on at Antioch, and the Spirit said, "Separate me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then, having fasted and prayed, and having laid their hands on them, they let them go" (Acts 13:2,3). It was the Spirit's mind and they let them go. It is a striking example of the working out of levitical principles.

WB-w It says in Numbers 8, "And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: sprinkle upon them water of purification from sin; and they shall pass the razor over all their flesh, and shall wash their garments, and make themselves clean" (verse 7). How does that process work out now?

JT It seems to be the service of Christ. Moses was to perform this first part — it is like, "sprinkled as to our hearts from a wicked conscience" (Hebrews 10:22). But then they were to shave themselves and *wash* themselves. The sprinkling is from the divine side. The Lord says, "He that is washed all over needs not to wash save his feet, but is wholly clean" (John 13:10). I think it honours the Levites. It was not a bath that they needed, it was just sprinkling, as a matter of testimony; that must be understood at this juncture. I am now brought near to serve; and hence I am sprinkled, but I must also shave all my flesh and wash my garments. I must see now to all matters in which my life is manifest. It is manifested in my house, in my business, and among my brethren; it is a great general thought. The flesh, the natural growth, is there, and I have to watch it. It is that in which my life is manifested as a Christian. I cannot say it is a question only of myself and my house; I must include my business. It is a matter of where my life is manifest; I think that is what is meant, and all that is to come under the work of the razor. That is the idea, I think. Then there is the washing of the garments. Some of us recently were speaking about Peter's boat, of how the Lord went into it, but Peter was washing his nets; that would allude to his business affairs.

WGT The apostle says he was conscious of nothing in himself, but he was not justified in this. Is it the thought, that he would continue washing?

JT Just so; you cannot be sure that everything with you is right, so that there is need of *constant* exercise.

AR After that they were to bring the Levites before the tent of meeting and before the people, who were to lay their hands upon them.

JT Yes; it goes on to say, "And they shall take a young bullock and its oblation of fine flour mingled with oil; and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin-offering" (verse 8); the burnt-offering would be what was pleasing to God, that which goes up to God; but there was also the sin-offering. There is no peace-offering here. It was not a matter of coming together for mutual spiritual enjoyment, but of service. A meeting like this would be in line with the peace-offering as offered and eaten, where the Lord has part, but verse 8 is not that. It is a question of service; so that these two offerings are in view. They are peculiar offerings, and then the oblation with the burnt-offering. "And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tent of meeting; and thou shalt gather together the whole assembly of the children of Israel. And thou shalt bring the Levites before Jehovah; and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites. And Aaron shall offer the Levites as a wave-offering before Jehovah from the children of Israel, and they shall perform the service of Jehovah" (verses 9 - 11). So that it is "the whole assembly"; the saints are all identified in this.

APT I am not quite clear as to this service of Jehovah. It is entirely manward?

JT Not necessarily. They were finally set around the tabernacle, and were amenable to the priest at all times. They were also to carry the tabernacle. Their attitude was "ourselves your bondmen for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5). It is not enough merely to say, I am a servant of the Lord. I may be, of course, but I am a servant of the saints, and hence I must be always ready to serve them.

RWS There were over twenty thousand of them. Is not that a relatively small number? I was wondering how it would work out; whether it would imply that there is not much for us to do, if each one did his own work, or whether the converse would apply today — more work to do than there are levites to serve.

JT Well, I think the latter is quite obvious. There is more work to do than is done. The number of Levites actually in service was eight thousand five hundred and eighty (chapter 4:48). This number would be increased as the entry age was reduced to twenty-five (chapter 8:24). They were evidently

sufficient for the service. There were enough; there were three families of them, and each had its own work to do, and there is no evidence that the work was not done. They were appointed to carry the holy things, and then the curtains and the boards. There was no suggestion that there were not enough of them, but is it so today? Are the holy things, the things in relation to the Deity, and the most sacred and precious things looked after? And the utensils of the holy place, the curtains, the boards, bars, pillars, pegs, and cords — are these things all looked after? The precious things of the Deity, are we concerned enough about them? Zacchaeus would be a man like that. He wanted to see who Jesus was. He would be a Kohathite, I am sure. And then the brethren who are looking after the principles, the Gershonites, carried the curtains and so on. We must see to the principles in everything that we do, the principles that govern what we do; and then finally the persons — the boards — particularly the boards, bars, and pillars. Who is looking after those? This was the work of the Merarites. So we have to make a comparison in this way. In the primary thought of God there were enough. It was strenuous labour, but there is no suggestion that there were not enough to do it, but our concern should be, is it being done now?

JEH Would you bring principles in in relation to the pegs?

JT The principles would be the curtains, things that stretch out and cover the whole position, that which properly makes up the tabernacle.

AR Do you think we are apt to reverse the order? The Kohathites rightly come first. They were always thinking of the holy things. I was wondering whether we are not thinking of people more. We have a great number of brothers who can preach the gospel, but very few possibly who could give an address upon the Person of Christ.

JT I am sure that is a very important suggestion. Can I give an address on the Person of Christ? And why not, if I know Him and love Him?

CAM Do you not think, in that connection, it is marvellous how the Lord has the personnel of all the local companies of His people under His own hand?

JT Yes. Every meeting of the saints requires these three services. The first thing is to keep God before the saints, God in the three Persons, and I believe Zacchaeus, as I was saying, is typical of that. "He sought to see Jesus who he was" (Luke 19:3), and he saw Him. The Lord had challenged the disciples as to who He was. He had asked them what men were saying about Him, and what they were saying. That enters into the service of the Kohathites. But then there are the principles that govern our position. The Gershonites see to the principles. The Merarites look after the people, for you must have the

people to sustain the principles; that is, the boards were to sustain the curtains.

ABP In that connection, the service of the Samaritan in Luke 10 seems to be distinctly the care of the person, but in doing so, there was a principle asserted — that of the neighbour.

JT Quite so. Those that were neighbours to him literally did no good to him; they passed by on the other side; so the Samaritan became the true Merarite and also the Gershonite.

AFM You are speaking about the disparity between the number of Levites and the people generally. I was wondering whether you could tell us how that applies to the temple? There evidently were plenty to do the work there.

JT The same comes out here, as we have been saying. In the closing verses of the chapter, after they are presented to Jehovah, the age is reduced to twenty- five years. It is as if Jehovah would say, 'All these persons are delightful to Me. Now I can increase their number by reducing their age'. We do not get a word about this until they are waved before Him. Then under David, the age is again reduced to twenty years. There were thirty-eight thousand Levites according to 1 Chronicles 23, but then David added to them by reducing the age five years, and I think it is in keeping with the then new order of things. Solomon was "young and tender", and he sat on the throne with David. I think the idea is that God was pleased with him from the outset. Jehovah had loved him even as a babe. I think the divine thought under David was to bring typically all the young Christians into correspondence with Christ, that they are normally young and tender spiritually. There is a freshness about them, and I think we all can say that when we hear a young brother taking part in the meeting for the first time, there is something particularly fresh and attractive about it, and we thank God for it.

JS The freshness in this sense is delightful to God, and hence the age is reduced.

JT That is what I thought; it is in keeping with the new order of things; you have Solomon as king, who was about the age prescribed by David for levitical service.

AR If young brothers knew what they are in the eye of God and in the eye of the saints, they would more readily take on the service.

APT What you say would help as to the matter of age when receiving into fellowship; it is a question of what we see in them for the Lord, not so much their age in years.

JT We may say they are too young, without thinking of their spiritual formation. Sometimes our young people are older than their years, and it is for the brethren to discern this.

EEH What would you say about Paul's first preaching, in Acts 9? He preached Jesus, that He is the Son of God. It was "Jesus" whom he saw on the road to Damascus. He seemed to have gained additional light as to the Lord's Person, would you say?

JT Quite so. He was the first to preach Him as Son of God, as far as Scripture records. I suppose all that enters into what we are saying, that Paul advanced rapidly. He is called a young man in Acts 7. Peter had the knowledge of the Son of God, and so had all the apostles, but what is so remarkable is that they do not say anything about it in their early ministry. Paul, however, begins with it. This is evidently in view of the full thought of the house. Sonship comes in also in David in relation to the house of God. It came into David's mind to build the house, which brought out the necessity for Solomon; that is, *a son*, and I believe the introduction of the full divine thought of the house synchronises with the appearance of Paul.

So that he preaches that Jesus is the Son of God. At Corinth, he and Silvanus and Timotheus preached the Son of God, Jesus Christ, so that it was evidently the great burden of his preaching. I believe Solomon on the throne suggests the idea, hence for David things were not as burdensome as they had been. So today, it is really a question of the part our young brothers are taking, or should take, *in the assembly*, not now carrying things as in the wilderness, since the ark is at rest, all of which gives character to the present *assembly position*, and as showing it is their time of service.

CAM All that seems to indicate the end of the assembly's history — that we are at the end of the dispensation; it is such a privileged moment, the truth of the Son of God and all these wonderful things connected with Him, being brought to our attention.

JT Would to God that we all took that thought in!

CAM We should take it in, it is really very wonderful. It should be exceedingly stimulating to any saint that has his Christian career ahead of him, as illustrated in the young Levites of David's day.

JTJr What is the thought of the fifty years? Does it mean that we should never reach that age?

JT That would be the thought. God expects from us our *best*. In the greatest servants mentioned in Scripture, their best went on to the end of their days.

There are really no pensioners or superannuated persons connected with the testimony. That the Levites were to minister with their brethren after fifty indicates that whatever ability there is will be accepted, but restricted according to what it may be.

AR In Paul's *first* preaching, he was morally a Kohathite you might say, handling the holy things.

JT That is right. And in the epistles to the Corinthians we have also Gershonite and Merarite services, i.e. principles governing the assembly are laid down, the curtains of the tabernacle largely representing these; and then he is concerned about the wicked person being put away, that his spirit should be saved, and that, as repentant, he should be restored.

APT What kind of man do you think Timothy was? Was he an all-round man?

JT The three levitical features would apply to one levite. It is not, in the antitype, that one set are Kohathites, another Gershonites, and another Merarites. You want to have the three ideas united, to present Christ as the Son of God, to keep the principles right, and then keep the persons right.

APT Paul says to the Philippian brethren that he would send Timothy to them as he had no one like-minded who would care with genuine feeling how they got on. I was wondering whether that refers to the service of God and where it would fit in.

JT Quite so; that, as having the saints in view, would be, in character, Gershonite service — how the saints get on. Epaphroditus was concerned about the saints, too.

ANW Yet Timothy was to do the work of an evangelist.

JT Quite so; all the levitical features appeared in him.

WB-w When the Lord Jesus was with the disciples on the mount (Matthew 5, Matthew 6, and Matthew 7), He taught them. Is the teaching there, the principles?

JT I think so; very largely the principles of the kingdom.

AP He spoke as One having authority. I was going to ask whether the limited number of levites would be an obstacle in any way to divine Persons speaking in a full way.

JT Divine activities are greatly limited and retarded today, because of the shortage of those who serve,

and because of our low state generally and consequent spiritual poverty.

WB-w Have you a suggestion to give on Deuteronomy 33?

JT We might finish this subject of the Levites with the understanding that their history is given retrospectively in that chapter. We have often noticed regarding Levi in Deuteronomy 33 that the Thummim is put before the Urim, meaning that the Levites had the needed quality and so were perfect. According to the best authorities, Thummim means *perfection*, which would show that all we have been speaking about had become effective in them, so that we have perfection. Then the meaning of Urim is *light*, which comes out in that setting. They endured the test at Massah and at Meribah; they denied natural claims: he "said to his father and to his mother, I see him not, and he acknowledged not his brethren, and knew not his own children; for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thine ordinances, and Israel thy law" (verses 9,10).

AFM You were saying earlier that their priestly and levitical service combined in Deuteronomy, so in this blessing the two thoughts are united. There was the teaching of Jacob Jehovah's ordinances, and the offering of incense before His nostrils. Is that the thought?

JT That is right; the priesthood is included in Levi here even as to teaching. "They shall teach Jacob thine ordinances, and Israel thy law". So we have teachers now; not man-made teachers, but those who are spiritual, who teach divine ordinances and laws.

AR Will you define the difference between Jacob and Israel here?

JT Well, it is a common distinction in the Scriptures; the first alluding to us in responsibility, and the second as spiritual.

JHE The Lord appeared to *Simon*. Would that be the Jacob side? and then He appeared to *Cephas* — would that answer more to Israel?

JT That is right. He appeared to Simon after He arose. But Paul says He appeared to Cephas; that is the spiritual side, for this name denotes material for building.

THE GREATNESS OF THE SAINTS (JT 44)

1 Corinthians 3: 21 - 23; 2 Corinthians 4: 5; Deuteronomy 33: 29; 2 Samuel 7: 23, 24

JT What is in mind is that we might dwell a little on the relation of the servants of the Lord to those ministered to. The first two scriptures are expressions of the apostle Paul, the leading minister of Christ, showing how he regarded the saints, even when they were in a low condition. In the second epistle he was a servant to the Corinthians "for Jesus' sake". It seems that in view of what is about to be unveiled — that is, the saints in their millennial and eternal relations — the Lord would lay it upon us that they should be rightly regarded as we serve them. In Revelation 3: 9 the Lord intimates that the saints, as in His mind (inclusive of all regarded as of the assembly, whilst, of course, it is remnant times) are to be done homage to in whatever manner He may bring it about. He says, "Behold, I make them of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie; behold, I will cause that they shall come and shall do homage before thy feet, and shall know that *I* have loved thee". It is evidently in view of what the Revelation opens up to us in chapter 21, the assembly in its eternal and millennial relations, that the Spirit greatly stresses its greatness. I thought also that it would augment the truth to bring forward what the two great ministers of the Old Testament — Moses and David — say of the saints, in the passages read.

The fact that the apostle brings this thought into his letters to the Corinthians, is to show us by the Spirit, that in order to regard the saints in the light of their true greatness we must not be beclouded by any low conditions that may exist. Low as the conditions were at Corinth, the apostle says to them,

"for all things are yours. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things coming, all are yours; and *ye* are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Corinthians 3: 21 - 23). He does not speak abstractly, but to them, to those very saints that he describes in the first verse as not spiritual, saying, "And *I*, brethren, have not been able to speak to you as to spiritual". The second epistle is more applicable to himself, as to what he was: "For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus Lord, and ourselves your bondmen for Jesus' sake" (1 Corinthians 4: 5). And then he says, "For all things are for your sakes" (2 Corinthians 4: 15).

I think the most practical and profitable way would be to consider the circumstances in which the apostle utters these remarkable statements, so that in serving the saints, those who do serve in any special way, may have right thoughts, may be in a right attitude of mind — "ourselves your bondmen

for Jesus' sake". The servant is among the "all things" that belong to the saints, and one might venture to add practically that consideration of this matter will deter us from exploiting the saints in any way. They become discredited and lose their character and dignity in our minds, if we exploit them in any way, however small, whether commercially, professionally, or ministerially. The thought of bondmen places us in the lowly attitude that is becoming, in view of the greatness of the persons we are serving. It says in Hebrews 7: 26, "For such a high priest became us". The Lord of glory, the Creator, is presented to us in priesthood, and we are told that such a great personage as He was necessary to be our Priest.

EG You have often used the expression, Clothe the saints with the thoughts of God. Does this fit in with what you have in mind?

JT It does. The saints may find it difficult to accept the great thoughts which Scripture attaches to them, and it is incumbent on those who do know, who accept it and appreciate it, to convey in their attitude towards the saints how great they are. Not of course in the flesh, for the apostle deals with them most severely from that point of view, but in his mind they are the owners of everything.

WSS Would that be involved in Solomon speaking of himself as a little child when viewing the people of God?

JT "So great a people!" How he clothed them! Luke 15: 22 says, "Bring out the best robe and clothe him in it". It is for us to convey in our attitude towards the saints this impression; of ourselves, "your bondmen for Jesus' sake". Yet not sparing the flesh in the brethren, because they are not to be exalted on *that* line at all. These epistles are most severe in dealing with that side of the truth.

Ques Do we see the way the Lord would clothe the saints in the last chapter of Matthew? He says, "Hail!" Is that a salutation of respect, recognising the subjective work which was represented there?

JT I think that is right. The apostle's salutations to those at Rome fit in, but they are to greet one another with a *holy* kiss.

AMH 1 Corinthians 1: 30 says, "of him are *ye* in Christ Jesus". Is that viewing what the saints are initially?

JT Yes. They are of God in Christ Jesus, "who has been made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and holiness, and redemption". I suppose such a statement is needed in an epistle like this, because the work of God at Corinth had become obscure and shallow, but still, they are in Christ; they have that

status. Although babes, the apostle would not have any other thought. If leaven is there, it is to be purged out "that ye may be a new lump, according as ye are unleavened;" he keeps that abstract thought in mind. We should not take up any other attitude in regard to the saints, however low their state, for a principle of service is to carry the saints along with us, not to travel too fast, or to lord it over God's heritage. So that Moses and Aaron, seen in Exodus 4, are typical ministers; they are in their initial service, and the people worship because of what they do. Then when the instructions are given as to the passover, the people again worship as the minister serves them (Exodus 12: 27). Further, in Exodus 16: 10 as the people would have gone back to Egypt, it says, "when Aaron spoke to the whole assembly of the children of Israel, that they turned toward the wilderness ... ;" showing that influence for good normally goes with the ministry.

Ques Would this tend to improve the quality of what is ministered?

JT I think so; the bondman is more likely to minister Christ, who is supremely the Bondman. He will be more likely to present Christ aright than any who in any way lord it over the saints.

SB Would it be right to say that David has these qualities when he speaks of the Philistines defying the armies of the living God, and challenges Goliath himself "in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied" (1 Samuel 17: 45). Is that the reason Jehovah later spoke of choosing David to feed His people?

JT Just so. One is impressed with the way David qualifies, especially in the pressure of the battle in the valley of Elah; his very beauties are alluded to. And then in answer to Eliab he said there was "a cause;" he was under orders, for his father had sent him, and he is so full of the thought of the armies of Israel and who they were, that for such a one as Goliath, great as he may have seemed to the natural mind, to have defied them, was abhorrent to him. What a place the armies of Israel had with him, the armies of the living God! And so, completing his service, he is peculiarly lowly when speaking to Saul. Saul was very supercilious even after the victory, when the giant's head was in David's hand; but David says, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite". Then it goes on to say, "when he had ended speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (1 Samuel 18: 1). He stripped himself to clothe David; he clothed him with the greatness which belonged to himself at least. Perhaps he did not go quite far enough, but he went a good way. This all shows the spirit of the servant, and how he attracts those he serves, for he had served

Jonathan and Saul wonderfully at that moment; after that we get the maidens of Israel coming out and sounding David's praises.

WJT You spoke of the servant carrying the saints along with him. Is that beautifully illustrated in Numbers 11: 12, "thou sayest to me, Carry them in thy bosom"?

JT That in itself is very beautiful, although in the stress of circumstances spoken in unbelief; it corresponds with our own great apostle's remarks to the Thessalonians, when speaking of being in the midst of them as a nurse cherishing her own children. The Thessalonians were just growing babes, but Paul clothes them with parental affection.

Ques Would you say that wisdom is called for in the particular aspect of the truth to be presented at any given time? Here they were quarrelling between themselves as to leadership, and this brings out the great thought in chapter 3. Then in chapter 6 we get another choice thought, "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit". Should it be known to the minister which feature of the truth should be presented on each particular occasion?

JT Yes. Here he was transferring the thoughts of party leaders to himself and Apollos for their sakes, and brings in this great thought which is very remarkable. We have spoken elsewhere of Joshua speaking to Jehovah, and calling upon the sun and moon to stand still. The two great orbs belong to the saints. What an elevating thought is this, even as to christians in a low state, babes — the sun and the moon belong to them! In royal families they follow this principle of keeping the children nourished with high thoughts — they are, of course, on natural lines, but that is the principle; the saints should be nourished with great thoughts, whilst carefully instructed as to the utter worthlessness of the flesh. It is a great matter that the servant is able to bring the great thoughts of God forward, helping to lift us out of the littleness of the flesh.

JTS Would the spirit of this be seen in Exodus 33: 13, 16? Moses says, "and consider that this nation is thy people", and then he says, "And how shall it be known then that I have found grace in thine eyes — I and thy people?" In the next chapter he says, "Let the Lord, I pray thee, go in our midst; for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin". He would not allow the flesh notwithstanding the greatness of the people?

JT That is very good. I had thought of that passage, because Moses is the outstanding minister of the Old Testament along with David. God must have given Moses a wonderful impression of the people — much more than is recorded. In returning from Midian the circumcision was enforced. Jehovah

was going to slay Moses, showing how He would impress him with the utter incorrigibleness of the flesh and its uselessness. His wife says he is "A bloody husband", because of the circumcision. So he must have had a great conception of the utter uselessness of the flesh in whatever way he may have understood it. It might be inquired, Why "I and thy people"? Paul would have said, Thy people and I. Evidently when the saints have gone astray and have come under fleshly influences, it is necessary that the authority of the minister should be impressed upon them; for, in truth, he is representative of Christ. He is not less, because he is a bondman; indeed, Jesus was a Bondman. If a man becomes a bondman, God does not fail to exalt that man. In Moses' case it was peculiarly so. God will not have His servant ill-treated, He will insist upon his greatness. The tabernacle was pitched outside and God appeared to Moses and spoke to him as a man speaks with his friend; all that his dignity might be known and that he should have influence with the people. When Moses is about to die, the point that he has before him is the greatness of the people. After all, what is the value of any service save as it promotes the greatness of God's people? The greater they are spiritually, the greater is God's inheritance in them.

MWB If we are to serve rightly, we must always bear in mind the greatness of the people as divinely constituted, and yet have a sober regard to their practical state; prepared to take up the feelings proper to the displeasure of God on account of that state.

JT Quite so — "having in readiness to avenge all disobedience". The true servant is prepared for all contingencies.

JJ Do you have that view of things when Balaam speaks in Numbers 23 and 24? Does it bring out the greatness of the people?

JT Yes. I suppose the divine thought was to augment what was already there in view of the people entering the land. Moses, as representing authority, could not take them in, but as a man of God he clothes them with wonderful thoughts. Moses had nothing to do with Balaam's prophecies; they were all the direct action of God, showing how He comes in sovereignly to augment the ministry; we can always expect that. Whatever God is stressing in ministry He will come in Himself to augment it with something, so that it might be enforced. He brings out the greatness of the people in those remarkable prophecies, or, as we may call them, divinely regulated pronouncements. Moses undoubtedly wrote the account. How it would enlarge his soul as to God acting to support him; and then you get the numbering, as much as to say, Such people as this can be numbered for the heavenly land.

AT Does the Lord's supper help in this matter?

JT It is introduced in this epistle under the words, "I speak as to intelligent persons". A feature of the assembly is that it is composed of "intelligent" persons; a thought which should be with us always in sitting down to the Lord's supper in assembly, Thus we are "one body".

PL Would the greatness of the saints in the Lord's mind be seen in the way He speaks to the Father as to them in John 17?

JT We have referred to that elsewhere — how the Lord laboured, according to John, to impress them with the Father, and who they were, too, in the Father's mind. Then finally the Lord speaks of them not as babes, but as *men*. He had spoken to His Father about them as babes, in Matthew 11, which is very touching. Now He speaks to His Father about them as men, and asks for such things as would enhance their greatness; their sanctification would be like His; they would be with Him; the glory He had received He would give them, He would glorify them with it; and they would have the kind of love the Father had. What men they would be, able to love Christ as the Father loves Him!

FSM Is it not characteristic of the writers of the epistles that they approach their task with the consciousness of the dignity of the saints? In Colossians, it is "to the holy and faithful brethren in Christ;" in Hebrews, "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling;" in 1 Peter, "to the ... elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father". If we are impressed with the dignity of the saints and have a sense of what God thinks about them, would that not give effect to our service throughout?

JT Just so. We should have this before us more — *to whom* we are ministering. In Luke 10: 20, when the ministers had just come back, having done well in their service, the Lord says to them, "in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subjected to you, but rejoice that your names are written in the heavens". It is one of the most beautiful touches in Luke. They were not to rejoice because of their success in service, but that their names were written in the heavens. That gives dignity — it is their status up there. What a glorious prospect that is! Viewed thus, how worthy the saints are of service!

Ques Does Numbers 20: 10 show the importance of viewing the saints rightly? Moses says, "Ye rebels", but Jehovah viewed them very differently.

JT It is very important for servants to bear this in mind, for we all know how irritated we become. This great servant, in that sorrowful time, called the people rebels. You cannot go into the land with such thoughts of bitter resentment, because the brethren will not listen. One knows well enough, as no doubt many do, how these thoughts arise, and this is written to check us. God will not brook it, He will not have the saints viewed otherwise than in

relation to His counsels and His work in them. On the other hand, as those, having the place of God's people, turn away from the truth, become opposers of it, reprobate, the strongest condemnatory terms are used in Scripture of them. The Lord Himself speaks of a wicked and adulterous generation, and Stephen says, "O stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, *ye* do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers, *ye* also" (Acts 7: 51).

AFM Jehovah defended Moses when Miriam and Aaron spoke against him.

JT We have just been remarking as to Moses saying, "I and thy people". The mediator must be distinguished, and the honour due to every servant is divinely maintained. Moses, in placing himself first, no doubt rises to the thought of Christ. He says, "so shall we be distinguished, I and thy people". It is beautiful language and evidently God was greatly pleased with it.

Ques Do you get a further example of what you are saying in Luke 22: 27? When the disciples were questioning amongst themselves as to who should be the greatest, the Lord says, "*I* am in the midst of you as the one that serves", and then He goes on to speak to them of having appointed unto them a kingdom.

JT That is very remarkable; and they were to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The thought is to lift the saints out of their pettiness and rivalry. To bring in their greatness, what they are in the mind of God, is part of the service of the minister, and he is to serve as a bondman for Jesus' sake.

EJMcB Viewing the greatness of the saints as God looks at them, the servant would seek to lift them out of the conditions in which they are, so that they may touch the thoughts of God for them.

JT That is what we get in 2 Corinthians, where we have correspondence with Moses. In Exodus 34 Moses goes up the second time, and it is left to him to hew the stones, and God would write on them. Then we get the reference to the fact that the skin of his face shone. It is the new covenant *figuratively*, and God furnishes the minister with the means to lead the saints on. He adds sovereignly to what the minister is aiming at, which is very comforting, for God is doing this all the time. Sometimes we really wonder what can be said next; so much ground has been covered. The Spirit of God has infinite resources, but the servant has to keep applying death to himself so as to be available in the dispensing of them. Joshua had to go down into the valley, as we have been seeing recently; he gets into the position of Christ, where Christ was. In Moses' case God furnishes him with fresh impressions, for God was not giving up. Moses has right thoughts, as we see in Exodus 33; he was thoroughly with God in what He had before Him. Jehovah passed before Moses "and

proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah God merciful and gracious" — a remarkable thing. The servant has to be ready to be adjusted all the time as to himself — old things will not do. One often has felt like Samson; he found, we are told, the fresh jaw-bone of an ass — an unlikely thing, from the human point of view, but it was just what was needed. The apostle Paul was in great sorrow as to the Corinthians, but he says, as it were, 1 am going on with *you*. I cannot write another letter to you like the first; and so he says, "Now he that establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is God". Note "with *you*" — he is with the brethren and they are now, we may say, with him. What will he say next? It is remarkable that the matter of the letter of commendation comes in just at this point; a very small thing in itself, but wonderful things open out from it. So now in the midst of the greatest things, the richest things to affect the brethren who needed recovery and establishing in the truth, we get the new covenant.

SB Would it be right to say that the defection of the people at Kadesh-barnea would not have occurred had they risen to the height of God's thought for them? Could Caleb and Joshua be referred to as fit to lead the people on?

JT Yes. It is an immense thing to hold the ground in a crisis, whether it be by many or few. Something is bound to happen; the enemy is not going to gain the day if two men, or even one man, is prepared to hold the ground.

JJ Do we get the authority side in the first epistle and the priestly side in the second epistle to Corinthians?

JT We get the priestly side in both epistles, but the first is more what Moses is typical of. The Aaronic character comes in more in the second epistle; but *authority* is stressed in both. In the second the apostle says, "Having in readiness to avenge all disobedience". But in chapter 3 he is dealing with them in the Spirit of Christ as the Mediator of the covenant; for that is the point. They went so far as to suggest that he should have a letter of commendation, and this gave him the "fresh jawbone of an ass", so to speak, that is chapter 3. It was there; I do not think it was premeditated, and the Lord was with him in it. The parenthesis, verses 7 - 16, was not premeditated, but what a wonderful opening up of the covenant it was! What a weapon the apostle had — what a means of leading the brethren on with him! I believe the servant will always find that, if he has the true thought of God as to the greatness of the saints whom he is serving. The Lord will furnish us with what is needed. We must not go too far ahead, but seek to bring them along the line that we ourselves are on.

Ques Would the servant be very greatly cast upon God in his ministry to be able to handle things like this, and make way for the expression of the truth

needed?

JT Quite so. Here it is a letter of commendation, which is a small matter, but God makes it a very great matter; for it is a means of helping the brethren at that particular juncture. He follows on in chapter 3, and speaks of the covenant by itself, and this, as we know, fits in with the Lord's supper. Then he alludes to bondmen, that is, himself in relation to the Corinthians. Chapter 4 begins, "Therefore, having this ministry ..." He is going on with them in the midst of such rich thoughts as the thought of a letter of commendation has led to.

HH I suppose that Moses blessing the tribes would correspond with the letter of commendation that Paul speaks about. Moses spoke *well* of Israel in Deuteronomy 33.

JT Yes. Anyone meeting Moses at that time and asking about Israel would hear him speak well of them; he would not call them rebels. The whole chapter is a wonderful testimony to what Moses thought of Israel; he does not go quite so far as to say that he loved the tribes, but he says that God does, and we may see how thoroughly he is with that; indeed, he is "the man of God" in blessing Israel.

WSS Does this come out in Daniel 9: 18, 19? He says to God, "behold our desolations, and the city that is called by thy name", and then, "thy people are called by thy name".

JT Just so. There is a great destiny for that people, and all would be fulfilled. The man clothed in linen says (Daniel 12: 9 - 13), "Go thy way, Daniel ... thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days". What a beautiful word for the servant.

APT Is Romans 16 something further than the jaw-bone of an ass? In finishing, the apostle brings in Phoebe and her relations with the saints.

JT Yes. Phoebe is a minister of the assembly and she is spoken of as possessing dignified qualities. She is evidently the bearer of the letter to the Romans, and the apostle's commendation of her is included. This brings up the question of letters of commendation, because sometimes a letter is a little out of keeping with the person who is bearing it. Paul in writing his letter of commendation of Phoebe speaks also of others, as if it furnished him with what was needed in the finishing of his letter. He evidently knew much about the persons he saluted, and his salutations would serve a good purpose, when commending this dear sister living near by. He had affectionate regard for the saints at Rome, and a specific estimation of some of them, and he takes advantage of the opportunity offered to give expression to it. It is necessary

that we should have a right estimation of the brethren we meet. We are to hold them in our minds as God regards them. The apostle's salutations would strengthen the position, because through them the assembly at Rome would be in its own account greater. The letter of commendation would suggest the *work of God* in persons so noted; and of course there were other persons there equally the subjects of the work of God.

JSE Does not Paul, in the way he covers the saints in the first letter to Corinth, help them forward in the direction of the thoughts of God to such an extent, that they themselves could refuse the things that damaged them? They would now regard them as beneath them.

JT That is suggestive of what opens up so wonderfully in chapters 3 and 4 of the second epistle. "Therefore, having this ministry, as we have had mercy shewn us, we faint not". As if the new covenant came into his mind and he was greatly stimulated. "But we have rejected the hidden things of shame" and "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassingness of the power may be of God, and not from us". He now allows what he is speaking of its own weight in his own soul, clothing his own position with the great thought of the new covenant, and he says, "your bondmen for Jesus' sake". Surely this was to the end that they might take it on and clothe themselves with it, too. Then he goes on to say, "while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are for a time, but those that are not seen eternal". He would link that on with the thought of the new covenant.

PHH Is that seen in Exodus 34, where the skin of Moses' face shone, but he did not know it? Would it be what you are speaking of — something furnished by God in order to bring the people into what Moses had?

JT Yes; it would enhance His servant. They were afraid of him, and it would seem as if he would not go on without his brethren, so that "Moses called to them; and they turned to him". Paul speaks of the shining of the face of Jesus, there was nothing to repel. Paul himself was exactly like that to the Corinthians, a bondman "for Jesus' sake".

WC "I drew them with bands of a man, with cords of love" (Hosea 11: 4). Is that the thought of the covenant?

JT Quite so. The allusion is to how God served Israel through Moses and Aaron.

JJ Is the climax reached in Psalm 148: 14 "the children of Israel, a people near unto him", and then Psalm 149?

JT Quite so; it seems to begin in Exodus 19, a people near to Jehovah. This matter of the letter of commendation opens up much about the new covenant, both in regard to the saints and in regard to the minister. He leads them through other great things — reconciliation and new creation — so that now he says to them, "Our mouth is opened to you, Corinthians, our heart is expanded" (2 Corinthians 6: 11).

Ques In verse 2 of chapter 3, the apostle says, "*Ye* are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read of all men". Does he suggest that the servant's commendation lies in his ability to view the saints, in the way you are speaking?

JT That is what is meant. The way Paul spoke about the Corinthians was wonderful; he would speak well of them, of how he regarded the work at Corinth. What is written in his heart is a wonderful thing; but now they also become an epistle "known and read of all men, being manifested to be Christ's epistle ministered by us".

The passage in Deuteronomy 33 confirms what we have in these two scriptures, and corresponds with the book of Revelation. It seems to me that the Lord would keep the book of Revelation before us, as to the greatness of the saints and how they will appear. Paul says, we shall be "manifested with him in glory" (Colossians 3: 4). John says, "the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, having the glory of God" (Revelation 21: 10). This brings out how great is the thought of what God has in us, in view of administration, in view of our millennial service. So that the ministers are mentioned, their names are on the foundations of the city. These men did their work well; it was foundational — there were twelve of them — and the result was seen. They did not go beyond their work, as it says, "To every man his work". In giving the twelve their work the Lord did not give them Paul's; but they had their own, which was not beyond the foundation. This wonderful superstructure reflects back on the apostles at Pentecost — how well they did their work, and what men they were! They did not bring in the *Son of God*, but kept to their own line; not that they did not have the truth. A great principle in ministry is "to every man his work". So in 1 Corinthians 3 every man is to see how he builds, what he puts into it; the foundation is there.

AJG Paul says, "For other foundation can no man lay besides that which is laid". Is the foundation which Paul laid consistent with the foundational work of the twelve?

JT It must be so, for whether in their work or his it is Christ. His name does not appear in the heavenly city. His work is not foundational in the primary general sense. He himself speaks in Ephesians 2 of the foundation of the

apostles and prophets, but his *name* is not there. He had part in the placing of the corner-stone, and, as he says in 1 Corinthians 3, he laid the foundation in a *practical* sense for his building among the gentiles. His work, therefore, would be included in Ephesians 2: 20. The great thought that should impress us in considering these great servants, including Moses and David, is how feeling they were, how thoroughly they were with God, and had God's mind about those they were serving. So God says to Moses, "this people", but Moses says to God, "thy people". David, after the light of sonship had come to him, speaks of Israel in a wonderful way in the passage read in 2 Samuel 7: 23, 24: "Who is like thy people?"

JHB David refers to the greatness of God Himself, saying, "Wherefore thou are great, Jehovah Elohim" (verse 22).

JT The whole passage, from verse 18 to the end, is a remarkable expression, by one who, as in the light of sonship, is full of the divine greatness; and correspondingly the greatness of God's people, for the greatness of the people is linked with the greatness of God.

AJG Is Paul in the spirit of that when he says, "*Ye* are Christ's"?

JT That brings out the true position. All things belong to the saints, they belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. That is the order seen in Corinthians.

Ques Does the apostle observe the same principle in his service manward? At Athens he says, "Being therefore the offspring of God ..."

JT It is *all* men there; he links man up with God. It seems to me that the greatness of God, in the economy into which He has come, requires the greatness of the saints, because it is a question of the whole scheme into which He has come, and the greatness of the saints is included in the shining out of God in His righteousness, power, love, and counsels.

Ques Does David in 2 Samuel 7: 24 give the thought of God's inheritance in the saints? He says, "thou hast established to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever; and thou, Jehovah, art become their God".

JT That passage enters beautifully into what is before us.

JTS Was it not the concern of these great servants that they should serve well? Paul says, "what is our hope, or joy, or crown of boasting? are not *ye* also before our Lord Jesus at his coming? for ye are our glory and joy" (1 Thessalonians 2: 19, 20).

JT That is what we have been seeing. The twelve apostles' names were in the foundation, and every man's name appears in relation to his work. We do not want to be ashamed of our work in that day.

UPRIGHTNESS (JT 44)

Galatians 2: 14; 2 Samuel 1: 17 - 19; Joshua 10: 12 - 14; Deuteronomy 33: 4, 5

My purpose is to speak about uprightness amongst the people of God. I have thus ventured to read the scriptures in 2 Samuel and in Joshua, relating to the book of Jasher, which word is said to denote uprightness, and, inasmuch as it is evidently a book of poetic productions to be conserved, the thought seems to be to teach us uprightness in an attractive manner, to make it attractive to us, to make it worth while. It leads to the collective thought in Jeshurun, which carries the thought not only of uprightness, according to its meaning given, but peculiar attractiveness, the word 'darling' being, as some think, suggested in its meaning. It is an upright people, not only an upright person, but an aggregation of such, and thus peculiarly attractive to Christ, He being also attractive to them. The more upright we are, the more we shall appreciate this feature in Jesus, who is the embodiment of it, as He is of every divine grace; hence He is in type King, we are told, amongst them — "king in Jeshurun" — but not simply amongst so many persons, but "When the heads of the people And the tribes of Israel were gathered together".

Well now, we have to look at this matter negatively, as indeed in such cases the negative side of it only enhances the positive quality involved. The quality is to be kept in mind, for, as I said, it culminates in the saints being viewed as lovely in Jeshurun, free from all those objectionable traits so developed, alas! in us, which sometimes cause us to be the opposite, causing certain ugliness, unattractiveness. Hence we are obliged to call attention to two great servants between whom the issue arose,

the issue of uprightness, or the absence of it, namely, Peter and Paul. I suppose we are entitled to regard them as the greatest servants of God without any exception: the one called the leading apostle among the twelve — "first Peter;" the other our own apostle, to whom so much was committed, who said of himself by the Spirit that he "laboured more abundantly than they all".

The chapter from which I have read shows them together, first in council at Jerusalem in regard to a work of the enemy which had in view to introduce legality, involving indeed apostasy in which it reaches its full consummation; for the effort of the enemy was to add to the Galatian christians something that God did *not* add to them, but what He would subtract from them — namely, legality. This epistle shows how even the great personality of Paul has to be thrown into the scale against this vicious doctrine which the apostle

calls, "another gospel", and he said that any one who preached it should be accursed. There was no mincing of matters with him, so that he throws his whole personal weight into the scale against it, not only was there what he said against it — most forceful words and epithets — but his own personality is thrown into the scale against it; so that he says, in Galatians 5: 2, "I, Paul, say to you, that if ye are circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing". Think of that in view of modern public christianity! How the legalists, those who have returned to Judaism, and, alas! paganism, too, have cut themselves off, in principle at least, from "all profit from the Christ". In keeping with that remark, he says, "I, Paul" — it is a question of his personality, what he was in the testimony, what he was personally, for he says, "by the grace of God I am what I am". He throws his weight, as I said, into the scale against this wicked doctrine that had been propounded from Jerusalem and taught among the Gentiles.

It began early, by Satan employing what had been once accredited, to set aside the current thing that God had introduced, namely, christianity. It was a successful weapon of the devil to bring in *what had been* to set aside *what is*. We have to begin with *what is*, what is of God; hold to that whatever *has been*. We shall never understand what has been unless we understand what *is*. The apostle was contending for what was in his day, that is, christianity, as over against what had been, which was now polluted, adulterated, and used by the devil to set aside what then was, especially the ministry of the apostle Paul. We have to speak with feeling, in subdued tone, as to the great servant Peter being brought under the influence of this evil, if it were but for a little while. It surely is not written to discredit the great servant in our minds, it would be hidden for ever in oblivion were it not that the Lord intends that we shall gain by what happened; that the most spiritual of us should see how he is in danger of coming under an adverse influence, even if it be only for a while.

The apostle here, in the verses I read, brings in this thought of uprightness. He says, "when I saw that they do not walk straightforwardly, according to the truth of the glad tidings, I said to Peter before all ..." — that is, he rebuked openly his great fellow servant. The chapter shows us what occurred at that memorable meeting at Jerusalem, when Paul and Barnabas taking Titus with them went up there and had a conference in regard to these matters. We get an insight as to how we are to stand with one another in the service of God, how we are to regard one another, and how careful we are to be as to those who are in distinction amongst us. The apostle says, he spoke "privately to those conspicuous among them". We have to be on our guard as to what we say as to the Lord's servants; so the apostle spoke about those with

distinction, but he says "to me those who were conspicuous communicated nothing". Yet there were Peter and James and John who seemed to be pillars — they were outstanding even then. The apostle Paul, I am sure, had great satisfaction in discerning them at that time, and then he says, they discerned us too — they recognised "the grace given to me". Happy indeed that brethren are so free from prejudice as to see what is of God in each other! for the gifts are varied and no gift can detract from another, in the abstract, anyway; it can only add to another. Increased gift rightly used is increased wealth, and we can only rejoice in every bit of ability the Lord gives. So Paul discerned that these three great servants were pillars. The word "pillar" carries its own meaning according to the use made of it in the testimony.

Then he says that "James, Cephas and John, [who were conspicuous as being pillars] recognising the grace given to me, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship" — a very happy situation, boding well for the work of God among the Gentiles; but, alas! subsequent influences diverted from this — interfered with it. So far it was a happy state of things, and Peter came to Antioch evidently clear of these influences — a great servant, as he was. As soon as Paul is on the scene, according to the historic account (Acts 9), Peter goes everywhere — he went "through all quarters", meaning that he was instinctively in accord with this new great instrument that the Lord had introduced — "an elect vessel", as He says of him, "to me", through whom He would establish the principle of local assemblies. Peter went through all quarters, he was free in spirit. In the end of Acts 9 we see how he moved in support, anticipatively, of what God was about to introduce through the great servant He had just brought into view at Damascus, who preached the Son of God in the synagogue. The great economy we are brought into as amongst the gentiles, set up in assemblies — not simply in one assembly as at Jerusalem, but in assemblies; that was already in view and the apostle anticipated it. Hence he goes down to Joppa and says to Aeneas, "rise up, and make thy couch for thyself" — that was the sort of thing that was coming in — Aeneas was to be ready for it. Then he raises Tabitha and presents her to the saints and widows alive — another thought; that means that the new economy should be marked by a sense of local responsibility and by a living state of things in each locality.

Well now, that is Peter, and chapter 10 opens up to us how nobly he comes under the direction of heaven, for no servant is worthy of the name who is not amenable to the influence of heaven; the great bodies up there are emblematic of the power that is there spiritually for good, especially guidance. So Peter is amenable, and by his mouth, he says, the gentiles — that is, we ourselves in our forefathers — heard the gospel. Surely we can but speak well

of one through whom such light is given to us! He justified the whole matter, too, in Jerusalem, and then, as I said, in Jerusalem, according to chapter 15, Peter with James and John gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship — a very unifying thought. The work of God is now to move on in unity and happy sympathy; the great leaders being of one mind. So he came down to Antioch, apparently in this frame of mind, but as certain came from James; that is, the influence of Jerusalem was transmitted through some sinister agency, for it was not simply a word, but certain persons under James's influence came and influenced Peter.

Now that is what is in mind in these verses, so that an issue arose in regard to straightforwardness or uprightness; the Spirit of God introducing it at this juncture, in relation to the issue at Galatia which is constantly occurring amongst the people of God, to warn us against any element other than uprightness, any opaqueness, any want of transparency, any want of brotherly simplicity and confidence between those who serve, and between the brethren generally. The apostle says, "when I saw that they do not walk straightforwardly ...". It was a very real issue, the truth of the gospel was involved, but it was a moral issue, too, this matter of uprightness. For a man to come out and say something wrong, is one thing, but to be underhanded about it, to be inconsistent in it, to be manifestly darkened by some adverse influence in it, is another thing — that involves what is moral, a state of soul. So it is introduced, as I said, in this great issue, by the apostle Paul, and he contends with Peter "before them all". It is an open matter now, he had already said things privately at Jerusalem, lest he might "run or had run in vain", for it is not of God to bring great servants into discredit publicly — surely not; but when there is a doctrinal issue of this kind, we had better speak publicly, we had better speak out — and that is what he did. He did not take Peter aside at this time — he did at Jerusalem under other circumstances, and so did Aquila and Priscilla in regard of Apollos, they "took him to them" — but this time it is a public matter; all the saints are involved, and all the saints are to understand what is at issue and are to judge the whole matter. For, after all, christianity is not only in the leaders, let that be understood. Christianity is in the saints, it lies in the assembly; it is what we are in relation to one another that affords opportunity for God to work out the great thoughts that He has in mind in christianity; it involves every one of us, and so the saints are to understand. If there be an issue so serious, it is well the saints should understand; and so the apostle does not shrink from speaking to Peter before them all, from rebuking before all, his distinguished fellow-servant, his elder brother, as I might say — "he was to be condemned".

Of course, as in the case of David, the more distinguished a man is, the more serious is any defect or any sin in him; here Peter was to be blamed, there was no doubt about it. Whatever people might say in regard of the apparent indiscretion of a younger man rebuking an older one, the matter was too serious to admit of anything else; it was a matter of the want of uprightness; for Peter at heart knew the truth and ultimately stood by it; as the sequel shows, he loved and valued Paul, but for the moment he came under the influence of others. The most spiritual of us is exposed to that, and there is nothing more subtle than influence of this kind coming from another. With the very best intent I just listen to a brother: why should I not believe what he says? Well, why should I, if it involves another brother? why should I, if it is a question of the truth? Even in Paul's own case, the Bereans, we are told, "searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so". So that the point is to be *sure* about things, not just to take them for granted; because one witness is not enough in any matter, it is in the mouth of two or three witnesses that every word is established. However distinguished a brother may be, his word is not enough if it involves another brother or brothers, and in this case it involved the truth, and so strong was the influence from Jerusalem that even Barnabas, Paul's fellow-worker among the gentiles, was carried away; it was a question of dissimulation.

The doctrine, of course, was the most serious thing, but think of such men coming under the influence of a vicious wind of dissimulation and carried away by it! That is all I have to say about that, it is only to bring out the truth that is in mind, namely the truth of uprightness, how it leads up to a moral victory, also a victory for the truth.

The facts show what one man can do even against odds. The combination against the apostle Paul was strong at that time, but eventually his faithfulness gained the day. How the apostle Peter came back to Paul is very beautiful; I suppose he never spoke so well about him as he did when he was about to put off his tabernacle. It is well for us who are older in the service to remember that the time is drawing nearer when we must put off our tabernacles, unless the Lord comes. It is well to have our eyes on the younger men, and not to discredit them in any way. If we are about to breathe our last we shall be glad surely to look around and see that the ground will be held. The best is said about the apostle Paul when Peter is about to put off his tabernacle, and he places his writings on the level of the Holy Scriptures; he could hardly honour him more. That suffices in regard of Peter. One would like to leave with the brethren, especially the young ones here, a right impression of the great apostle, and how the work of God brought out in him at the end perfect consonance with the testimony of the apostle Paul.

Now I go on to David to show how this matter of Jasher, of uprightness, appeared in him. I have read from a section in his history which was transitional, and it is these transitional periods that are most testing, for in regard of a brother today there may be still a question as to whether he is ready to come forward into prominence, and he is apt to take short cuts which will always be against him in time. The whole road to the desired result has to be travelled from this point of view; distinction in the service of God is reached by a road which has to be travelled. Not that this should ever be a goal in the eyes of a servant, but it is apt to be, in young men particularly, and in transitional periods, that is, when their position in the testimony is still uncertain. Things, in the government of God, have happened and may cause us elation, if they are in our favour; they may cause us to make unseemly remarks seeing that the circumstances may involve humiliation in others, disaster in others. Indeed, it may be in those who have served, but now have ceased to do so, and we are so likely, in these transitional periods, to make statements and take up attitudes that are unseemly, and indeed to overlook what the persons have been in the service of God; namely, that they have been really anointed. If a man has ever been anointed and served well, that is to be remembered and never to be forgotten whatever his subsequent history, whatever his end; what he has been as anointed of God can never be forgotten, nor will any one who is upright, whose name or composition is worthy of the book of Jasher, make little of one whom God has used.

This is how matters stand in the passages I have read. Saul had been slain on the mountains of Gilboa — one of the most sorrowful parts of Israel's history! How will David take the news? He is the ostensible king now, but then, you never can be sure in such circumstances; our calculations often fail us. Not that it could be so in this case, for David was king according to divine choice, but I am making a *present* application, for our calculations do not always mature. Now as the tidings come of Saul's disaster, David is rightly affected. I want every one here — including myself — to drink into this lesson how *rightly* affected he is. It meant a change for the better in his whole life, it meant unquestionably the kingdom for him; but he is not thinking of that, he is thinking of God's servant that had been. Think of such a man as Jonathan slain in his high places! "The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places". "Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant in their lives, Even in their death were not divided". In truth David must have had real enjoyment with these men in earlier days; we know he had with Jonathan — his love surpassed all human loves to him, and he associated him with his father. How could he be complacent in such circumstances? How could any true lover of Christ be complacent in such a disaster? For in truth the enemy has had a hand in it,

and it has brought a once-valued man, a once-distinguished man, once anointed with oil as king over God's people, into a disaster — slain by uncircumcised hands. The very messenger who brought the news has to die! Such is David's feeling, and he is a real man; no feigned feelings with David, he was genuine, he felt the thing, and hence this lament of his.

I speak thus, just to bring out what is becoming in us, as, it may be, on the road to distinction in the service of God, or, I should say, perhaps, more correctly, on the road to more usefulness — for that was exactly the case here — on the road to serving the people of God better than they had been served. So it may be that many of us are in such a transitional state of things, and the outlook is that the saints need help, they need leaders, they need service and rule. David is brought in to show his feelings here in song; "the song of the bow", I suppose, is the proper title of it — and all that accompanied it, both in this chapter and later, in regard to Ishbosheth and Abner. In these three cases what happened was in his favour, but his expressed feelings were genuine; he could not but feel that such things happened. If Satan has a hand in anything that happens to one of the saints, we cannot but feel it if we love God and love our brethren.

So we have this lamentation, and it is in poetic form, and that is a point I wish just to mention, because we have the thing put thus into the best form for us, in this song of the bow. The Authorised Version, as you will observe, has "the use of the bow", and no doubt David had that in mind, because Saul had fallen by the archers. It was no doubt a weapon, formed perhaps secretly, which gave them an advantage, I have no doubt it was a transitional period in the use of weapons. David's history shows that there was no lack of skill in him, and he certainly could not fail to excel in anything the Philistines might have. So this song had a known place in the annals of Israel, disclosing dexterity in the great warrior king, and not only the great warrior king, but "the sweet psalmist of Israel", the charming leader God had introduced. Surely every such production must be cherished in the hearts of all Israel.

So it is to "teach the children of Judah the song of the bow", and, according to the way it is translated in the best translation, we have the song of the bow in the words that follow right down to the end of the chapter. Let us look into it. It is not simply the *use* of the bow, it is really better to read it in the sense of the *song* of the bow, for the song of the bow will keep the thing in our minds, as the very weapon of warfare involved in sorrow. Paul speaks of the weapons of his warfare — they were spiritual, he says — and every spiritual item may be put into poetry. It is a question of uprightness, of how matters are in the warfare of God. Let us look into this book of Jasher and breathe the poetic

spirit of it. Let our spirits be affected by it, for it will enable us to discern whether, in war, we are using dissimulation as the enemy was using it in seeking to adversely influence the people of God in Paul's day; let everything be open. If we learn this song, I think it will be always a challenge, as to our methods and skill in spiritual warfare, for we are not to be behind in anything. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10: 4, 5). We must have these weapons.

Now I want to say a word briefly about Joshua. What I have said about David will help us as to influence with men. David speaks about one that ruleth among men, what he must be, and what I have been speaking of enters much into the kind of man that is to rule amongst men. He must be just, he must be upright, he must be as the dawn. In "the last words of David" he tells us what a man should be who rules amongst men, and in truth, it is a very important matter; for, after all, it is not a question of the service of any one of us, but what one *is* — personality is an immense thing. Gift is out of place in any who is out of accord with it in his own qualities and spirit. "The ruler among men shall be just, Ruling in the fear of God" (2 Samuel 23: 3). In 2 Samuel 3: 1 we are told that "David became continually stronger, and the house of Saul became continually weaker". It does not say the *house* of David grew stronger, it was David himself. He had to say, it is not so with my house, but as to himself, what a man he was! What a spirit he had as a ruler among men! So after all David's experiences, to which I have alluded, in relation to those men, all Israel came and made him king — all Israel, we are told earlier, loved David. So it is a question of what one is among men in his service, what influence one has, whether one leads the saints aright.

Now in this part of Joshua, it is not one's influence among men, but what influence I have up in *heaven*. You may think that a peculiar thing to say: but it is a fine thought, and there is not anyone of us, who *prays*, who has not some influence in heaven. You will notice what is said in the passage; it is not exactly a prayer, it is more like a familiar request — as of one having personal liberty with God. The Lord uses two words, as you will remember, in the New Testament, *begging* and *demanding*, the latter alluding to what He was entitled to, the former is simply supplication, begging things, asking for things in that sense. Now Joshua here, we are told, "spoke ... to Jehovah", as much as to say, Do this for me. In speaking thus, I am seeking simply to urge that the saints should get into the idea of their greatness in heaven — these qualities having developed, and hence to understand what liberty they may

have with God. David, as I was saying, developed the spirit of a man who should rule among men, but then, he was a man who went *up* too; he says, immediately after what we have been dwelling upon, Shall I go up? And God says, Yes, as much as to say, 'You are the kind of man that should go up'. "Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" Well, the upright man, the pure in heart, he is the man that can go up. So David goes up, Jehovah telling him where to go; he asks Him and Jehovah tells him — he went to Hebron and then to Jerusalem. Now, as I said, the point in our chapter in Joshua is what influence I have above. I believe it is commensurate with what influence I have below, that is, as I take on the heavenly character. If I have power with God, like Israel, I have power with men.

Now, with this in mind, I want just to follow out what this matter of uprightness means here, to show that it involves power with God; that is, I can say to Him, Such and such a thing is needed. God likes that in an upright man, a man who knows what is needed, whose boldness of access He would encourage. There are many short prayers in the Bible; long ones are rare. The word here was, "Then spoke Joshua to Jehovah in the day when Jehovah gave up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand still upon Gibeon; And thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon! And the sun stood still, and the moon remained where it was, until the nation had avenged themselves upon their enemies". The necessities of the case required this, it was an intelligent word; it was as if Joshua said to Jehovah, This is needed. You are doing a great service to us, You are giving victory over the Amorites; but I want to *complete* the matter. Unfinished matters are very frequent. An illustration of a finished matter is seen in 1 Samuel 7, where Samuel offers up a sucking lamb to Jehovah, a whole burnt-offering — beautiful thought! Christ dependent here in type — and whilst he did it, whilst the offering went on God thundered on the Philistines. You say that is enough — but it is not, the passage goes on to say, "the men of Israel went out" — they finished the matter; they "pursued the Philistines, and smote them, as far as below Beth-car".

Now, if we take the present dispensation; we say to the Lord, Come. Many of us may say it in the most sentimental way, without having *faith* about it, but then I am to consider what is in the mind of God about this dispensation. Is it to be finished? Do I want it to be finished? I may ask God to interfere with the powers that be; for if they go on as they are going on, and God does not interfere, we shall have the antichrist presently, we shall have the finish — but what do I say as to that? The Spirit is here, the assembly is here, and Scripture abounds with the idea of long-suffering, of patience, and that all the elect are to be saved. What do you think of that? Is the day to be lengthened

out? May be it is necessary for it to be lengthened out. God is pleased with a man who thinks like that, who says, It is needed that You should interfere with the powers that be. The first mention of these heavenly bodies in Scripture is that they were to rule — well, they are to rule, and God has set up rulers on earth and they are going forward, but the night of complete apostasy is coming very quickly if they have their way unhinderedly. Hence God may stay the current trend, and the upright man says, It is right that they should be stayed — God is pleased with that; He likes us to be in accord with the principle governing the dispensation — "the acceptable year of the Lord" — I want to be imbued with the spirit of it.

So Joshua spoke to Jehovah, and he spoke to the sun, and he spoke to the moon. Think of a man being able to do that; and then we have the poetic words in the sight of Israel: "Sun, stand still upon Gibeon; And thou moon, in the valley of Ajalon!" Is not such an exploit worthy of a place in the annals of the people of God? It is indeed. It is enshrined in the book of Jasher, and if, so to speak, I open that book, it challenges me. You will understand that I am speaking in a figurative way; this book is not extant now, but the thing it represents is, carried down in living power by the Spirit. It is a question of uprightness in the things of God, and what power the upright man has. He speaks to God, and then he speaks to the governing powers,

and they stop. May there not be an equally great result today in view of what I have been saying, as intelligent, upright men speak to God as to what — among the governing powers — may hinder the testimony of God going forward? I have not a doubt of this.

Then, as I said at the beginning, there is the collective idea in which all this culminates, namely, the saints viewed as Jeshurun. I need not add much to what I have said, but you can see that if each of us takes this in, in his local situation, we shall be upright with one another; not simply that we break bread together, and have a meeting room and set meetings, including all the meetings we have — these may proceed and yet we may not have Jeshurun. Jeshurun is a great collective thought involving delight to the heart of Christ, for I believe that is what is meant. It is to be reached in every company of saints represented here moving on these lines, moving with God. The Lord sees them together, "the heads of the people", the heads meaning those who have wisdom, who are there in the wisdom they have derived from God, or now, from Christ as Head; as such are available, there is control and leadership. Then "the tribes of Israel", meaning all those that are available to the Lord, set in relation to one another in love. The Lord says, in effect, that is delightful to Me, and He comes there. Moses, typical of Christ, was king in

Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together.

THE ANCIENT MOUNTAINS (JT 46)

Deuteronomy 33:15; Genesis 8:4 - 12; Genesis 22:14; Luke 9:27-31; Luke 9:34-36 (to "found alone")

Brethren taught of God, as through grace most of us are, and lovers of Christ, will feel at home in being directed to the person of Joseph, typical as he is in such a touching manner of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God, both in Jacob and Moses, seems Himself to be stimulated as He touches the person of Joseph, of him who, it is said, was separated from his brethren. His brethren did not miss him, but he missed them; and so it is that if there is one here separated by his own will from Christ, He misses you, although you may not miss Him. His voice is to be heard at the present time seeking His brethren. Whatever the character of spiritual ministry, it always conveys the voice of Christ, and the suggestion of Joseph brings out the thought of the brethren, that Christ was separated from them, that is, His brethren among the Jews. He is compensated, but He feels the separation.

Well now, the verse I read is brief, and it refers to one character of the blessing of Joseph, that is, "the best things of the ancient mountains", and "the precious things of the everlasting hills". His blessing, I need not say, is not confined to himself, it is shared with his own, as it says here, "the myriads of Ephraim" and "the thousands of Manasseh". We share with Christ, and He shares with us, nor would one who loves Him care to share anything save as it is shared with Him. He appeals to one who loved Him saying, "Unless I wash thee, thou hast not part with me" (John 13:8). A lover of Christ cannot bear that, he wishes to share with Christ, and the Lord shares wonderful things with us: "the glory", He says to His Father, "which thou hast given me I have given them" (John 17:22). Think of that! How great are the things He shares with us! And so, in what I have to say, I have the saints more in mind than Christ in this sense: that is, how we come into these blessings, whether we have come into them, and if not, why not? And then, if possible, to show how we come into them.

I have selected Genesis as obviously the section of Scripture in which we should rightly look for the ancient mountains. Ararat is the first one mentioned, indeed, the idea of mountains only comes in with this section, and Ararat is the first specific mountain mentioned — it is a range, as is usual. Sinai was the mount of God; it was a range, too. So here we have, as you will observe, "the mountains of Ararat", and from the verse in Deuteronomy we are entitled, and I believe obligated by the Spirit, to dwell on the facts recorded as to these mountains. The first point to be noted is that the ark

rested there. Many believers know little or nothing about rest; but the idea has a great place in Scripture, far more than could be noted now in our short time.

What is in view here is Christ in type, reaching, through death, a point of rest. That is one of the "best" things that one can mention, one of the chief themes of the gospel, that Christ as Man, having come in here to a world of death, has gone through death and reached a resting-place — solid ground for faith. We are told by Peter that "God ... raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Peter 1:21). As Man, He is on solid ground, making a way for us. It is one of the chief themes of the gospel; there could be no gospel without it; everyone of us doubtless knows that in his own soul, but it is well to be reminded of it. "The ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat" — a great point reached in this great type.

But then, there is much more in the way of adjustment, and it is in this adjustment that perhaps help is needed, for, after all, the top of Ararat in itself would not do for the propagation of a new race; we need the land, the fruitful land, below. And so we find forty days mentioned — a well-known period of experience; and then it says, "Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. And he sent out the raven, which went forth going to and fro, until the waters were dried from the earth". Now this is an experience: the Spirit of God would never record this did it not have some antitype in the believer's history; for that, we may be sure, is what it is. In the Old Testament there is one glory after another appearing, either of Christ or of the work of the Spirit in our souls. "My Father worketh hitherto", said the Lord (John 5:17); and the Scriptures abound with the glory shining out through the work of God, whether in the death and resurrection of Christ, as I have been saying, or in the saints — whether it is a question of what is above or what is below. Then we must remember our state is in mind; the significance of the ark and its resting-place is one thing, and the discovery as to whether the waters are dried up is another, for we cannot subsist upon the tops of mountains. You will understand me — I mean that from the point of view of the propagation of a race, another world, we must have the land.

So after forty days, which has its own meaning, Noah opened the window of the ark and sent out a raven, a carnivorous bird. As a believer apprehends Christ above and gets peace in a sense, this state below, which the raven here points to, is often very uncertain. The dove is another thought — delightful in contrast: but, as I hope to show, the raven and the dove go together in the believer's experience. It is not that the raven in itself is to be abominated, it fits here and enters into the divine work in the believer; it goes to and fro, it is

restless, but it does not return to Noah, it can get along without him and without the ark. In a literal sense, what did it matter if the raven perished? It is the typical meaning we have to see, and that God would nourish us with. The raven continued "going to and fro" until the waters were dried up, we are told: whether Noah found him alive or not afterwards, we do not know — the fact is just given by the Spirit of God that he does continue. He can live on other things, such as, alas, were available in the dead creatures that were there as a result of the flood. The raven, however, is not to be abominated, for God feeds him, and he can be turned into a servant of God, too; he can feed us, as he did Elijah. But he is not a dove, there is no affection suggested, and so no link between him and Noah; in truth, it refers to the fleshly condition that often ensues when light comes into a man's soul, light as to Christ risen and glorified. There is no knowledge of the state in which we are, and this raven condition creates uncertainty and often sorrowful eating of food unlawful. Young people may go after this unlawful food — terrible stuff that is dealt out in books and novels and magazines — and the result is, the work of God does not progress. Sorrowful though the experience is, dishonouring even to God, there is nevertheless education in it; so that the dove is also sent out, referring to the *concurrent* work of the Spirit of God in our souls.

I cannot dwell at length on this remarkable picture, but it is one of the best things of the ancient mountains. Young people need to note it, to read it carefully, because it contemplates an end reached, not in the raven, but in the dove; that is the fruit of the Spirit, and once that is reached, solid rock has been reached in the soul of the believer — that is, he no longer sows to the flesh, but to the Spirit: "the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit life and peace". The *state* of the believer thus corresponds with the resting of the ark on the top of the mountains: the latter is Romans 4:25, the former Romans 8:6. And now we have means for the propagation of a new order of things in the soul of one man or woman, or in any number — in the whole race of men in result in the millennium. So the dove is sent out and finds no rest for the sole of its foot, that is, the condition is *not settled*.

The Spirit strives with young believers like that — ready to be there; but the dove finds no rest for the sole of her foot and returns, not to the ark simply, but to Noah, for there is a personal link with him: "he put forth his hand, and took her, and brought her to him into the ark". There is a beautiful personal touch and link there to be understood by the believer. Then he sent her out again; there are seven days, and other seven days, and so on. Let us look into our histories, dear brethren: this refers to them, these spiritual periods we have to go through in order to reach solid rock spiritually; no longer this undulating condition, misery today and joy tomorrow, and so on; but a steady

peace — "The mind of the Spirit is life and peace" — not simply peace with God, as in Romans 5, but *life and peace*, as in Romans 8. If you look through Romans 8 you will be impressed, if you have not already been, with the allusions to the Spirit of God, the varied functions and services performed by Him in the believer's soul, so that we are in conscious relationship with God as children and as sons. We are so free of this uncertainty inwardly that the Spirit of God can actually witness to our spirits that we are children of God — a most comforting and blessed thought: the witness of the Spirit within.

So we read that Noah "waited yet other seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. And the dove came to him at eventide; and behold, in her beak was an olive-leaf plucked off". Now, if I apply this as I have been applying it, it is the *fruit of the Spirit* in the christian; that is, it is an olive-leaf *plucked off*, not a floating one. An undelivered christian might come to this room and hear something good and rejoice in it, and a little while after lose the joy he had. Now that means it has not *grown in himself*, it was the outcome of what another said, although good so far; but this leaf was plucked off, it was *growing*: that is to say, the flood had not destroyed life, at least in the olive, a type of the Spirit. The epistle to the Romans shows that the incoming of death in the soul is educational and does not destroy what is of God — presently you get a real growth. There are nine branches spoken of in Galatians 5:22,23; this is just a leaf, but with evidence that it was connected with a tree; it was not withered up, it was growing when the dove plucked it off; it is fruit for God, so to speak.

Then we find that "Noah knew that the waters had become low on the earth", that is how we know where the soul is. This is a great matter, this inward thing; we arrive at solid ground and we know where we are, and we have reached continuous joy — a very blessed state to reach. So that the exhortation comes: "Rejoice evermore" — that is the word! Why should it be otherwise? "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, ..." we are told; love and joy are the fruits first mentioned. Now when that point is reached there is no more returning of the dove; she has a wide field now to go on with, the great field of God's work in man, for in truth, "that world, and the resurrection" (Luke 20:35) which the Lord speaks of is begun already. It begins in the saints, and so is applicable to every one of us as this fruit is reached, the actual fruit of the Spirit; then the Holy Spirit is at liberty to move on; the dove does not return any more to Noah. What a field opens up as the waters are dried up! Now death is understood to have been annulled — Christ "has annulled death, and brought to light life and incorruptibility by the glad tidings" (2 Timothy 1:10). So that one now has entered on a world of life, death is no longer in the way. Viewed as typical, what we have here is a new world opened up for

the believer, involving the Spirit operating in him. A great domain opens up through the death and resurrection of Christ and the solid work of the Spirit in the believer, so that God proceeds with what He has in mind. Much more could be said of what follows in the chapter, but I go on now to chapter 22.

We have spoken of the resurrection of Christ in the ark as a type in chapter 8, but we have it in a fuller way here; it is now in a person, that is, Isaac. There is not much time to dwell on these precious things, but I have selected them as the chief things of the ancient mountains; but there are other things. The margin, I believe, reads as to this word 'chief', 'head'; it is leading, outstanding things. The next thing is Christ in heavenly glory, a heavenly Christ in view of a heavenly testimony now; not simply a universal one, as in Noah. Noah is head of the world as coming through death, inaugurating a new order of things, but in Isaac it is a heavenly order of things that is in mind. It is in connection with him that we first get speaking from heaven in Scripture. There is much to speak about now up there. The angel of Jehovah called from the heavens twice: the reference is to Isaac, that is, Christ as the heavenly Man. This chapter is an advance on what I have been speaking of. I read verse 14 because it contemplates provision on a mountain: "On the mount of Jehovah will be provided". That is a great principle, introduced here and continued down to the present time; indeed, it is said here "to this day". It is a principle introduced which continues, in fact it has a greater place in Exodus than here — not the same mountain, of course, but the same principle, for the mount of Jehovah was that to which Israel made its way, and before which it encamped. Chapter 19:2 says, "Israel encamped there before the mountain", as if they had come to the great resources of God, and they did, too: it is called the "mountain of Jehovah". So this is a principle that we may have recourse to, especially in critical times, and in assembly history the word 'crisis' is written in large letters. When we reach a point requiring the keenest discernment and judgment, and with the possibility of conflict and loss of brethren, nothing is more important than to get the idea of the mountain and that there are resources; we are never driven to the wall. In the history of the assembly normally, the saints are never driven to the wall, however bad conditions may be in any given place. "On the mount of Jehovah will be provided", is a great abiding thought for all time.

What is particularly now the occasion of these crises is heavenly truth, the truth of Christ in heaven, and that the assembly is heavenly: that the service of God is heavenly and that the saints themselves are heavenly, and this is not merely on the first day of the week, but every day of the week — for it is on the corners of the garments the tassel is to be (Numbers 15). When we turn from the first day to the second day, which may mean a test, there is means

to carry us through so that we maintain the heavenly colour. Now that is the point, so that we have here the word to Abraham out of heaven the second time: it is out of heaven, it is a heavenly matter. Even Isaac has to go into death: Christ typically. This scripture shows us that, not only the raven character in ourselves has to go, as in Romans 7 and 8, but that Christ must die, as in His condition in flesh and blood here on earth. That condition was not what the counsels of God required; for that He must have Christ in another condition. Not, of course, that it was obligatory on Christ to die; no one could take His life from Him, He was personally immune from death; but, taking on a character of life which He intended to lay down, and which the will of God required should be laid down sacrificially, He "died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3). The order of the life of Jesus here on earth was of a character of its own, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26). Still, it was to be laid down, He could die, He could lay it down, and He did lay it down — the glory of God in the accomplishment of redemption required it. As seen in the type (Exodus 21), He could go out free, but love led Him to die; and now He is in the glorious condition of manhood answering to the eternal counsels of God.

It will be noticed that although much is made in this narrative about Abraham and his beloved son, there is nothing said of Isaac returning to Beer-sheba with Abraham. What holy converse Abraham and Isaac had. But as to the return journey, there is not a word about Isaac, only about Abraham and his young men. That is to say, Isaac is in heaven, as it were, it is a heavenly position; and hence the next chapter tells us Sarah dies; but before we are told of Sarah's death we are told of Rebekah, the heavenly bride. These wonderful thoughts of God, dear brethren, we must get into our souls; that is what the Scriptures and spiritual ministry are for, to get the thoughts of God into our souls. So the thought of the heavenly bride is here, but where is the Bridegroom? He is above, He belongs to heaven. You can understand that the bride involves Christ in heaven and the Holy Spirit down here, so that we have Rebekah, we have the assembly. It is a heavenly product, kindred to Christ, of His own family. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24) — this specially marks the assembly. We have the heavenly family of Rebekah, as related to that of Isaac, noted at the end of this chapter; and then the death of Sarah, and then Rebekah brought to Isaac. It is all so rich and full, dear brethren, that it certainly ought to have an entrance into our souls. Besides, it alludes to ourselves — I mean all the saints in this dispensation; that is what is in mind in Rebekah. As connected with "the mount of Jehovah" as a place of provision,

what I have been calling your attention to in Genesis 22 is surely one of the chief things of the ancient mountains.

Now I go on to the New Testament, because it looks on to what is coming — the lasting hills. I suppose mount Zion might be taken to enlarge the subject as in the New Testament carried down from the Old. We have come to it, we have come to mount Zion, we are told, so that we should understand it and see how it represents the sovereign thoughts of God as to place, "Here will I dwell", God says, "for I have desired it" (Psalm 132:14). It is a place of love; He "loves the gates of Zion", too, "more than all the dwellings of Jacob" (Psalm 87:2), that is to say, the saints viewed in that light in the assembly. Jesus came to where the saints, the disciples, were; as we love the place where He is, so He loves the very spot where His loved ones are. As God regards Zion and His people brought to it, what a holy scene it is, at least in type! Three times every year the males of Israel wended their way to Jerusalem where Jehovah had placed His name, where He would come in among His people. "There I will come to you", He says, "there I will bless you". What seasons they were! What corresponds to them today in the way of holy convocations of the saints are most pleasing to God — enjoyable and profitable to the saints also, so that one might speak of Zion as perhaps carrying the thought of the lasting hills.

I refer to the mount of transfiguration as giving a more concrete idea of the precious things of the lasting hills. We do well to notice these words: the vocabulary used in Deuteronomy 33 and in Genesis 49 is very rich. It is the blessed Spirit of God, through chosen vessels, speaking about the saints. There is nothing one feels so poor in as ability to speak about the saints, to speak *rightly* about the saints. We speak about God and Christ, you might say, freely; the brethren are able to do that; but then, what about being able to look at the *saints* rightly and to speak rightly about them? That is what we see in Moses, the man of God in this chapter. In Genesis 49:2 Jacob calls himself, "Israel your father", a man who can bless the tribes in spite of the terrible incongruities he noticed in them, for he lays bare the very worst things in the history of the tribes; yet they are all blessed, every tribe has its blessing and each gets it. These two chapters are of extreme importance as to our way of thinking of the saints and speaking of them. Peter speaks of precious things, "precious" is one of his choice words. In his second epistle he tells us something of the precious things of the lasting hills. "For we have not made known to you", he says, "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, following cleverly imagined fables, but having been eye-witnesses of *his* majesty. 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" (2 Peter 1:16 - 18). He, and James, and John were eye-witnesses of the precious things of the lasting hills. Think of what they heard! Could anything be more precious than that wonderful testimony — what transpired on that mount, witnessed by these three chosen men who were with Jesus on that great and holy occasion?

Did time admit, one would like to elaborate on the four accounts we have: Matthew gives one, Mark gives another, Peter gives another, and Luke gives another. Peter interweaves this precious fruit of the lasting hills into his second pastoral letter, that we should have it in our hearts. Matthew 16:28 is "the Son of man coming in his kingdom", it is a *personal* matter, it is a question of the royal pomp and glory of the Son of man as He comes. Surely that is an appeal to our hearts! We shall see that, and be with Him too, in that glorious display. Mark is "the kingdom of God come in power". We see in pageantry the royal family in their glory; then we may see a great display of the army and navy — that is the kingdom in *power*.

Then Luke says simply, "The kingdom of God". The Lord says, "there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God". That is, it is a question of what is moral, what shines out in the meekness and gentleness of Christ, in Himself and in His people, in the ministers and in the saints as reflecting what is above. So we find a praying Man in Luke — in a moral sense, what a consideration! Each of us can be that. I can be a praying man, and that is what Luke presents. He presents Christ many times as praying, and on the mount particularly. He went *up* to pray, "and as he prayed the fashion of his countenance became different", that is to say, He was a different Man, not that He could be anything but Himself, but it is Pattern we get here, dear brethren, and how much we need to be changed if we are to be reflecting the kingdom of God! If I am a praying man, how different from ordinary men I shall be! — before starting out in the morning to the office, having the word of God and prayer in my house — very important! "As he prayed the fashion of his countenance became different and his raiment white and effulgent". That is moral glory, as applying to the kingdom of God, for the kingdom of God is what is down here in testimony. We are told expressly that it "is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). It is the testimony of God here below that is intended, as the Lord Himself said, "the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:21); that is, it is *among men*. Well, how is it in the midst of men now save as the saints are it? Christ is in heaven; the Holy Spirit being here, Christ is here kingdom-wise, and Luke presents that side; and I

apprehend it is one of the most precious things of the lasting hills that the saints are here representative of God in His kingdom.

So it is said there are two men talking with the Lord; the other evangelists say, "Moses" and "Elias", to occupy us with the persons expressly, but Luke makes the point that they are *men*, and that is the idea. However great I may be in ministry or ancestry or wealth, it is a question of my being a man according to Christ. "Quit yourselves like men" (1 Corinthians 16:13) — men in this way, men that can pray, men that can be approached, men that are not too haughty in their offices to be approached by their employees, and the like. Two men were speaking with Him. A man is approachable if he is like Christ; so the kingdom of God is the spirit in which we are here like Jesus. I am reflecting Him, that Man praying up there; and so it was with Moses and Elias. They are talking with Jesus and about His death at Jerusalem, not about things in heaven, but about things down here. It is important we should tell people that Jesus died and that He died at Jerusalem. The word is "exodus", it is the way He went out of this world, through a gibbet: it was ignominious. Moses would understand, he had to do with the sacrifices, all pointing to this one great event, which was now the theme on this mount. So, dear brethren, it should in one way or another be the theme of our conversation whatever time of the day or week it is; it is a question of that, of speaking about the departure of Christ from this world. He was a martyr, of course, but He died for us. "God is one, and the mediator of God and men one, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:5). And these two men were talking about that. The voice from heaven out of the cloud announced, "This is my beloved Son: hear him". One point in Luke is to hear this One, to hear Jesus. Otherwise we shall not reflect the kingdom of God, which is a moral thought, as I said, and one has to be born again even to see it; born of water and of the Spirit to enter into it. So it is a moral question and has to be understood, but it is one of the most precious things of the lasting hills.

THE MAN OF GOD (JT 47)

2 Timothy 3: 17; Deuteronomy 33: 1; 1 Kings 17: 24; 2 Kings 4: 8,9; Nehemiah 12: 24

I have in mind to present the idea of a man of God in its application to the present time. If there are not those who may be so designated, there should be; it should be the aspiration of all, especially those who serve amongst the saints in a prominent way, and in view of our own times it is significant that Timotheus, as far as I know, is the only one so designated in the New Testament. His being a young man brings the matter within the range of all of us, even the youngest; it is something to be attained, and this is not by mere ability. Divinely given ability is necessary for the service of God, but it does not alone suffice for the filling out of the thought of the man of God, one who, as I hope to show from the examples in the scriptures read in the Old Testament, represents God and stands for all that is of God. That Timotheus is the only one mentioned in this way does not imply that he is the only one that could be so designated in the New Testament. It is needless to say that the writer of the epistle was one, and many others.

In 2 Timothy the title is not formally applied to Timotheus, as it is in the first epistle, but appears in this second epistle evidently in view of the last times when men of God are so needed; and in this respect it is remarkable that the preceding verse calls attention to the inspiration of Scripture: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" 2 Timothy 3: 16,17. It is by no means implied that the Scriptures are not for other purposes than for use by the man of God. The Scriptures are in themselves a great testimony to God; evidently carefully thought of beforehand, although many centuries elapsed in the history of humanity and of God's testimony before any Scriptures were written, but being written by the power of the Spirit, they embrace all that is necessary for the man of God to know, and for all saints to know. The book of Genesis is remarkably concise and yet comprehensive. Satan knows that, and that it lays the foundation for all that should follow, hence his great effort to discredit that book, as indeed all the books of the Pentateuch. One of the chief features of modern opposition to the truth is seen in the attack on the book of Genesis. There is negative guidance in that, for Satan selects what is worthy of attack, what is needful to get out of the way to defeat the purpose of God; and so the Spirit of God has graciously furnished remarkable expositions of the book of Genesis, as well as the other books of the Pentateuch, which all christians should read as entering into this

verse, if they are to be "perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" 2 Timothy 3: 17.

The Lord Himself stresses the books of Moses, placing them alongside His own words, indeed He says: "if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" John 5: 47 — remarkable grace and wisdom to stress thus the value of the Pentateuch. He began there in speaking on another occasion, not to a large congregation, but to two persons, and they erring christians. Christendom is full, alas! of erring christians, persons who have turned aside. Not that I am accusing any in particular, but it is a fact, and hence the example set by the Lord is to be observed: "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24: 27), showing that erring christians need to have the Scriptures not only read, but expounded. Exegetical works of great value on these books are current, and should be attended to if we are to be throughly furnished unto every good work. Expositions are of great importance, not that christians should depend wholly on them, they should read the Scriptures in dependence on the Holy Spirit. The Lord said, "How readest thou?" Luke 10: 26 to one man, and that is a good question for us all. If you read them aright you will be supported in them, they even preach the gospel. An unconverted man would do well to read them, for the Scriptures preached the gospel to Abraham, we are told, and here it is said to Timotheus: "from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus". 2 Timothy 3: 15. They are able to do that.

The apostle says elsewhere, "the Lord will give thee understanding" 2 Timothy 2: 7; He is available to us. The Spirit too, guides us into all the truth. We are wonderfully furnished and no one who is ignorant is excusable. In fact, where people are ignorant and have no exercise the word might apply; "let him be ignorant", 1 Corinthians 14: 38. Very solemn! So we are to read the Scriptures. The Lord Himself says, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me", John 5: 39. They are full of holy matter, the most engrossing matter for the renewed heart, able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. The eunuch is a good example; he says to Philip, "How can I [understand], except some man should guide me?" Acts 8:31. It is well to have the sense that you need to be shown. The eunuch was reading, but he admitted he was not getting help, and if not getting help in reading Scripture it is wise to ask; I would advise each to do so, to ask the person most likely to answer helpfully. We read of the Lord Himself in the temple hearing and asking questions. I am not going to say He needed to ask questions, as we do, but that is what He did, and

then His understanding and answers! It is wise, as I said, to ask questions, but be sure of the person of whom you ask. Philip was a good person of whom to ask questions about the Scriptures; he was a man amenable to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a safe man, not a man who trusted his own mind. An angel directs Philip to go down to the desert, and the Spirit says, "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot" Acts 8: 29, and he did. He was a man under the guidance of the Spirit, and Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch; so it is not only the understanding of the Scriptures that is needed, but the knowledge of Jesus, for He is the subject and substance of all Scripture.

Moses is, I think, the first man called a man of God. I begin with him. What is in mind is to point out the features of the man of God. They are not all in one man — they are all in Jesus, every one of them, and Nicodemus is a good example for us as to discernment of these features. He says, "we know that thou art a teacher come from God" John 3: 2. That is the idea — we know. There is guidance in that statement; he not only says that, but gives his reasons, "for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" John 3: 2. You may be sure if there are these marks in any one, you can designate him a man of God. Nicodemus would regard Jesus as pre-eminently what is indicated in the thought of a man of God, but he did not go very far, and there are many like him today. He was a questioner; he knew that Jesus was come from God, basing it on signs, but seemed to fail in not allowing light to flood his soul, although clearly he was a subject of the work of God. The true light is shining there before him, and yet he kept on questioning, and it would appear there was nothing definite reached in his soul at first. There are many like that, they come to meetings, and hear something and speak well of it, but the soul lacks light, the soul fails to take in the light that is shining, so that the person remains where he was — a member of the Jewish council. If John did not mention him we should have known nothing of him. John, representing love, mentions the least evidence of God's work; he mentions Nicodemus three times, and finally as identified with Christ as dead, which is important. It is a pity he remained so long unidentified with a living Christ while He was yet available to him. Still Nicodemus recognised that Jesus was from God, and the Lord unfolded to him the truth as to new birth.

Jesus, the Word become flesh, represents every trait of the man of God; He is infinitely more than any of us. Moses beforehand exhibited some of these traits; he was near enough to Jesus in character to be His companion in glory. What a great end is before us! "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory", Colossians 3: 4. We cannot afford to be marked by discrepancies from what Jesus is if we are to appear with Him in

glory. Moses, too, appeared in glory, he and Elijah; we can see how he is honoured; he speaks well of the people of God; that is a point in this chapter. It is remarkable that he is called a man of God here; he is called also a man of God as praying, the prayer of Moses, the man of God (Psalm 90). He is also called a man of God elsewhere, but he appears here for the first time as a man of God. The idea is cumulative; he did not just become one because he wrote this book of Deuteronomy, or this one chapter, but it is stated at the outset as if the Spirit of God would say, This is one of the most beautiful traits of the man of God that he can speak so well of the Lord's people — he blesses them. He is not a characteristic critic of the people of God, not that they did not deserve to be criticised to themselves; but he is king in Jeshurun, that is, among people who are "upright", in this chapter.

Every upright person in that day would regard Moses as a man of God. He speaks well of the people of God; he could speak ill of them, too, and we are to be warned by that, such a great man calling the people of God rebels, but it was not characteristic of him. This chapter is characteristic of him, he loved the people as Jehovah did. Of Jehovah he said, "Yea, he loved the people" Deuteronomy 33: 3. Moses loved the people too; the people he had known in their contrariety for forty years. Israel sinned from the time Moses knew them. The book of Ezekiel says they sinned in Egypt, sinned in the wilderness, sinned in the land, sinned in captivity; it is one history of sin. There were good features, but the general thought is continuous sin. There is not much in such conditions to draw out affection, yet it is after forty years with them that Moses speaks so well of the people (Deuteronomy 33).

Elijah is the next example. He accepted responsibility, took to heart personally the calamity in others. The son of the mistress of the house died, and Elijah made it his matter. God has great respect for men and women who identify themselves with the calamity in others. Notice what Elijah did. "And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed", 1 Kings 17: 19. Elijah appeared in glory on the mount of transfiguration talking with Jesus, and what I am speaking of now entered into that, it is indicative of how God honours faithfulness in His servants; and He honours what is of Himself.

Elijah takes the child out of the mother's bosom; spiritually that was the real difficulty — the natural being usually the source of all troubles amongst the saints. He laid the child on his own bed, he took on the calamity as before God, as the passage goes on to say, "And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three

times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again" 1 Kings 17: 20,21. What a beautiful complete identification with the child, with the calamity! And then the prayer, acknowledging he has no strength in himself to do anything. Power is in God, the God who raises the dead, as Paul said. That is a man of God; for he is acting for God, for the widow,

for the boy. Let us look at this feature in a man of God, and learn to accept as our own the calamities of the people of God, and bring God into the matter. I may share in a calamity and not help much in it, but if I bring. God into the matter it is a great deal. A man of God does that. "And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth" 1 Kings 17: 22 - 24. He is discerned to be a man of God. It is not put just that way as to Moses. The Spirit of God calls him a man of God, but here the beneficiary of the man of God calls him that; that is, the saints come to know by what a man does and is, that he is a man of God. What greater renown can one have? Not that you are aiming at that. It is what God is in His work, in His purpose, that such a man has before him. Still, the incidental result is great, and here the woman who got the benefit says, He is a man of God. The representation of God becomes fixed in people's minds in this way.

The third example is Elisha. What is to be observed here is not a widow, but a great woman, not great as in mere human parlance, but great in a true sense. Spiritually speaking she is the continuation of the widow who paid her debts from the proceeds of the oil and lived on the rest. The widow represents a believer living on the Spirit, the Spirit is life rightly understood, and makes us great in a moral sense, so that we are capable of seeing what is of God. It is a very great comfort that there are people in this world who can discern what is of God, and persons that are of God. The widow of Zarephath discerned by a signal miracle, not only that Elijah was a man of God, but that the word in his mouth was truth. Here we have a great woman,

and such a person is attested as having spiritual discernment. Many are regarded as great, but have they spiritual discernment? This woman's estimate of Elisha was not based on his miracles. Elisha had been passing by her house: "And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually" 2 Kings 4: 8,9. "An holy man of

God", a new term in our subject, one that ought to affect us all, because holiness is very scarce. Righteousness is scarce, but holiness is more so. Elisha is designated by her "an holy man of God". One would covet to be known in that character. Moses is not said to be that, nor Elijah. Elisha is called it by this woman. Is her judgment right? That is to be considered. Is she affected merely by the presence of the man, such a great man, a man of great repute? That would be a poor thing. Men of repute are in demand. Is this woman just making much of a distinguished man? Evidently he is not affecting her naturally, she calls him *holy*, and "she constrained him to eat bread" 2 Kings 4: 8. That is, she is hospitable. To eat bread, not simply to spend an evening with them. The social side amongst us is to be watched; she had not that in mind. A man of reputation of this kind is sought after, and even for evening occasions. All no doubt may be well if under control, but all she constrained him to do was to eat bread. He needed support and she ministered support, a very great matter in the service of God. "And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread" 2 Kings 4: 8. He did not go beyond that.

I speak of this, because of the importance of limiting ourselves in the service of God; not allowing the social side of things to influence us; it would surely tend to damage. He turned in to eat bread; he did not go further than that, he is a man of God. And then she called her husband into the matter, very important in these cases. She was evidently greater morally than her husband, which is humbling. She brought him into the matter and says to him, "Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God" 2 Kings 4: 9. She evidently perceived it by his deportment as passing by her house. He came in according to her constraint to eat bread, and did not go beyond that. Elisha was a *working* man, as every professed servant ought to be. Not that the Lord does not make allowance for the need of rest; He does. He said to His disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while", Mark 6: 31. He knows exactly what the strain of service is, and those served ought to take notice of this in regard of those who serve. It does not say that Elisha rested in this house, he just went in to eat bread.

Now she has a further thought — hospitality in a fuller way. He is a safe man, one to be desired and trusted in the house, so she proposes that a little chamber should be made; it would be no social matter. You understand I am speaking in the spirit of things, not in the letter, for we have affections, and these affections in a spiritual way ought to have play, but here the thought was isolation, not exactly to bring him into the family. "Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us,

that he shall turn in thither" 2 Kings 4: 10. Servants are very glad often to get that little chamber, and not to have any part in the social side of the household. She had right thoughts, she was a great woman, a remarkable woman. How touching it is that he passed by *continually*! Where was he going? The Lord regards His servants as those who have to go out and journey; it is a great privilege to do it; but He says of each, "he shall go no more at all out" Revelation 3: 12. That is indeed to the overcomer in Philadelphia, in our own time; rest for ever is in view; so that, as Paul said, no servant should be lazily a charge to anybody. The time of rest is coming, "he shall go no more at all out". This kind of hospitality brings about a living condition, results in better conditions in the locality wherever it is found. How much one sister can contribute to the living conditions in a locality! So that the outcome of this is life — a son, a great increase in the truth. I mention that as an inducement for this kind of greatness to be developed in regard to the service of God.

Finally, coming to David in Nehemiah, the point as regards him is an entirely different phase of the matter. It is a question now of the service of God in song. This has come up lately, and the Spirit of God seems to stress it, how a man who is marked by care and consideration for God in these things is a man of God. So we have in the verse read: "And the chief of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren over against them, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, ward over against ward" Nehemiah 12: 24. "The commandment", it is no optional matter, no question with him of learning to sing a few hymns, very often for personal enjoyment, the Lord with us doubtless, for we are to sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord, but David commands it here, it is an imperative matter, and that is a word for the present time. The service of God is imperative. God would call us all into it, and so we have here "according to the commandment of David the man of God" Nehemiah 12: 24. It is in connection with this that he is called a man of God, not as a military man or as a ruler; he is not called a man of God in these connections, but as promoting the service of God. How important this is, and God would lay it upon us, and so we find a further word in verse 36 in connection with the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem. It says: "with the musical instruments of David the man of God" Nehemiah 12: 36. We are told about the musical instruments earlier, but David is not said to be a man of God there, the Spirit of God here crediting him with this remarkable thought, he is a man of God in relation to musical instruments and in relation to the service of God generally. He commanded the service and prepared the musical instruments.

ADMINISTRATION (5) (JT 59)

Exodus 28: 1 - 26; Exodus 25:1 - 9; Deuteronomy 33: 1 - 5; Deuteronomy 34: 1 - 12

JT In further consideration of the subject of administration we should look at Moses as administering the law, his building of the tabernacle, his blessing of the tribes, and, finally, what may be called the eulogy of Moses by the Spirit in the last chapter of Deuteronomy. Reference was made at our previous reading to Numbers 12, and it was suggested that something further might be said as to it. It belongs to the section in our subject that is personal. "The man Moses" comes before us and this brings up the whole question of manhood, for he was a type of Christ. Moses, like David, was, in measure, a man after God's own heart who did all His will. And we are reminded by the facts recorded that he was envied, which is a common thing where a man is being used of God. The instruction for those of us who are in the service in any way would be that we should follow the example of Moses, who was meek and lowly, reminding us of the Lord Jesus who said, "Come to me, all ye who labour and are burdened, and *I* will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls", (Matthew 11:28,29). So that an administrator in the things of God has in Moses an example that points to the Lord Jesus, as in all such persons. Every one of them converges on the Lord Jesus.

JAP In Hebrews 3 we have Moses as faithful in all God's house, the reference being to Numbers 12.

JT Moses is brought in there by way of contrast. He was a servant in God's house but Christ is seen as *Son* over God's house. I think that is the distinction that should be made on that point, because Hebrews is contrast, even if it be Moses. It alludes, as you say, to this chapter of Numbers, which brings out the character of the man and how great he was as to his office, so that no prophet compared with him. He beheld the form of Jehovah. Jehovah says, "the form of Jehovah doth he behold", (Numbers 12:8). This enlarges on what we had as to Moses being constituted God to Pharaoh. It brings out how personally qualified he was as a man.

JTJr Does meekness need to be understood also in relation to what is said of him as going out from Pharaoh in a glowing anger?

JT It reminds you a little of the expression 'the wrath of the Lamb' in Revelation. This is a remarkable phrase, because the idea of a lamb is not wrath, it is meekness. But what need there is for wrath in the book of

Revelation, for the Lord will be stirred up as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and His wrath comes!

AMacd Does that fit in with the Lord's entry into Jerusalem, meek, and mounted upon an ass, and then His entry into the temple and His zeal for Jehovah there?

JT Yes; at that time He made a scourge of cords and cast all the sellers of oxen and sheep and doves and the money changers out of the temple, showing how the Lord can turn from meekness to wrath. Any one of us who is in the service ought to learn to turn to indignation if necessary. If there is some conduct that is obnoxious to heaven, we should be indignant, as the apostle says to the Corinthians, "but what vengeance ...", (2 Corinthians 7:11). He speaks of their vengeance in executing judgment on the incestuous man; and yet that man was restored, showing how wrath in that sense is essential and useful in bringing about repentance.

RH Would shepherding with an iron rod be a similar idea?

JT Just so.

LVD God speaks of Moses as being faithful in all His house. Both qualities would come in, meekness, and indignation to those ignoring the rights of God.

JT So Moses says, "He that is for Jehovah, let him come to me. And all the sons of Levi gathered to him", (Exodus 32:26). Then there was a heavy slaughter. That conveys the idea. He was faithful in all God's house, even to severity.

RH God is prepared to defend a meek man.

JT Is it not comforting that God defends a man who is like Himself, who corresponds to Christ?

AR This chapter is a warning to all of us as to how we speak about the Lord's servants.

JT Just so.

FHL Meekness is one of the great features of the kingdom, according to Matthew. The Lord was operating in those qualified to inherit the earth.

JT And it is in that gospel that He said of Himself, "I am meek and lowly in heart", (Matthew 11:29). That section of Matthew is the turning point in the Lord's history and ministry on earth. It is where He was rejected; therefore He had recourse to what should happen. "Woe to thee, Chorazin! woe to thee Bethsaida! for if the works of power which have taken place in you, had taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they had long ago repented in sackcloth and ashes",

chapter 11:21; this shows, that at that point, the Lord being rejected. He asserted the righteous judgment of God, and at the same time, in the same section. He asserts His own meekness, saying, "I am meek and lowly in heart". He is the Centre of everything there as always. So He opens up to His Father: "At that time, Jesus answering said, I praise thee". He is speaking to His Father as if there were a secret voice that He had heard. "I praise thee, Father, Lord of the heaven and of the earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes. Yea, Father, for thus has it been well-pleasing in thy sight. All things have been delivered to me by my Father", verses 25 - 27. That is, He is beginning over again, but He is beginning in meekness and at the same time He asserts the kingdom throughout chapter 12, which follows; "and behold, more than Jonas is here", verse 41. This means there was power there in the kingdom. All that is linked up with a meek man.

RH In 2 Corinthians 10, the apostle entreats the saints by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, and then goes on to say that he was ready to avenge all disobedience when their obedience was fulfilled.

JT That is a good scripture to bring in here.

TEH Timothy is exhorted: "In meekness setting right those who oppose ..." It is to be done in meekness.

JT Just so.

AAT When there was a personal attack on Moses, he was very meek, but in dealing with the golden calf his anger burned.

JT Three thousand were slain at that time. The sons of Levi came to Moses' side and defended the rights of God, and hence the great judgment executed.

RH In verse 4 of Numbers 12 it says, "Then Jehovah spoke suddenly to Moses, and to Aaron, and to Miriam".

JT Suddenly is another word to be noted. It is found also in Luke. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host", chapter 2:13. God was acting urgently when the need was there and when His pleasure was involved. And so Luke 24 says, "two men suddenly stood by them in shining raiment", verse 4. These two men came suddenly on the scene to assert the resurrection of Christ to the women who were there. It is therefore a question of being urgent when urgency is needed. And so here, Jehovah called these three out suddenly. He was going to execute judgment on Miriam. It was a question of a sister and two brothers. They were three members of one family; two of them opposed in envy against the other,

showing how natural relationships often intrude into the things of God. The natural link did not save them from being opposed.

WWM Would you say that the forty years' experience Moses had in the wilderness would have brought about his meekness, because when he started out he was not so meek? Between the time he slew the Egyptian and the time Jehovah spoke to him at the mount of God forty years had elapsed.

JT Yes, indeed; showing that there was progress with Moses through the circumstances of the forty years. It should be a concern to us all the time as to whether or not we are progressing. It is not how we are progressing in public matters, but how we are progressing in the service of God.

AR God must have been near to Moses. He says, "Mouth to mouth do I speak to him openly", (Numbers 12:8).

JT This would show the intimacy there was between God and His servant. John, the beloved disciple, uses that expression, saying, "... not with paper and ink; but ... mouth to mouth"; meaning that the relations between him and the one to whom he wrote were very close, as remarked. Such proximity to one another is proper to Christians in holy fellowship in such meetings as these. It is what we have come to. It really amounts to what is said in (Hebrews 12:22): "but ye 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 firstborn who are registered in heaven". The dignity of the brethren is displayed at these meetings. What happy seasons these are and they should be so because of the quality of the persons present.

AI Would "mouth to mouth" involve the service of God?

JT I think so. We are speaking to one another of the things of God. There are two things; we speak to God and we speak to one another. We are speaking to one another now and it is a question of the kind of mouths we have, because, in this same book we have, "Who gave man a mouth?" How attractive it is according to God! Man is His masterpiece in creation, and the organ of speech for communication one to another is remarkable. The conversational idea evidently began with Paul and those with him at Troas and it was after they had broken bread, Acts 20:11. Before they broke bread, Paul discoursed to them, which is a different thought.

JTJr Would this chapter show how God dislikes any interference in His administration or with that of the assembly?

JT How often we have had persons among us taking sides with those under discipline, thus disregarding assembly discipline. It is one of the most painful things we have to contend with and it promotes ill feeling and even division in the households of the saints. So that God is assertive of His rights in such matters, if anyone interferes with His administrative discipline. It is not uncommon that someone thinks he loves more than all the brethren, whereas he is not loving at all in disregarding the administrative righteousness of God in discipline.

RH The attack against Moses takes the form of what is personal. It is not in connection with a principle; it is in connection with the Ethiopian woman which Moses had married.

JT No doubt alluding to who she was, as if Moses did not have a right to marry whom he pleased. The Lord is defending that, and it widens out to the brethren as under reproach. The Lord would defend us, especially when we are under reproach in the Lord.

Rem The root of the attack on Moses seems to have been jealousy of his authority.

JT Quite so. No doubt there was a bit of pride in Miriam that was hurt because she should have such a sister-in-law as the Ethiopian woman, and Aaron shares in this same sentiment. How easily this sort of thing comes up!

RDG Would it seem evident that Miriam was to blame for it? Aaron is not rebuked as she was.

JT The evil of pride was in her, but both Aaron and she were in it together. *They* spoke against Moses.

RH Would it be right to link this with a condition in a locality that we might be inclined to discredit? The Ethiopian woman had to be recognised as the wife of Moses.

JT Quite so. If it is a locality where the brethren are poor and there is no distinction after the flesh, we may be under reproach because of that; and generally the saints are of that class, because 1 Corinthians 1: 26 contemplates this: "consider your calling, brethren, that there are not many according to flesh, not many high-born" Then a list of things is given, each of which would bring us under reproach, in that sense.

ANW It is interesting that God takes the occasion of the attack on Moses to bring out his faithfulness, "he is faithful in all my house".

JT "Why then were ye not afraid ... ?" (Numbers 12:8). God brings that out; how readily we speak against each other and especially in regard to servants that are prominent!

FSC It would seem as if it were an old matter. They said, "Has he not spoken also to us?"

JT Yes, and they were assuming to be on the same level as the minister and to some extent they were, because the three are put together in the minor prophets; and the three were engaged in the service of God, and in a certain sense they had a status in the service, but they were not on the same level as Moses in God's account, showing there are grades in God's service, which is an important matter.

Now, we should consider the law in Exodus 20. There is a point which we have often noticed, but it is important that it should be noticed now, because, in this chapter it is a question of God's rights in love. There are persons who love Him and He is speaking about them. The saints come under God's eye, because they love Him. "If any one love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema Maranatha", (1 Corinthians 16:22), which means accursed at the Lord's coming. This is a solemn matter but Jehovah is able to say here, "... shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments", (Exodus 20:6). It is not those that *should* love Him, but those who *do*, showing there are those that love God whom we might not have noticed. He has them in mind in making this royal law, which it is called, and of which Moses himself would say as to it: "From his right hand went forth a law of fire for them. Yea, he loveth the peoples, all his saints are in thy hand, and they sit down at thy feet; each receiveth of thy words", (Deuteronomy 33:2,3). It is very beautiful that Moses is able to speak thus.

RH Deuteronomy refers to "the myriads of the sanctuary" and Exodus to "thousands of them that love me" . What would be the link there?

JT I think Deuteronomy's reference is fuller and more abstract and refers to the manner in which God came. The allusion is to the holy myriads and it is God's love for the people, not their love for Him as in Exodus. Deuteronomy therefore contemplates in this part of the book, the work of God as based on the truth of the brazen serpent as set out in the book of Numbers. The brazen serpent contemplates the possibility of the work of God, "What hath God wrought!" (Numbers 23:23). Deuteronomy is the work of God; Deuteronomy is to bring out what God hath wrought. That is, in this sense, the only thing worth speaking of.

CN So in Deuteronomy 33:4 it is a question of "the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob".

JT Yes; that is the law of the inheritance; how valuable it is! And so the "royal law", as James calls it. Our chapter in Deuteronomy is based on the work of God; what God has wrought; whereas in Exodus and Numbers a larger number is contemplated. There were probably two million people in the whole congregation, but they were not all the subjects of the work of God. And so it says in the New Testament, "For not all are Israel which are of Israel", (Romans 9:6), showing, I think, that those who are really Israelites are those that are wrought in by the Spirit of God and they only will be taken account of. That is all God will have eventually.

AR Dan leaps out of Bashan according to Deuteronomy, whereas in Genesis 49:17 he is an attacker. In Genesis he represents antichrist.

JT In Genesis Dan is an adder by the way and bites the horse's heels and the rider falls backwards. That would be Dan in a bad sense whence antichrist comes, showing the sort of thing that will eventually rise up, but it will be overcome, and the real Israel will come to light. The real Israel would be what is set out in the tribes in this chapter. In verse 22, it says, "And of Dan he said, Dan is a young lion; he shall spring forth from Bashan". Here, it is the work of God that is viewed in Dan, not the antichrist as in Genesis 49, where his father speaks of him. This is the work of God. "At this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!" God is entitled to speak only of that.

EEH How does the giving of the law in Exodus 20 fit in with the idea of administration? Is it intended for regulation?

JT I was thinking that. The law and its result, in a responsible sense, are contemplated in the whole chapter. "And Jehovah said to Moses, Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: Ye have seen that I have spoken with you from the heavens. Ye shall not make beside me gods of silver, and ye shall not make to you gods of gold. An altar of earth shalt thou make unto me, and shalt sacrifice on it thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen: in all places where I shall make my name to be remembered, I will come unto thee, and bless thee. And if thou make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone; for if thou lift up thy sharp tool upon it, thou hast profaned it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon", verses 22 - 26. This paragraph is the result, in the mind of God, in the Israel of responsibility (which is the Israel of the Old Testament), and the Israel to whom Christ came, and the Israel that is being set up according to Deuteronomy, presently. But Exodus 20 refers to the Israel that was; the responsible Israel, and what God brings out of it. He

discriminates between the altar of earth (what we must have or there can be no worship at all) and the altar of stone, which is Christ risen. This means that the service of God can go on in a low or shallow condition amongst the saints; whereas if there is an altar of stone the highest level of worship would be reached. But if you do not have the altar of stone, you can carry on the worship of God on the altar of earth, showing how considerate God is that we might all be in fellowship, because the very youngest is in fellowship (if he is in it) as well as the eldest.

CAM When we bring God into our administrative matters it would result in this answer to God's heart in sacrifice in some measure.

JT I think so. God is very considerate of us. We have a goodly number here today, but there is a great variety, and we are graded from the shallowest or weakest up to the most spiritual, so that the instruction here would include all. All are carried on in fellowship although only some can worship at the altar of stone, but all have the status of worshippers according to what we have here, even if it is only the altar of earth.

SW In Exodus 20:21, it says, "And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near to the obscurity where God was". Moses was made conscious of his ability to stand before God personally in that way.

JT Quite so; all is based on what we have already said as to what he was personally. Then later in chapter 24: 2, Moses alone was to come near; and then in verse 12, Jehovah says, "Come up to me into the mountain, and be there". It is in this position that he received the instructions as to the tabernacle. That is where he learned God. God came out in all His administrative services. Moses knew how to stand in His presence.

SW God would have us to be conscious of this fact.

JT "Moses and Aaron among his priests". That is, Moses was a priest as much as Aaron and more, so that he had a right to go into the presence of God at any time. According to Numbers 7 he went in to speak to God but God spoke to him, showing that He changed the matter. God spoke to him first which brings out the gracious feelings that God had toward Moses in the position He had given him.

CN Would you say a little more about these two altars? One seems to be compulsory and the other optional. In verse 24, it says, "An altar of earth *shah* thou make unto me", and then in verse 25, "And thou make me an altar of stone".

JT All that is very good. We have already touched on it a little. The compulsory side refers to the humanity of Christ; even though we may not understand much as to His deity we must have the altar of earth; whereas in the second passage, the 'if' requires that we know Him risen from the dead, and as the Son of God — "marked out Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead", (Romans 1:4). These two altars show how the truth stands as to our worship and how the feeblest are recognised. We are distinguishing between two altars, but both together cover very many genuine Christians. All have a right to worship according to the first requirement. If they do not have a right to it they are not worshippers at all. Worshippers are genuine Christians. They are recognised as worshippers, but the'if in relation to the second altar brings in those who are advanced in the truth. In the use of the altar of stone, we have more spiritual and intelligent persons contemplated. So that we have graded conditions in the worship of God, but all having the status of worshippers.

APT The Jewish Christians that Peter wrote to would understand a little about the stone side.

JT They would, indeed. "... yourselves also, as living stones ...", (1 Peter 2:5). I think what we are saying is most important, because you are thankful if the young Christians here understand that they really have a status before God as having faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, even though they may not have advanced very much. In Leviticus we have a case of a person who can only bring a little meal, Leviticus 5:11 - 13. He is accepted in the sin-offering without blood. That is important. There is a distinction made in regard to the sin-offering of a person not having sufficient to meet the full requirement. The man with a handful of meal is accepted under certain circumstances as before God, and the meal does not mean that death is brought in. It is simply humanity, or the order of Christ as Man. That establishes a ground of acceptance under certain circumstances.

APT Luke 18: 13 says, "O God, have compassion on me, the sinner". He would not be established very far in the truth but that would be the idea.

JT Yes; God would take account of him. The Lord says, "This man went down to his house justified rather than the other".

CAM The thief on the cross seems only to have offered the meal. "This man has done nothing amiss", Luke 23:41. That would correspond with the fine flour you were referring to.

JT He did not go on to the death of Christ, but the Lord says, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise", verse 43.

RDG Would Elijah's measure be seen in that he was able to build an altar of twelve stones? 1 Kings 18:30 - 39.

JT That is good, but it was really a time of *reparation*. He repaired the altar. That is what is meant. It is a great matter to repair things, provided you bring it back to the full thought. If there has been failure, reparation should bring us back to the full thought. The eleven apostles were not the full thought but they were reparable. They added another that was of the same kind as themselves, so the full thought is recognised, and the Lord appeared not to the eleven, but to the twelve, (1 Corinthians 15:5).

RH Is the altar of stone more the Colossian presentation?

JT That is good, I have often thought of that too. We have referred to Romans 1:4:"... marked out Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead". In Colossians we have: "... in which ye have been also raised with him through faith of the working of God who raised him from among the dead", chapter 2:12. That is the status we are in, according to Colossians, and it brings us into Canaan in our worship.

AI Why is profanity mentioned in relation to the altar of stone?

JT "For if thou lift up thy sharp tool upon it, thou hast profaned it", verse 25. That would shut out all that is expended in science and refinement in the service of God publicly in certain sections of the profession. Tools are essential to manufacturing trades, and they serve to bring out the skill of man, whereas the use of them here is profanity. The stone is a question of what Christ is personally. "They no longer saw any one, but Jesus alone with themselves", (Mark 9:8). We do not need anything else but that for worship. It is the real worship, too. It was "Jesus alone with themselves", when they came down from the mount.

JAP Would you say there was a worshipful attitude with the centurion? "Truly this man was Son of God", (Matthew 27:54). Is that the altar of stone?

JT I would say that. His expression, "Truly this man was Son of God" would show that the light was shining, even for that centurion. It was what he observed in what happened before his eyes. What a thing it is to see and feel the light shining; the light of the glory of Christ!

JTJr The speaking is from heaven. "Ye have seen that I have spoken with you from the heavens", (Exodus 20:22). But it had in view the setting up of the tabernacle, so later we have speaking from between the cherubim that overshadowed the mercy-seat, (Exodus 25:22).

JT Speaking from the mercy-seat would mean that God had drawn near and this is fully seen in the Lord as man here. The full thought of the divine system is in mind. Speaking from heaven, while distance is there, conveys authority. Consequent on Christ's return to heaven, the word is, "See that ye refuse not him that speaks ... from heaven", (Hebrews 12:25). This is contrasted with the oracles speaking on the earth.

CN Say a word as to "Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar", (Exodus 20:26).

JT It goes with the tool of which we have been speaking. It is nature being exposed. God abominates that in His service.

RH Colossians speaks of being "vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh", chapter 2:18. That kind of mind would inflate and is the kind of thing that is forbidden.

AR There were winding steps in the temple. What is the thought there?

JT That is all inside; it is all covered, where things are secret, and the same idea does not come in here. This is open. This is what is going on publicly. The law is being given. God is coming out and asserting His rights in love (because that is the point) and yet He is concerned about things being seemly and right. It is the public worship of God. One meaning of the idea of worship is that it is public. The Lord says, "Ye worship ye know not what; we worship what we know", (John 4:22). That is public worship, and of course. God is concerned that everything should be right.

Then the offerings are alluded to in Exodus 20: "... and shalt sacrifice on it thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen: in all places where I shall make my name to be remembered, I will come unto thee, and bless thee", verse 24. This is a precious thought in regard to the altar of earth, but in chapter 25, in relation to the building of the tabernacle, it is the heave-offering. There is an allusion there, in the note, to the heave-offering in Leviticus 7: 14. Our passage reads: "of every one whose heart prompteth him, ye shall take my heave-offering. And this is the heave-offering that ye shall take of them: gold, and silver, and copper, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and byssus, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins; and acacia-wood; oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil, and for the incense of fragrant drugs; onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. And they shall make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them", verses 2 - 8. That is, the offerings required are what is needed for the tabernacle in which God is to be served. It is a question of the kind of thing needed in this offering. And it is a heave-offering, which would mean the

heaving up of the affections. It would mean, typically, that there is a real living state of things amongst the saints springing up into everlasting life.

FNW Would the heave-offering be seen in John 4 in the woman? Would she be a product of the administration of Christ as referred to in the end of chapter 3?

JT Just so; "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand". That is a very good connection. The fourth chapter of John would bring out the feminine side, which no doubt (if not openly, certainly secretly) alludes to the assembly, where we have the feminine side. It is intelligently seen there in her, for her body is to be used. "The water which I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into eternal life", (John 4:14).

AR Would you say how we can furnish the material for the ephod and the breastplate?

JT It says: "And this is the heave-offering that ye shall take of them ... stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate". That points to the affections of Christ. It is a unique thing provided for in the service of the sanctuary in chapter 28, when we come to the priesthood. Precious stones would represent what would be most excellent in the offerings of the saints, and I believe Ephesians and Philippians would be that. These are the epistles that contemplate what is more excellent. It says, in Philippians 1: 10, "that ye may judge of and approve the things that are more excellent". In Ephesians we have, "... and to know the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge", chapter 3: 19. Then, in 2 Corinthians 5:14, we have, "The love of the Christ constrains us". These are things which are more excellent.

CAM Would you say that in exercising assembly administration there is such a thing as going on from the responsibility side to the privilege side? There would be that distinction perhaps between chapters 20 and 25.

JT Just so. And then there is addition in chapter 35. We do not have time to go into all the detail, but just to get the general view. Chapter 35 is an addition to this chapter as to the materials that were offered. So the word is, "And Moses spoke to all the assembly of the children of Israel, saying. This is the word which Jehovah has commanded, saying. Take from among you a heave-offering to Jehovah: every one whose heart is willing, let him bring it, Jehovah's heave-offering — gold, and silver, and copper, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and byssus, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and acacia wood, and oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil, and for the incense of fragrant drugs; and onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate. And all who are wise-

hearted among you shall come and make all that Jehovah has commanded: the tabernacle, its tent, and its covering, its clasps, and its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its bases, the ark, and its staves; the mercy-seat, and the veil of separation; the table and its staves, and all its utensils, and the shewbread; and the lamp-stand for the light, and its utensils, and its lamps, and the oil for the light; and the altar of incense, and its staves; and the anointing-oil, and the incense of fragrant drugs; and the entrance-curtain at the entrance of the tabernacle; the altar of burnt-offering, and the copper grating for it, its staves, and all its utensils; the laver and its stand; the hangings of the court, its pillars, and its bases, and the curtains of the gate of the court; the pegs of the tabernacle, and the pegs of the court, and their cords; the garments of service, to do service in the sanctuary, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to serve as priests", verses 4 - 19.

I think the sabbath prefaces all this and gives light to it. How much we need to get rest, spiritually, in order to have to do with these exalted things that are used in the sanctuary of God. We need to be restful, because many of us are not equal to the thoughts of God because we are tired out. We have too much to do and are affected in this way, not only physically but spiritually and we become jaded. There is, perhaps, too much taken on and we miss a time of rest and quietness in the Lord's presence. The point for us is that we make use of the rest of God. It is necessary for God to have us with Himself. "For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed", (Exodus 31:17).

APT There is much that happened after chapter 25, for there was the sin of the golden calf involving the general breakdown of the people. That all enters into the matter, necessitating a better and deeper understanding of the holiness of God.

JT Yes. If we are not growing we become stunted and we are not in liberty in the divine service. Hence there is the need of spiritual restfulness of which so much is made in the type before us in Exodus 31 and 35.

AR Please say a word about the creation. There is an added word in Exodus 31:17 that is not in Genesis, "... and was refreshed".

JT Yes, God was refreshed. You only get it there. We need that refreshment. It is the principle of providing things for the sanctuary of God. These are the exalted things that the epistle to the Philippians especially contemplates.

AMacd Would you say just a word on the fact that they had to be restrained in chapter 36.

JT That is another thing. It is well to be balanced. Many of us add much that is not necessary. If our wills at all enter into the service of God it only does harm.

AMacd Would that fit in with your thought of restfulness?

JT I think it does. What I am saying is most important.

ANW Do you mean that we take on too much in business or in our homes, or do you mean we may take on too much levitical work?

JT We have to discern what is hindering us in our service to God, even if it is weariness. God may come in, as He does very often, and we are less tired when we go out of the meeting than when we go in. But we have to watch tired and jaded conditions.

APT Does John 4 indicate there is no cessation of the Lord's service to the Father on account of His weariness?

JT He sat just as He was by the well, wearied with His journey. Christ was there and He carried on. He took advantage of the presence of the woman to open up the greatest things in spite of His weariness. We have the availability of the priestly service of the Lord. He attends to us in our weariness so that we need not be denied through it.

ANW He says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light", (Matthew 11:30).

JT That would suggest to us that we can go on, and that we are not tired out. Of course, one can overcome tiredness by the grace of the Lord; the high-priestly grace of the Lord enables us to overcome. But we have to keep in mind that we are not to allow ourselves to become run down physically. The Lord knows what we need and He provides rest as we seek it.

APT What do you make of Mark's gospel where it says, "For those coming and those going were many, and they had not leisure even to eat", chapter 6:31? He says, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest a little".

JT They were with Jesus. They were not playing tennis. It was not a holiday that the Lord contemplated — or to have recreation. The Lord saw what they needed and that was to be *restful*. Rest a *little*, not very long, but a little.

RH It says, "they sit down at thy feet, each receiveth of thy words", (Deuteronomy 33:3).

JT That is restfulness. The Lord told the people to sit down on the grass when He was going to feed them.

ANW Deuteronomy is most attractive.

JT What Moses says of the tribes is very beautiful because it is a question of the work of God, and then chapter 34 eulogises Moses, which we should notice. Although he never entered the land, in the ordinary sense, he saw it all from Jehovah's point of view. God honoured His servant here at the end of his course, and he died in full natural vigour.

CAM You were recently stressing the completion of the word of God. Deuteronomy 34 really completes the personality of this remarkable servant.

JT You feel how suitable that there should be a tribute paid to him such as is given here. The completion of things is largely characteristic of Matthew, the assembly gospel. Every subject is finished, not only what relates to Christianity, but what relates to the nations and Israel.

CAM That is very impressive and instructive.

JT So that we do not want to leave our subject unfinished now, but we can only touch on it briefly. We have already said as to Deuteronomy 33 that it is a question of the work of God. "What hath God wrought!" Moses can bless the people according to God. There is no discrepancy. In Jacob's blessing there are discrepancies as we have already noted in Dan, but here it is *all* Israel. And then in chapter 34 we are told the view that Moses got of the land: "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And Jehovah showed him the whole land, Gilead to Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah", verses 1,2. If we consider the antitype, heaven is shown us with people in it. It is not a bare idea or a peopleless realm; it is a peopled realm. Heaven is viewed in Scripture as a peopled realm; not empty. So that what Moses sees is not simply the bare land but "the whole land, Gilead to Dan"; that is, the tribes are named as there, and that, of course, is where the glory lies: "Nor what is next Thy heart can we forget; Thy saints, O Lord, with Thee in glory met". That is not simply heaven in the abstract, but heaven with people in it! That is what Moses saw: "the whole land, Gilead to Dan ... unto the hindmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, to Zoar. And Jehovah said unto him. This is the land that I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying. Unto thy seed will I give it: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. And Moses the servant of Jehovah died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Jehovah. And he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-Peor; and no man knows his sepulchre to this day", verses 2 - 6. Jehovah buried him. The whole matter is a tribute to Moses. No other man was shown the land as he was, and no other man was buried by Jehovah as he was. And then it goes on to tell us about his age: "And Moses

was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated", verse 7. That is another thing for the servants to be concerned about; that their voices do not give out, nor their hearing and eyesight; but that we may be able to go on in our service to the saints. Moses was as able to serve at the end as he was earlier. "And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; and the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended". And then we have another tribute given: "And there arose no prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom Jehovah had known face to face; according to all the signs and wonders that Jehovah had sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land; and according to all that mighty hand; and according to all the great terribleness that Moses had wrought in the sight of all Israel", verses 10 - 12. That is what I would consider the eulogistic tribute to Moses, which is very suitable and beautiful.

Ques It was said of the Lord that He spoke with a loud voice and gave up the ghost. Is there any relation in that to Moses- strength?

JT Quite so; you mean that the Lord died in power. Everything converges in Christ; even if we speak of the physical power of Moses at one hundred and twenty years, it points to Christ. He did not die an ordinary death; He died in power.

SW Is there any connection between Moses being shown the whole land here, and the apostle John being taken up into a high mountain to see the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven?

JT What John saw would be greater. Moses saw the land of the tribes.

FNW Is there a final administrative touch seen with Moses? He imparts something to Joshua in the way of wisdom: "And Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him", verse 9. His administration was to be carried on.

JT That is another very important matter to be noted — that what he was administratively is carried down to Joshua, aiding him in his administration when the time came for it.

TEH Who wrote chapter 34 of Deuteronomy?

JT I do not know. You also wonder who wrote the last verses of the book of Joshua, and other passages. We have to leave these things with God.

RH Is the blessing to be regarded as the great end of administration? Would the blessing in chapter 33 be the spiritual end?

JT What a great man Moses was to speak of the work of God in such a beautiful way without any discrepancy in it. What God wrought is perfect, so that new creation is touched on here.

JTJr Moses is brought into the New Testament on the mount of transfiguration with Elijah. This would show how such men were honoured later by God after their testimony was over.

AR In what way is new creation seen here?

JT Just in the description given. It is what God has wrought. "At this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!" (Numbers 23:23). It runs on into our own order of things. "The old things have passed away; behold all things have become new: and all things are of ... God", (2 Corinthians 5:17,18).

RH Is that why the thought of excellency is mentioned in Deuteronomy 33? It refers to "the sword of thine excellency", verse 29.

JT I think that the nearer you come to the end of the things with which we are dealing, the nearer you get to excellence and refinement. I believe the epistle to Philippians deals with this side of our subject.

POWER FOR SPRING IN THE SAINTS (JT 84)

Acts 3:7 - 9; Genesis 24: 64; Joshua 15: 18, 19; Deuteronomy 33: 22

These Scriptures, as no doubt most will have observed, speak of persons leaping or springing, and I have put them together so as to speak of this matter, of the power of spring in the saints. It appears early in the christian dispensation, and it is recorded with such detail as to leave on the mind the impression that it is to be a main feature in the dispensation that there should be the power of spring, which of course, implies the Spirit of God. Peter and John, as we have often noticed, go up together to the temple, and the lame man is, as usual, at the gate. It is said that he had been lame from the outset of his being, but it is also said that he was carried to this spot. A similar incident is recorded later in this book, a gentile incident, far away among the nations at Lystra; the man is spoken of as not having walked at all. Nothing is said about any assistance rendered to him, he was just there: he never had walked. In the fact that no one is spoken of as assisting him, we are no doubt reminded that there was no real assistance in the gentile world at all spiritually, whereas there was some little consideration in Israel, even as it was, the Spirit of God being ever ready to acknowledge whatever there was to be acknowledged among God's ancient people. For it was a question at that time of saving them, and everything that would prejudice them unnecessarily against the gospel was avoided; everything, however small, that might encourage them spiritually was brought forward. So that the man was carried by some, whoever it was; someone cared for him to that extent, and laid him there; not indeed that they expected the temple or those in it to help him in a spiritual way, but that those who went in by that gate might be moved charitably. And then what is stated of Peter and John is another touch. Nothing was being said about the barrenness, the poverty, of the temple; indeed these two great servants were going up to it; there was no thought of disparaging it then, but gently they hint that there was something else — "Look on us". These are levitical touches that we should note in our service so as to gain the most possible, or if by any means to save some. The difficulties are increasing and hence the need of levitical skill in those that would serve. And then Peter gives the man his right hand. Here we are in the presence of the beginning of a wonderful dispensation and the kind of service that marked those who had part in it, how, as in this instance, they would say, We will do our best for you. There were no half measures, no laziness, in those days; the right hand was there. In the gospels, especially in Mark, before we have the appointment of the apostles, the right hand of the man which was withered was healed, as if the Lord would say, These men that I am about to appoint

are to understand that their very best is to be employed. And so, whilst God did everything, of course, "The Lord working with them", yet great stress is laid on how they did things, that God was not at any disadvantage in employing them for the best that they had was available. Their appearance in relation to one another, their countenances, their outlook, would all be involved in the direction to the needy man. "Look on us" — there is something there. No disparagement formally of the temple, the Beautiful gate is mentioned, whatever there was is there mentioned, but there is something else. There is nothing in an outward way; there was no prejudice to anybody in suggesting, "Look on us;" it gives no unnecessary offence, there was something to look at. Perhaps no two men like them ever appeared together in this way before. We have twos, of course, and threes, operating in the service of God throughout the Scriptures — Moses and Aaron, and many others in that way; but I am sure that no two men ever appeared like these two just in this way before. And Peter uses his right hand, and speaks of the Nazaraean, no eloquence, no bringing forward of the great immortal, invisible, or anything like that, it is "Jesus Christ the Nazaraean". The position is equal to that. There is no need yet of these great titles which we get later; they have their place, of course, and we love to use them, and indeed the Lord would put it on us as to whether we are using them, what we *are* saying about Him. But here it is, "Jesus Christ the Nazaraean", in His name this man is to rise up and walk; but notice, it is not the mere word, it is the right hand of the servant — he is able to do something. So that it is "the Lord working with them" — they are doing it, they are doing what is being done, but the Lord is there; things are well done, not only were they worth looking at, but the way they did the thing was worth looking at. So we have this result that he walked and leaped and praised God.

Now this is the great general thought I have in mind and it is found in this particular setting as bearing on the whole dispensation to the end of which we have come. It is written for us, dear brethren, so that there might be something to look at in the sense of spiritual formation and attractiveness, and that there might be something in the way of ability to work the works of God. The Lord says of a blind man that he was blind just so that the works of God should be made manifest in him, and that is the position, it is a question of the works of God. But the works of God are to be done by workmen who enhance them, and that is what we get here. So that we have a spring in this man; it was not simply that he sprang up, like the man in chapter 14, but he was walking and leaping and praising God; he is seen that way. That is another thing to be noticed, that what is effected is manifest, he is seen in this way, he is seen by the people as a testimony, walking and leaping and praising

God. I have no doubt that these three words, walking, leaping, and praising God, are in their proper order — of course they are. Walking is balance, that we are sober, as the apostle says. As regards man his testimony was sober, balanced, but to God, he says, "I speak as being beside myself". The power that we have by the Spirit is affected by environment; the more we are in assembly where every whit says, Glory, the more effective we are as spiritual. It is a living scene, it is a glorious scene, and we are not to detract from the glory but to add to it. Leaping, I think, alludes to excess or increase of spiritual power under certain conditions, that is, where it is seemly. And praising God is the final thought. I believe the Lord is working very effectively in this way among His people so that there should be something of this kind, praising God. Whether or not this man used the psalter, whether or not he used hymns I cannot, of course, say, but he praised God, that is, there is further excess; praising God is a further thought of spiritual power, not in mere words but in attitude. The Old Testament is constantly helpful as illustrative of what we are called to. So you find that with the sweet psalmist of Israel, the leader of the praises of God: he danced mightily, with all his might, before the ark. That is a real thing, not mere sentiment, but a real movement of the person before God.

Well now, that is what resulted from these remarkable incidents recorded, what was to be seen and what was to be heard, in connection with Peter's right hand. The name of the Nazaraean, that which was under reproach in the world, was already taking on glory in the spiritual realm. This is the beginning of matters, and it is intended to cast rays all down the ages to ourselves. Spiritual matters are not brought down merely by books written, but by the real presence of the Spirit of God in the assembly. So that we get, for instance, in John 14: 26, the beautiful reference to the Spirit bringing things to remembrance; the Lord says of Him, "The Comforter ... whom the Father will send in my name" — the Father would send Him in the Son's name and He would bring to remembrance whatever the Lord had said. It is the Spirit that brings to our attention what we need; He brings to our remembrance. The thought of His having come in the name of the Lord Jesus fits in with these last days when things are peculiarly done in His name as over against other names; so that He says to Philadelphia, "Thou ... hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name". The Spirit of God, dear brethren, is bringing things up constantly in all these meetings through one and another, bringing things to our remembrance, so that there should be what God intended there should be in the last days, what there was at the beginning, in some little way. Here it is walking and leaping and praising God, a real spring in it, and it is to continue. It is a remarkable thing that there is very little in the early chapters of the Acts

about the service of God in the assembly; it awaited the full thought of the assembly for that; but here is the idea; there is the material for it. How lustily a brother like this would take part in the assembly meeting, spiritually formed, how he would join in with heart and voice in the praises of God.

Now I want to show you briefly from Rebecca how the thought works out, for Rebecca really fits into this chapter; she is the assembly brought into this position. She was, of course, a failing creature, like all of us — alas we have to own that! — she was just a woman of like passions with ourselves; so that,

whilst we honour her as a woman of faith, and she is a type of what I am speaking of, we must remember that in all the scriptural narratives it is a question of the Spirit of God selecting that which is needed for what He has in mind. How much is left out who can say? It is just His own selection of incidents and His own way of putting them together that makes them speak to us. And so Rebecca is just, as you might say, what we get in this chapter. Sarah's tent is in view in the history of Rebecca, but Isaac comes into view. That is, before you can have Sarah's tent or Rebecca in it, Isaac must come into view and he must be recognised. Here Peter calls Him the Nazaraean, that is the Christ. How much more He was to this man! We can understand how readily this man, who walked and leaped and praised God by the power of that Christ, would listen to anyone who could tell him more of that glorious Person. God had His man ready for that a little while after, that is Paul; but Peter and all the others could speak wonderfully of Christ. You can understand how this man would be ready for any additional thought about Christ. And so Isaac is just Christ in this particular narrative in Genesis 24. He is out in the field coming from the well Beer-lahai-roi. Why was he coming from that place? He was coming from having gone to it indeed, as it should read; he had gone there. He did not despise the well because Hagar had had to do with it. It was a well, it was a spring. Whatever there was in Israel the Lord Jesus took it up and made the most of it. Meditating in the field, he is alone. We sometimes sing. 'No longer now alone;' how worthy He is of companionship suited to Himself! Now you can see, dear brethren, how this man would answer to all this in so far as he could at that time, walking and leaping and praising God. Rebecca draws near on the camel and she sees Isaac; he was meditating in the field. She saw him and she asked about him. What a figure he was, I mean spiritually. How often it is the Lord comes into our view in one way and another. We say, What was said was very nice; but what about the enquiry as to this Man? It is a question of the assembly coming into view in each of us. What about enquiring as to this Man? Who is He? Well, she is told who He is; the servant said, "That is my master!" — not, 'my master's *son*' now. It is Christ. Here is a man ready for that; you cannot say too much about that

Person, Jesus of Nazareth, to this man. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus who He was. You can understand that thought would be presented in a living way in that lame man now able to walk and leap and praise God in the power of the name of Jesus. So it is said that Rebecca, having enquired, sprang off the camel. There is a real movement. That is what one would look for in Christ being presented to the saints, presented as He is in Isaac, that there is real movement, real response of heart. She took a veil and covered herself too in a seemly way, a beautiful feminine touch; there is seemliness. But then, there is the power of spring: she sprang off the camel. What enters into all this passage is that it is the testimony that is in mind. It is what is to go on and what is going on here up to this present time that is in mind in this passage. It is briefly stated but it is typically, dear brethren, what we are enjoying at this very moment, the testimony that goes out from a risen glorified Christ to the assembly viewed in this way with a spring in her and seemliness marking her in the position. No pretence, no gold or artificial beautification with her, as it is said in Peter — I mean that is the idea in the New Testament — it is what is spiritual, and how beautiful that is as the Spirit of God depicts what He intends to convey to us. He depicts such facts as He intends to create an impression in us as to what the assembly is; and, of course,

Rebecca is but a type of ourselves. And so she is leadable now; one has often referred to that, but it is a very practical thing: he *led* her into his mother's tent and he was comforted. It does not say he was grieved about his mother's death, as it does of Abraham when Sarah died; it is the release from grief that is noted; it is to bring out what Rebecca is, the satisfaction that the Lord finds in this one, one who has the spring and who puts on the veil, and who is leadable. Many of us are not leadable, you know; she is. He led her into his mother Sarah's tent. It does not say he loved her until she was there; that is, it is the assembly in the place of testimony that is lovable to Jesus; it is not yet the assembly in heaven. He loved her there in that position.

Well now, you can see that Rebecca fits into Acts 3, and the type in Acts 3 is brought down to us by the Spirit even to this very moment, so that there may be some little correspondence with the Lord in us in this way of spring. There is a remarkable reference in the types in Leviticus to the creatures that are clean and the creatures that are unclean. Creatures that crawl upon the earth, although they may be four-footed, are unclean. I may listen to all the ministry and speak of it, and yet be on the earth; I have never got the idea of spiritual power to leap off the earth. So in Leviticus 11 there is a difference in this particular case, there are certain ones that have legs above their feet by which they spring up from the earth. There is nothing much to say about them, they are more or less characterised as the others are, but still it is that which saves

them that they do have power to leap up sometimes off the earth; there is that relieving feature about them. And so it is that the Lord would remind us that it is not what we hear, or appropriate even, for we may hear things and assimilate them too, like chewing the cud, and yet not be clean, for the reason that there is no rising from the earth: we just stay there. When we are in the assembly we are away from home. You understand me, I do not say we can stay very long together; it is not so, because God considers for us: addresses are to be short, prophets are to speak only two or three. The idea is you are perfectly at home while you are there. Do not make it appear that you are away from home while you are there, but that you are enjoying the thing, you are satisfied, you have been made to drink into one Spirit.

Now I think from what I have said you will see that Rebecca fits into the chapter in the Acts from which I have read and that it is the position of the assembly all the way down. The Lord has brought us back to it in some little way, and what I am speaking of now is the spring, that, in respect of Christ, there is a real movement at all times, as soon as He is presented. I have no doubt that Beer-lahai-roi, being the first mention of a well, although it was connected with Hagar, was God's provision, and the Lord would say it is all a question of the Spirit in this matter; He had gone there and He was coming back from there.

I go on to Achsah, a well-known figure too, another type of the assembly, but not as in Sarah's tent; she is in the inheritance. Sarah's tent is not the inheritance of the assembly, it is another side of the position. The Spirit is the earnest of it and the Father "has made us fit for sharing the portion of the saints in light" (Colossians 1: 12). So that now it is a question of ability to occupy the inheritance, not merely in words or mental assent, but in a real living way that I can leap, I can spring. It is a question of Caleb, the great inheritance man; he is another wonderful type for us in this sense, a man that steadily went on year after year patiently enduring maybe the jibes of Israel at times, but he went on day in and day out with the inheritance in mind. He knew it was a good place; he had tasted it, and he knew that the Lord delighted in him — "If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land", he said. Let us not expect to be brought in unless the Lord delights in us. Is He going to fill heaven with persons who do not please Him? No, beloved brethren, He will have persons whom He delights in, and Caleb understood this. The cumulative wealth of truth that comes down to this moment is seen in this remarkable man, the appreciation of the inheritance of God. There are people who do value the inheritance, maybe very few, but if you come in contact with them they deserve all the respect you can give them, and, if you gave them respect, it is because you value what they value.

So we have here a true daughter of a man who valued the inheritance, so she moved her husband to ask her father for a field, but in his presence she seemed to have more encouragement and more liberty than she had earlier. The nearer we get to God, dear brethren, the more liberty we have; you will always find that. You may go to the meeting for prayer, or to your closet with the thought of asking for something, but the nearer you get to God, the more liberty you have; you will ask for more than you thought of asking. So she asked for springs of water and he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs. That is, she had the thought that this position required the power of spring. She already had the power of spring, but how is it to be sustained? It is in the springs of water, the upper springs and the lower springs. We do not know how many. I suppose the plural word shows that it is a continual supply of that which supports us in energy and power in this wonderful position. How can we live in Ephesians, dear brethren, in the realm opened to us in that wonderful epistle? Some of us were saying lately that the apostle Paul had gone to Jerusalem about four years before he wrote this epistle, for he was a long time at Caesarea and two years at Rome. Could he have written this epistle at Jerusalem? The environment would have been against him, but he had gone through much and now the whole vista of the inheritance of God is opened up to him by the Spirit. How can we live in these things? Only by the Spirit, and by the Spirit in this plural way, the upper and the lower springs; it is the variety, the unsearchable riches that are involved; there is no slackness in it. See the variety there is even in our little way in these days, how the Lord is helping us. He will help every one of us. It is a question of seeing the need; you are brought into this wonderful position, and you want to be in it in a suitable way. Not simply a field, she was emboldened to ask for what she really needed, springs; and she got the upper and the lower springs, which would fit her down here in regard to the inheritance and which would enable her up there, typically, to enjoy the full liberty and dignity of her portion in Christ. That is what Achsah means as I understand, and we can easily follow that; it applies to each christian here. We are brought into this and we need to make room for the Spirit, not only to keep us here but to enter into and enjoy the great things of God, things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard and which have not come into man’s heart to conceive, but which God has prepared for those who love Him.

Well now, I finish with Dan; he is a lion’s whelp, we are told. It is a very brief comment on Dan, but a great relief from what is said in Jacob’s blessing. He leaps from Bashan. The allusion, I think, is to persons being, it may be, in an inferior spiritual position, or even a wrong position. Bashan is not to be

despised, it is divine territory, but it is not Canaan. Now I am not here to criticise, but to state facts.

There are many of us who are well content with the other side, the wilderness side, of Jordan. Is there power in our souls to get out of it? As we come together in assembly (one never tires of alluding to the collective side for it is there that the concrete thing is worked out fully) is there sufficient power in my soul as I sit down to partake of the Lord's supper, which is a wilderness position, to leave the wilderness? It is a question of where He is, not where I am. Christ is away, but is there power in my soul, as I apprehend Him in the emblems, to get out of the wilderness for the moment, to spring from one position into another? A right position, it may be, certainly the position in the Lord's supper is quite right, but it ceases to be right if I stay there and others are enabled in the power of the Spirit to go further, to go over Jordan in spiritual power. I want to be with them, to move on, and I think that is what is meant here by the brief comment on this remarkable man Daniel He is able to leap from Bashan, to leave one position for another with a spring and a leap. That is what I had in mind, that we might finish with that and be concerned that, as we come together in assembly, we might be in power and that we might understand what enters into the assembly, what possibilities there are as this idea of spring is laid hold of, as we avail ourselves of it. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, *these* are sons of God" (Romans 8: 14). That means I have laid hold of the power; the Spirit of God is leading, I am leadable, and I am marked off as one of the sons of God. Now I think that Dan as capable of leaping from Bashan would come under that heading, fitting in with the glorious outline of the tribes as presented by Moses the man of God.

May God bless the word.

THE LORD JESUS AS KING (JT 90)

John 18: 37; Genesis 14: 18 - 20; Deuteronomy 33: 4,5

I have before me tonight to speak a little about the Lord Jesus as He is presented to us in the Scriptures as King. It is not the title by which He is known to us exactly. The term 'Lord' is that by which believers imply His authority, but it is akin to the term 'King', kingship being more official, and conveying in itself as I hope we shall see, much in the way of testimony from God.

What I wish to dwell upon first of all is that in His answer to Pilate the Lord says that He was born king. He says, as you will observe, "I have been born for this". Now, in approaching this subject I thought it well to touch on the Lord's royalty which, I may say, is hereditary; He is the *root* of David, being God, but He is also the *offspring* of David. We who belong to the assembly have intelligence as to Him both as the root of David and as the offspring of David. The gospel of John unfolds for us the truth of the Lord's Person, and that underlies His being the root of David. The gospel of Matthew unfolds His official position, so that it is the "Book of the generation of Jesus Christ, Son of David, Son of Abraham". Matthew 1:1 Thus the assembly, for which the gospels were written, understanding the gospel of John, understands how the Lord Jesus is the root of David. David was not an accidental king, beloved friends. In the first book of Samuel you have first the desire of a pious woman to have a son, and this desire was granted, so that we have Samuel, the prophet. Then we have the desire of a people to have a king, and their desire was also granted, and so we have Saul, for man's unregenerate desire must ever result in confusion, and so God says that He gave them a king in His anger. We do not want to have anything from God given in His anger. We may ask, and ask amiss, we may ask for things to consume on our lusts. We must be on our guard against such desires and petitions.

The Israelites of old asked for a king. They wished to be like the nations around them, and they wished to have a king, whereas God was their King. And God gave them a king. "I gave thee a king", it says, "in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath", Hosea 13: 11. Then we have David. Who asked for him? No one among men. What his mother's desires were we know not. We know that his father had no such desire for his son, for when Samuel came to anoint the king according to the word of God, to Bethlehem, to Jesse's house, David was not sent for to be present. Who desired David? God. It was no accident that he was chosen. He was a king after God's heart. "I have found David", He says, "... a man after my heart, who shall do all my will", Acts

13: 22. What is the secret of all that? The root of David. David's root was Christ. The assembly understands it, so that when the Lord announces Himself as the root and offspring of David the assembly knows what that means. The Lord announces Himself, "*I* Jesus have sent mine angel to testify these things to you in the assemblies. I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come", Revelation 22: 16, 17; they understand! The Spirit is infinitely aware of all that these terms signify; and He has the assembly with Him in intelligence and in affection, so that she knows who He is and with the Spirit says, "Come".

Pilate was ignorant of all these things, and he says to the Lord, "Thou art then a king?" This brings out the Lord's reply, as I have read to you, "I have been born for this, and for this I have come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth".

God had Him in view when He had David anointed. What you find in the gospel of Matthew is that the gentiles recognised this fact before the Jews. The wise men from the east arrived at Jerusalem and they say, "Where is the king of the Jews that has been born?" Matthew 2:2. It is not, 'Where is He who has made Himself King', like Adonijah, or like Absalom, or like antichrist. Such climb into power on the dead bodies of others. Ruthless murderers! These wise men from the east wanted to see the king that was born. As you look into His countenance you see royalty; true royalty emanates from God. The time is coming when "the blessed and only Ruler shall shew", as the scripture says, "the King of those that reign, and Lord of those that exercise lordship", 1 Timothy 6:15.

The wise men were guided by His star, the star of the King. They were not governed by fleshly, national feelings of patriotism. They were not envious of the Jews that they should have a king. They did not say, 'King of the nations'. "Where is the king of the *Jews* that has been born?" They were in the mind of God. The star guides them to the house "where the little child was". The Holy Spirit says, "the little child with Mary his mother" (Matthew 2:11), not the mother and the child, for the King born, beloved, was greater than His mother, for He is the root of David. So they enter the house, and opening their treasures they presented "to him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh", and they worshipped Him.

Pilate had his answer. The Lord says, "Thou sayest it, that I am a king". He did not hide the truth. He was wearing a purple robe, the insignia of royalty as *suffering*, for suffering goes before reigning. Let us remember that. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him", 2 Timothy 2:12. If Pilate had eyes to see, he could see royalty. How majestic is Jesus as He stands before the high

priest, and as He stands before Pilate! And so we have the inscription of His accusation written, "Jesus the Nazaraean, the King of the Jews", "in Hebrew, Greek, Latin", John 19:19, 20. The world has committed itself to the murder of Him in whom royalty shone, in whom it is shining, and in whom it will shine. A King was there, and the world has committed itself to His murder. As Paul says later, speaking of the hidden wisdom, the wisdom which God hath prepared before the world "for our glory: which none of the princes of this age knew", 1 Corinthians 2:8. Caiaphas did not know it; Pilate did not know it. "For had they known", he says, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory". He was there before the eyes of Pilate. You can understand the feelings of that poor weakling, a representative of Caesar, when he said, "Thou art then a king?" Pilate had asserted over and over again that He was innocent, and yet he scourges Him and hands Him over to His enemies to be put to death. He was in the presence of a Monarch before whom all the Caesars would pass away into oblivion. It says of the antichrist, who is the embodiment of them all, "whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and shall annul by the appearing of his coming", 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

I have read from Genesis because we have in Melchisedec the first intimation of this wonderful kingship of which I have been speaking. There was a king spoken of earlier, Nimrod, who "was a mighty hunter before Jehovah", Genesis 10:9. I suppose he used men and beasts for sport, for kings after his type care nothing for men's lives. Men are but chattels in their minds, as the other creatures of God. Then there were those kings that were at war, four against five. A sort of 'world war' was on. Melchisedec was not embroiled in that. Abram came into it to *rescue his brother*, a worthy cause surely, under all circumstances. And in 'returning', as the writer in Hebrews says in chapter 7, "from smiting the kings", Melchisedec met him with bread and wine. So that Melchisedec is the first king representing Christ. It was "Melchisedec, King of Salem, priest of the most high God", which is "first being interpreted King of righteousness", Hebrews 7:1, 2. *We* have such a King as that. We have One who is not only personally righteous, for Jesus loved righteousness, as the centurion witnessed when he said, "In very deed this man was just" (Luke 23: 47); but He is King of righteousness, and that means that He has it by Him and will enforce it. As He comes out by and by, we shall see righteousness. Righteousness shall reign. It is not reigning now. Grace is reigning now through righteousness, or none of us would be here. Presently righteousness shall reign. And so it says, "when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness", Isaiah 26:9. Now they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. God is wonderfully patient, but there is the King of righteousness, and when He takes up the reins in this world He will

enforce righteousness, His judgments will be in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. They are not learning it now. A few of us are, thank God. We are taught righteousness. The world is not. It is unrighteous, and lawlessness is taught in it. The very schools are teaching it. Let us not be deceived as to the world. We are living in an awful age. Lawlessness is pursuing its course; we have arrived at the apostasy, and it is developing rapidly. But here is the King of righteousness. He is teaching us righteousness through grace, "the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men has appeared, teaching us that ... we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in the present course of things", Titus 2:11, 12. Grace reigns through righteousness. So He bears with us, and that accounts for the way things are. How much God bears with in us! He goes on with us and teaches us on the principle of grace.

He is first King of righteousness by interpretation, and then "King of Salem, which is King of peace", so that we have peace through righteousness, beloved friends. For "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever", Isaiah 32:17. An unrighteous person can never understand the peace of God. We must learn righteousness and practise it and then peace follows.

And then the King brings forth "bread and wine". Melchisedec conveys to us the great salient features of kingship as exercised in grace, and every one of us who knows the Lord Jesus in His position in heaven will attest that. We will bear witness to the fact that He is all these things to us; and I would urge the youngest here to know this blessed Man in heaven, and you will know all these things. You will find that He comes in the way of righteousness, in the way of peace, and in the way of supply. He brings forth bread and wine.

Every king according to man, instead of bringing forth supplies, demands them. From Nimrod down to the present day the kings of this world subsist on what they get from the people. So God warns the people of Israel as to what a king would do. He would take their sons and daughters, their fields and vineyards. He would give them nothing. What had Saul to give? What has Christ to give? All the wealth of heaven. He demands nothing. He brought forth bread and wine.

I cannot dwell longer on this, but it is a delightful subject conveying to us the salient features in Christ, and none of us should rest until he knows Christ in these features. When we know Him in these features we shall never come under the domination of the king of Sodom, that is, the power of this world. See what the bread and wine mean. Bread, we are told later, strengthens man's heart. You need your heart strengthened. And wine makes the heart

glad. It is better than what the world can give. Indeed wine gladdens the heart of God and the heart of man. Melchisedec is king and priest. He is priest of the Most High God, and he blesses God and Abram. Now as we thus learn Christ, He will become King in our affections. So that in going on for a moment to Deuteronomy 33, from which I read, I want to show you how that as you apprehend and learn Christ as King of righteousness and King of Salem and Priest of the Most High God, He ministers to your needs spiritually and *acquires a place in your affections*. "He was king", it says, "in Jeshurun", that is to say, king in an upright people. Wherever there is an upright man or woman in the world, Christ has a place there. You get to know the Lord as I have been saying, and now He is enthroned in your heart, and as enthroned in your heart He preserves you from every rival, for there are rivals: "as there are gods many, and lords many, yet to us there is one God, the Father ... and one Lord, Jesus Christ", 1 Corinthians 8:5, 6. And so Mary Magdalene says, "they have taken away *my* Lord", John 20: 13. He had a place in her heart. So to us there is one Lord, Jesus Christ. He is God's Son, Jesus Christ *our* Lord. Can all you young people say that? That we have got the Lord? He is *our* Lord.

Moses typifies Christ here not in His official position as King but in His moral greatness. I want to make that clear to you. Moses was never crowned. He was not in the regal line at all. He belonged to Levi. He was of the priestly line. Therefore, if he is alluded to as king it means what he was morally.

I will just refer for a moment to a passage in Proverbs to explain that. The writer speaks of four stately things; Proverbs 30:29, 30. The first is a lion. He turns not away for any. The second is a warhorse; he smells the battle afar off. The third is a he — goat; that means the christian who is separate. It means a servant of God who accustoms himself to retiring to be with God. Moses was called up to the mount to be with Jehovah and he was there forty days and forty nights, and he neither ate nor drank. What an experience! But what moral formation there must have been in that man during those forty days he was with God! No natural sustenance! He drew all his sustenance from God. How he would come down from that mountain imbued with the sense of divine support and as the possessor of true moral greatness! So he draws near to the camp, and he hears the noise of the people. He understands it. He has an exercised ear. Joshua thought it was war. 'No', says Moses, 'it is not war, it is the voice of singing'. A false god was there. They were making merry in his presence. Idolatry was there and Moses enters into the camp of Israel; he burns their idol, the calf, grinding it into powder, and putting it into the water, he compelled the Israelites to drink it. One man in the presence of thousands of men, and they have to give way before him. There was no rising up in the presence of Moses. He was not there a crowned king with an army behind

him. He had been forty days and nights with God in the mount. He was imbued with a sense of the presence of God and the support of God and the protection of God, and a nation had to give way before him.

That is the idea in which he was king. From that point onwards Moses rises. God honours him. And so in this remarkable chapter it is said that "Moses commanded us a law, The inheritance of the congregation of Jacob". He was the law — giver. The speaker instances the value of the law. The law was spiritual. It was God's law, not only the ten commandments but the whole law of God. The Israelites had come to value it. It is a great thing, beloved friends, to learn law in the true sense. I connect Romans 7 with this. I do not think any believer acquires a place in the testimony unless he learns to value law. I do not mean now the legal sense, but as from God. The writer in Romans 7 says, "I delight in the law of God according to the inward man" (Romans 7:22). If I delight in it I regard it as an inheritance, so "Moses commanded us a law, The inheritance of the congregation of Jacob". What the congregation of Jacob would have been as governed by these laws! No other people had such laws. They were divine laws. They were wise laws. They were spiritual laws; now they were valuing them.

If you look carefully into Romans 7 you will see how the believer works out this principle. He arrives at the value of the law of God and he wants to do it. When he comes to chapter 8 he sees the way: "the righteous requirement of the law should be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh but according to Spirit" (Romans 8:4). You have the Holy Spirit, and you are fulfilling the law. You delight in it. You are in the spirit of it.

"Moses commanded us a law". It is really Christ. "And thus fulfil the law of the Christ", we are told; Galatians 6:2. Do you think of the law of Christ? "Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfil the law of the Christ". No true believer is afraid of law. The law of God enters into everything. "I delight in the law of God". Moses commanded us a law and it is called "the inheritance". Then it goes on to say, "He was king in Jeshurun". That is to say, we have come to admire the one who gives us law. We value him. "His commandments are not grievous", 1 John 5:3. That is the way you come to appreciate Christ. He is King in your heart. He has acquired moral greatness in your soul through experience. It is one thing to read the Scriptures and hear sermons, but it is another thing to prove what Christ is to you in a moral sense so that He becomes greater and greater to you every day. "He was king in Jeshurun", it says, "When the heads of the people And the tribes of Israel were gathered together". There you have the people together. The heads of the people and the tribes. The heads represent the mature wisdom that was there, and the

tribes the family feeling. When these are together Christ is supreme. He is King in Jeshurun. The next thing is, you will say, "My heart is welling forth with a good matter: I say what I have composed touching the king. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the sons of men", Psalm 45:1, 2.

The soul advances in the knowledge of Christ, into appreciation of Christ and, I may add, into admiration of Christ. You love Him and you speak of Him. Your heart is welling up, with a good matter, and that is really the normal state of those who love Jesus. You think of something of your own. However little, it is your own and you speak of it "touching the king".

Well, I hope what I have said will help all to have a better appreciation of Christ as King.

"THE PRECIOUS THINGS OF THE ANCIENT MOUNTAINS" (JT 91)

1 Peter 2:4 1 Peter 2:6,7; Deuteronomy 33:13 - 16

You will observe the occurrence of the word 'precious' in these scriptures, and I have that word in mind as denoting, in these settings, what is peculiarly valuable as attached to Christ's Person, and the things that come to Him as Man; The first scripture from the apostle Peter is characteristic of one who led in the way of appraisement of Christ, giving us a lead in this connection. The apostles are intended to lead us in regard to valuation or appraisement of what is more excellent. There are the great general foundational truths, the knowledge of which is required for the deliverance, peace and blessing of our souls. These truths acquired in their true relations, both in regard of God and ourselves, set us free for exploration and appraisement of what is more excellent. As we progress on this line we become ranged in regard of quality, for there are persons and persons. The heavenly city contains only one street according to the Scriptures, suggesting equality in dignity of all of us, yet there are gradations of quality and development. These gradations are reached now, but remain and mark us for ever.

That being so we do well to pay attention to the lead given to us by the apostles, and particularly Peter, although Paul is not behind in his ability to appraise, and attached to this appraisement is spiritual feeling, a quality that is rare but much to be sought after, for spiritual feeling marked the apostles. Amongst the twelve Peter is first in this as in other things. Paul stands by himself and carries out among the gentiles all that the twelve had, and I would venture to say adding to what they had, as to feeling and affection. I believe Paul stands without a peer in all these respects. He thus freely speaks of himself as an example for us, so that we are to follow his epistles, noting his superlatives and comparatives, that we may become accustomed to comparison and appraisement, and be able to name what is more excellent, as we see it and come into contact with it. Peter, as I said, leading the twelve or being first amongst them in this and in other respects, had great opportunities of proving what he speaks of as precious. He uses the word in his epistles characteristically, and shows in this quotation which he cites from Isaiah 28:16 that his appreciation of Christ in this respect was according to the spirit of prophecy. It is a great thing to see that things are cumulative in the course of God's ways and testimony, so that the spirit of prophecy extending back and looking forward had the same feature of appreciation of Christ; what was more excellent. Peter had peculiar advantages, and was impressed by the

opportunities that he had of observing what Christ was. His first interviews and contact with the Lord impressed him in a way at the outset that remained and entered into his ministry, for the divine intent is not only that one is to be a minister but he is to exemplify and adorn what he ministers. Peter is not behind in that. It was the beaten work of which we have read today, the beaten gold of the candlestick. In referring to the gold one might note that it stands in Scripture for what is excellent. You will recall that what came out in the recovery in Nehemiah's time was the prominence of goldsmiths. They were engaged in rather rough, but most important work, that is the building of the wall, which refers to fellowship, and which occasions the greatest and bitterest opposition. There were those in Nehemiah's time who *would* oppose; that is they were opposers characteristically. They would oppose by their flattering words and invitations to meet in the plains of Ono, and they would oppose by direct attacks against the brethren. These are not wanting today, beloved, but we are not to be deterred from the building of the wall, nor is a refined workman like a goldsmith to let his hands hang down, even if gold be not the material that he is called upon to use. The refined workmanship amongst the people of God will not be damaged, nor degenerate in the building of the wall — the goldsmiths retained their cunning — and as soon as the time came for the use of gold they would not be wanting in skill. They were there, and they would be amongst those who would appraise and who understood values. This is most important, for the principle of generalisation is a damaging principle in the things of God; we must learn to exercise the power of discrimination and to put up the separating veil when it comes to the Person of Christ. Unless we guard against generalisation we are likely, in our minds at least if not in our words, to reduce the Lord to the level of man.

Now the apostle Peter was a skilled workman. He was a servant who could retain things for months and years, it may be, without speaking of them, and he would retain their quality, which would not diminish but rather become enhanced. You recall for instance that the Lord recognised him because of the revelation he received from the Father about Himself; the Lord recognised him as material, for he had in his soul an understanding of the Lord's Person. He understood something about the ark of the covenant; he would put the covering veil upon it. Notice his first great address at Jerusalem, how beautifully, how respectfully, how reverentially he speaks of Christ. Perhaps in no address do you find the covering veil so beautifully spread over the ark; but then he knows what to say, he does not say everything he knows; it is a great mistake in ministry to say everything one knows. If Peter were to say everything he knew he would tell his audience about Christ as the Son of God, but he did not. We have not a word, or reference to the sonship of Christ in

his ordinary oral ministry as recorded in the Acts, and yet he had it in his soul. No doubt it would give body to what he was saying, his hearers would be impressed with the fact that there was more behind than what was spoken; but it was unspoken. In service, beloved, let us gather up all possible, let us fill our souls with the precious truth about Christ, about the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the whole range of truth, but see to it that what is spoken is from the Lord. The Lord did not say to Peter that he should announce him as the Son of God; but God revealed His Son in Paul that he might announce Him as Son of God, and he did not fail to do so. Let us therefore be careful that what we say we have authority for saying, for after all, the ministry is Christ's. The levites are all given to Him for the work is His and it is for the levites to get their orders from Him. The apostle Paul immediately "in the synagogues ... preached Jesus that *he* is the Son of God", Acts 9:20. He had authority for that, but then Peter knew and held the thing in his soul, and as he was about to put off his tabernacle he would stir up the pure minds of the saints, and he refers to the mount of transfiguration in the most beautiful, powerful and holy language. "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", 2 Peter 1:17,18. With what feeling he would write that. How the scene would come back to his soul as he referred to the holy mount when he was with Jesus, when Jesus was transfigured and when a voice out of the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son; hear him". Mark 9:7, Luke 9:7. You see from all this how evidently these jewels that are found in these verses fit in in Peter's ministry. He reminds us that Jesus was a living Stone. What memories that would recall to his heart, as he himself had said to the Lord, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". Matthew 16:16. How all that would come back to him as he wrote, and then he says, "chosen of God, and precious". Can we not see the feelings, the holy sentiments of the apostle entering into this word 'precious' as he wrote of the preciousness of Jesus. The Holy Spirit would bring this up, beloved, as to what Jesus is to us. The preciousness of Jesus, elect of God, and precious. Then he goes on to say, quoting from Isaiah, that God had laid in Zion a corner stone, elect, precious. Then further, "To you therefore who believe is the preciousness", 1 Peter 2:7. All that which was so in his soul, was intended as it were to extend toward us, to cover us, to bring us in that respect into accord with Jesus, so that divine pleasure rests upon us. As was said at the beginning at the baptism of our Lord, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight" Matthew 3:17, Matthew 17:5 — not 'all my delight' — because there is room made for us to come in, that divine complacency should rest on all.

We now come to Deuteronomy, where Christ appears typically in Joseph. We are to learn what He is by the covering veil, the separating veil, that is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and become higher than the heavens" Hebrews 7:26 as Man. There is no one like Him in that sense, He is unique, "higher than the heavens", but then He shines among His brethren. How beautiful the thought! How it should enlist our deepest interest as we think of what Jesus is among the brethren! This fairly well-known chapter is the blessing of Moses the man of God, wherewith he blessed the children of Israel before he died. The blessing is not like that of Jacob which was almost entirely prophetic, the good and the bad mentioned. Moses is engaged with the good here. He is engaged with it as the man of God, and the man of God will think for God, and if he speaks of the saints in this abstract way, as having spent forty years with them in the most contrary circumstances, he is speaking of the work of God; he is speaking of what he had observed as the work of God; a matter of the deepest and greatest importance for us, that we should look at the saints, however contrary or wanting they may be, and seek to see something of the work of God in them. If I can see something of the work of God in a man or woman, that man or woman is potential material not only for the assembly, but for eternity. God has taken that person up for a place in His own scheme. The number in the counsels of God is known to God, and there will not be one more nor one less, and everyone will be a subject of divine workmanship so that even Balaam has to say, "What hath God wrought!" Numbers 23:23. That is really the safest way in dealing with the Lord's people; that is the safest enquiry, 'what has God wrought?' for what God has done is done for ever, and there can be no possibility of the destruction of it. It gives great leverage in dealing with the people of God to know as a certainty, as Moses did, that God had wrought in the tribes, that God had wrought in this one or that one; that is what comes out in this chapter. It is a chapter of twelve features of the people of God, wonderful features rising up to Christ, for however you look at the people of God you must see Christ towering up, whether it be a question of His deity, or of His moral worth or beauty, He must tower up above all, and so when Moses comes to Joseph he has the occasion by the Spirit of God to bring out what I have been speaking of, the precious features that attached to Christ. "Of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven". It is His land — ours to be sure in due course, but it is His first. Applying it to Christ, He was the old corn of the land. When Israel entered the land the ark was not in view, they were in before it, really what is in view is Christ in another way, that is as indigenous to heaven; that is a word we have to understand, that His very humanity is heavenly, that the Son of man has come from heaven, that the Son of man while here upon earth was in heaven, and that He is not in it as having gone into it merely. The

preposition in John 3:13 does not mean that, it means that He was there, He belonged to the place. It is not new to Him; He ascended up far above all heavens, but in entering in, it is not at all new. He is there, the Son of man; so that as Israel crosses Jordan what comes into evidence is Christ in that relation, He is the old corn, or the store corn, of the land of Canaan. So that you can understand how Moses would speak thus by the Spirit, for these words have more significance than even Moses could understand personally. Let us remember that, that the things they minister, they minister to us: "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify ... . Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister", 1 Peter 1:11,12. It is for us to understand, "Blessed of the Lord be his land". Oh, you say, 'I shall have a share in that!' Yes, but it is His. He would say to you, if you have gift and you have been used of the Lord in conversions and other things, He would say to you, 'Glory not in this, it may give you distinction among the brethren'; but He says, "rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" Luke 10:20 — that you have a status there, your names are written there. In truth we are the levites of God, not as we had it today in Numbers, but as it is in Joshua; that is, our part is heavenly, not on the earth. Seeing that our names are written in heaven, and that is our place, how important, beloved, to become acquainted with the place. Ephesians gives you the gospel of the land — it is the gospel of place. We have another place, raised up together and made to sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ; so that the testimony of the Holy Spirit of what Christ is in heaven is to be mixed with faith; if we mix it with faith then we shall understand and become accustomed to another place.

Then there are "the precious things of heaven", that is to say, the refreshing influences of heaven and "the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath", "the precious fruits brought forth by the sun and for the precious things put forth by the moon". It would take many addresses to open up what the precious things are, and the features in relation to all these. It is a matter for enquiry as to what they are, for they are precious things. Looking into it the soul will be nourished as it traces what is meant by the heavens and by the sun, and by the moon or months, by the dew and the deep that coucheth beneath. As we trace what these things mean, what precious results accrue; and how all come to pass in Christ and attach to Him. Then there is the blessing for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the everlasting hills. Think of the stretch of mind back to the ancient mountains and forward to the everlasting hills, and the precious things of them, all coming on the head of Christ, on the "top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren". If we take these verses up and follow them

we shall have to read the Scriptures from the beginning to the end with this in view. We shall become wonderfully enriched, because our minds stretch backwards and then forwards, learning that all that accrues of the precious fruits of these things is to come on Christ, and (insomuch as this is a tribal chapter) it is Christ in relation to the saints. It presents His greatness towering above us, but nevertheless in relation to us, so that we share in all these things and learn how to value them, and see their working out. Take, for instance, the ancient mountains, who can tell what was alluded to? You may say that must be Ararat; that must be the mountain of Jehovah. Genesis is full of the idea from chapter 7 onwards, of a mountain or mountains in a literal sense; but the significance is spiritual; however far back you go in the ways and testimony of God there were outstanding features from God that stood the test of time and weather and Satan's power; and they stand now. It would be a fruitful examination, beloved, if I may commend it to you, to examine what these ancient mountains are. Take one of the literal mountains, take Ararat; what lessons there are to be learned, spiritually. The tops of all the mountains, we are told, were covered by the flood, God let nothing escape, but the mountains reappeared, they went through; they reappeared, and the ark rested, we are told, on Ararat. What lessons were to be learned on that mountain, the beginning of another world, as if God were to say from the very outset, 'man spoiled this world, that I made with such detail and skill, thorns have come up on it on account of sin, but there is another world'. Those words, I might say, are written right down Scripture, 'there is another world' — a world that goes through death, and all that is living in it carried through in a vessel; so that God smells a sweet savour as Noah comes out of the ark on Ararat; worship begins, as you might say, for he built an altar. Are there not precious things to be gathered up in these chapters in Genesis, the great thought of something outstanding that goes through, standing against time and weather and Satan's power, yielding to God the precious savour of Christ; and all that returning upon the "head of him that was separated from his brethren"?

I just refer to two other mountains, to illustrate — the mountain in Genesis 22, upon which Isaac was offered up. It is an ancient one, but containing the most precious thoughts. It is the mountain of God, it refers to His resources, His provision, to the death and resurrection of Christ, yielding the most precious thoughts by which Scripture is filled; they have all reverted back, glorifying Him, resting upon His head as a diadem, on the top of the head of Him that was separated from His brethren.

So, too, Moses comes to the mountain of God; Moses led the flock to Horeb the mountain of God, and God sends Aaron and meets him there, and he is

glad in his heart. What is it, beloved, but the love of the brethren at that ancient mountain? And Moses unfolds all the thoughts of God on it, and all that comes down on the top of the head of Him that was separated from His brethren.

Then there are the mountains running into eternity, the everlasting hills. Think of the sweet savour and preciousness that comes on the head of Christ, accruing from Him, and all must revert back to Him, coming upon the top of the head of Him who was separated from His brethren.

I might remark, dear brethren, as to the wonderful link of these mountains with the mount of transfiguration; we have the writer of the Pentateuch, and the representative of the prophets, carrying down all the ancient things that spoke of Christ, every precious thing would be in their minds, how they would speak of Christ; they spoke of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. We can understand that aside from that decease at Jerusalem there could be no precious things, no ancient mountains of value, yielding such precious thoughts of glory and dignity; all is based on that wonderful act of Christ, the laying down of His life at Jerusalem. Then the stretch forward from that mount as Peter speaks of it. He does not refer to it as an ancient mountain, but as a holy mountain; its sides were beaten by the blessed footsteps of Jesus, its top was trodden by Him, it was holy. It was enshrined in holiness, the feet of the heavenly saints were there, and the feet of the earthly saints were there, linked up with them; and the cloud was there, and the voice out of the cloud was there, denoting the Father's voice, stretching on into an eternal state of things where Christ will be all and in all, and where we shall be like Him. Dear brethren, that was what I was thinking of, that the saints might be led on to the better things, to the excellent things, to the precious things, and to see how they are toward us and how God clothes us with them, that we might be fit companions with Christ in all these relations. May God bless the word to us!

DETACHMENT AND ATTACHMENT (JT 98)

Zechariah 12: 9 - 14; Deuteronomy 33: 7

I desire to show that the light of the gospel is intended to effect detachment and attachment. In other words, the light of the gospel coming into the world has the effect of detaching the heart, the soul, and the mind of man from all that he may be attached to hitherto, of completely isolating him. On the other hand it has the effect of attaching him to another system or order of things. So it becomes obvious that if we are to be in the good of what the gospel proposes we must be detached from things here. I refer to things used to render man self-supporting. You will recall that man deliberately gave up God. So in Romans 1:28 it says, "And according as they did not think good to have God in their knowledge"; this is a remarkable statement: men put God from their minds; it was a matter of choice; they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and God gave them up. God having withdrawn His support from man, man had to cast about for support. God would have supported Noah's line on the earth. What a wonderful position he would have had! God made a covenant with man, and God would have supported him. We should have had a world established by divine support, but men decided to eliminate God from their knowledge, and God gave them up. Man was left without support, and the result was the banding together at Babel, "Let us build ourselves a city and a tower ... and let us make ourselves a name", Genesis 11: 4. I refer to that as the origin of the world as we have it today, when each nation desires to be self-supporting, unconscious of the need of divine support.

On every hand we see it in the brotherhoods established; not only one huge brotherhood of men, but subdivisions appear, especially in the present day. You remember Jacob's prophecy in Genesis 49: 5, "Simeon and Levi are brethren". The idea of brethren is beautiful where love is; such a brotherhood Christ has established; but it goes on to say, "Instruments of violence their swords". The prophet's eye sees them, but he sees cruelty there. What does God think of these brotherhoods? They are avowedly for self-support. Why self-support? Because they have no divine support. So the Spirit of Jesus is presented to that brotherhood saying, "My soul, come not into their council", but what do men think of that? So at Babel the families of the earth were dispersed. Every foreign tongue is but a token of the judgment of God, barriers contrary to love. In Acts 2: 8 we read, "And how do we hear them each in our own dialect ... ?"; there are no such barriers where love is. There is a terrible day coming; the day of sentimentality leads on to that of apostasy and finally to open antagonism.

What did God say? "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel".

When light comes into our souls we begin to think of these things. Today God has given Jerusalem up, and the assembly is now the object of attack. There is a day coming when God will revert to Jerusalem, and then it will have enemies, God's enemies. When the light of God penetrates into your soul, Satan will begin to attack you, as it will be with Jerusalem. Satan stands to resist, and so it is with every soul, as soon as God begins to work, Satan begins to resist. See what the Lord does, "Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan! Yea, Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee!", Zechariah 3: 2. The preacher here speaks from the Lord, for He is on your side. Jerusalem is lying waste now; when God reverts to it, the enemy will stand to resist; that is all future, but I refer to it now to show how God works. God raises the question with Jerusalem herself, with every family and with every individual.

There are great advantages in belonging to a christian household. The gospel announces blessing to the household, "Thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house", Acts 16: 31. The head of the house may trust in God, and what God proposes in the gospel, He will carry out. As belonging to a christian household you are very near the house of God, but you have to do with God yourself; each member has to repent apart. Your father can have you baptised and count on God for you, but he cannot repent for you; you have to do with God for yourself. The light of the gospel is to separate you from others so that you may be alone with God. You have to get alone with God; that is the effect of light.

There is separate wailing and mourning for the Messiah. Each family and each member of that family repents for his guilt before God. God gives the spirit of grace, and it requires grace to judge yourself, "But he gives more grace", James 4: 6. There is no lack. He says, "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications".

The whole of your past history comes before you. The woman of Sychar says to the men, "Come, see a man who told me all things I had ever done", John 4: 29. She had judged all; it was all out. In the case of the leper when the leprosy was all out the leper was clean. That woman was clean when she went back to the city. Wonderful grace! Not only does God forgive sins, but He gives grace to confess them. Man naturally would not own he had sinned, so we cover things up, but it is just as well to come to the light at once. Then you learn the means of removal. The effect of the spirit of grace is to lead to isolation of soul. You get into a corner by yourself and tell it all out to God. When the leprosy covered the man, he was clean. Hide nothing; tell it all out to God; the blood is there. Leviticus 14 is the answer to Leviticus 13, "The

blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin", 1 John 1: 7. The conscience is set up in the light of the death of Jesus; such is the effect of the death-the blood-of Jesus.

The passage in Deuteronomy shows the effect in the individual; it is the blessing of Moses, the man of God. In Genesis it is the blessing of Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes, speaking prophetically. In Genesis Judah is like a lion, "The sceptre will not depart from Judah ... until Shiloh come" (Genesis 49: 10); royalty is there: Christ is the gathering centre, and Jacob sees this in Judah. It is the hope of Israel as seen in Christ. But when we come to Moses the man of God, Judah is seen in weakness. It is the experience of a repentant soul. There is repentance, a cry, and Moses, as it were, hears that cry, "Hear, Jehovah, the voice of Judah". If there is that cry, there is the intercession of Jesus. He has taken up a position in regard to men; you may reckon on His support in the faintest cry which He hears. You are detached, and now you want to be attached. God designed man for society; we all love companionship; this desire is in the heart of every man. It is God's thought to detach you from the brotherhoods of this world, and then your voice is to Him. My impression is souls do not cry to God enough. God will make out your cry, "Hear, Jehovah, the voice of Judah". He knows what you need. The light of God renders your conscience bad; the blood of Jesus makes it good. You want society; you can be attached to the Lord Jesus. What is said of Judah? "Bring him unto his people". If there is anything to be desired, it is the fellowship of God's people. Judah has his people, "bring him unto his people". There is to be a living link between your soul and Christ, but you want society, fellowship, companionship. God can give all this. You lose nothing, but gain everything. You are brought into a living system; the power of the Spirit of God is there. One loves to see young Christians coming into that. There is a living order, and God would bring you into it.

In the case of the leper outside the camp the effect of the judgment of his sin is that he was not fit for the society of God's people. Remember what Ruth said, "Thy people shall be my people", Ruth 1: 16. The Lord knows all about you; you come to know Him and you say, "Thy people shall be my people". Every society in the world is banded against Christ. Is it not a great thing to be linked up with a people that are living though hidden? Our time for display will be when Christ is manifested. Meanwhile He supports you. The Christian has His Spirit. The Shunammite woman, who is called by the Spirit "a wealthy woman" (2 Kings 4: 8), is a continuation of the widow with the oil. Not only were her debts met, but she became a woman of wealth, and lived off the balance. If you recognise the Spirit you are spiritually wealthy. There is no claim against you, not a moral charge, if you live by the Spirit. That is your

income, you live by the Spirit, and so you have a wealthy woman, but not too great to live amongst her own people. Judah is to be brought to his own people. You recognise the Holy Spirit, and now you have your hands, "May his hands strive". The Spirit of God becomes your means of support: "Be thou a help to him", that I take it to be the kingdom established in Christ. The Christian has the support of the Spirit and looks to the Lord for protection. You will be in reproach if you associate with the Lord's people, but you pray and the Lord protects you. It is by the protection of the Lord Jesus you are here looking to Him now; it is wonderful how He comes in for you, so that you are protected and supported.

MOUNTAINS (JT 99)

Genesis 8:4 - 12; Genesis 8:20, 21; Genesis 12: 8; Deuteronomy 33: 15; 2 Peter 1: 16 - 18

The thought that I had in mind to enlarge on is mountains. The first of the ancient mountains as mentioned in the verse in Deuteronomy refers to Joseph's land. Those of us who are conversant with that wonderful chapter will know the setting of the remarkable statement, "Blessed of Jehovah be his land!". Joseph, in that chapter, comes in for the most extensive, exalted and precious features of divine blessing. He represents Christ. To Him the inheritance belongs; the birthright was Joseph's. So that he sets out the thought of Christ as the heir. And Moses calls for the greatest blessing in the most priestly way, on that land. That land, dear brethren, is not to be inherited alone by Christ. We are joint heirs with Him, heirs together, it says, with Christ. This brings in suffering, that as we suffer with Him, we will be glorified with Him. For the blessing is for Joseph who is separated from his brethren, separated not by his own wish, but by their hatred, but he would not be alone. Indeed, the Lord Himself says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit". The "much fruit" is ourselves, the myriads of the redeemed who shall share that land with Him. So this should be of the deepest interest to every one of us. How richly that land is to be blessed! "Blessed of Jehovah be his land!".

But I wish to confine my remarks to the mountains — the ancient mountains and the everlasting hills. Now in referring to mountains, dear brethren, I may remark that they have a great place in Scripture. They are first mentioned, as far as I remember, where I read in Genesis, and they are mentioned by name. Their tops pierced the flood as it receded by the power of God, and we are told that the tops of the mountains were visible. All these mountains were taken into account. Scripture abounds with allusions to them. Ancient and everlasting ones are all in mind. The tops of them have just come into view, emerging from the deluge. As the earth emerged from the earlier deluge according to divine ordering in the first chapter, nothing is said about the tops of the high mountains. No doubt they had appeared first but there is nothing said about the mountains in Genesis 1; but in Genesis 8 the tops of the mountains appeared, as if the Holy Spirit fixes the mind upon them, and they are never to be lost to view henceforth. Scripture never loses sight of them. Indeed the gospel that is marked mostly by them is Matthew. The first one mentioned is used by the devil; it is a solemn thing to see what God intended to be in the mind of faith emerging from the deluge, giving way to the power of the devil, so that he uses it to take the Lord Jesus up to it and show to Him

the panorama of this world and its glory, and he assumes that all that was his. Christians have to realise that the enemy has power to use the mountains, to give you a mistaken view, a panorama of the world to decoy you, to bring you under his power. He does not go to the extent of offering it all to us, but he will offer bits of it. Many have fallen under his power in that way, so that young men are enjoined to "love not the world, nor the things in the world". All the other mountains in Matthew are engaged with what the Lord Jesus would use. The mountains to which the enemy takes us afford us no precious things. There is no blessing from that quarter.

Well now, in making these remarks I wanted to stress that another feature in the mountain is that it is moral elevation. You see how much the judgment rested on the level as compared with the mountain in Genesis 8, so that the higher the elevation, the more what is morally degrading is withdrawn from. Hence in Matthew the first mountain the Lord went to, He sat there. It is a permanent thought and the disciples came to Him there; that is a key really to the subject in Matthew, the Lord sitting on the mount and the disciples coming to Him, and as they arrive He opened His mouth and said "blessed" nine times over. You can see how great the elevation is, and then there is the sense of instruction, a sense of blessing, a sense of quality there, for those nine cases of blessing are nine cases of quality, the fruit of the works of God, and as the Lord proceeds, you remember, three chapters 5, 6 and 7, are employed by the Spirit of God to give us an epitome of what He said on the mount, and the more you look into them, the more clarified your vision becomes as to everything. The most important thing in regard to the assembly is to have clear vision; that is what is needed, especially in relation to the assembly. It is a great thought in Matthew.

Now to go back to Deuteronomy, it speaks of the chief things, or the best things, or the head things, of the ancient mountains; that is, there are better and best in this. Now the word 'ancient', of course, is to direct your mind backwards. The next statement is the precious things of the everlasting hills; that is a forward thought, "the everlasting hills". Now I hope to be able to show a comparison, not minimising the best things of the ancient mountains, but you can see that that word 'precious' is a stronger thought than the word 'best', and so I proceed to consider the first mountain, which I take the liberty of regarding as the ancient mountain. The chapter affords us the things that the Holy Spirit has in mind, the best things, the best things of these mountains, not of all mountains. I want you to follow, dear brethren, what these best things are and share in them, and to share in them now. Nothing we are to have in the future is to be unknown now. The principle is, that I have everything now, not in its fulness or in its blessedness, but I have it in

principle, and if I have it in principle or, as it were, by sample, then I know that when I have it in its fulness it will not be unknown or strange. I shall be a stranger to nothing there, and that can only be by the earnest. God has given us the earnest into our hearts and that means that in principle I have everything that I will have in the future, so that I will be stranger to nothing, so that if I am to understand these things in the ancient mountains, I shall be obliged to look into them and see what they are, and so the Spirit of God tells us that after the long dreary days of the deluge (and one often tries to place oneself alongside of Noah in the ark-what an experience it must have been until the ship grounded. It was no such grounding as the apostle Paul experienced. There was no such pressure at Ararat), the judgment was resting where the ark grounded. It was resting, a very precious touch. We should learn rest, dear brethren, after judgment, after it is spent. That is to say, one can understand the joy, the thrill of salvation as we are grounded firmly on the mountains of Ararat. The great ship found a resting place, with its precious freight of living beings; foodstuffs and the like were not mentioned in that connection at all. We have to learn things spiritually. Food is not the point; the point is life, the matter of the people being alive.

What a thrill in every intelligent person there. What a thrill as the ark grounded firmly on the mountains. Why mountains? It is a spiritual thing, the sure foundation, you see. Well, that is one thought, and it is one of the chief thoughts of the ancient mountains. I ask you to picture it in your own mind what it was to Noah and his sons and their wives, to look out and see the glorious panorama of the tops of the mountains, never again to be out of view, always to be in the view of faith henceforth. And then, dear brethren, another thing comes to light on Ararat besides this precious rest of soul after the judgment is spent, and the precious view, this grand vista of glory; we have to picture and consider ourselves for nearly a year in the deluge-what the vista was!-what was to be seen! And then going further there is the test of love, who was who. It was a question of species of life. Noah sends out the raven, meaning that species of creature. He is to be tested, for if the best things are to be brought into view, we have to be tested for our value.

It is a question of species, *the* raven. It would be carried through in all these trials as of value; now he is going to be tested. Every one of us has to be tested and these best things come out of the tests. That is where quality comes to light in a test, and God will test us. He does it constantly. The raven goes out and never comes back. There is not much in him.

Where is his love? He went to and fro; well, that is not much. There are some christians going to and fro; going hither and thither with no resting place at

all, no place of life. Look at that ark resting on Ararat, a place of life. You cannot get the life else where. It is a question of the assembly. Thousands of christians can go in there. He sends out the dove, another species, that kind of creature is going to be tested, for there is treasure in this test. Now we come to one of the best things; would you not like to be like that, bringing in something like that, some indication of life, such as the olive leaf? He sent out the dove, it was a link with him. This is one of the best things of the ancient mountains. We should be like the dove; she found no resting place for the sole of her foot. It is a moral thought. There is nothing fit for me. When I scan christendom, I see nothing fit for me. The dove could find no place at all, so she came back. There is no time given, but she came back, so Noah put his hand out and took her in to him.

Then he waited and sent her out again. This is another test. What will she do now? The waters are abating. Well, you have the time spent out mentioned this time, a day's work. Every spiritual person thinks of a day's work. We like to be like God, and work by the day. The dove could do nothing the first day outside. The second visit she did something. She came back, and it is very beautiful; the spiritual person coming back to where his love is after his day's work. Barnabas and Paul went out and the brethren laid their hands on them, and they came back with something in their mouths, some evidence of the work of God. Sometimes the brethren come back and say, 'I do not see much change in him': that is a poor thing; when the dove came back she said, 'There is the result of my day's work'. It was a sufficient one! Where did it grow? The ground was covered with death. It must have grown quickly. That was the move of spiritual energy. The corn dies, or it does not bring forth any fruit, so however you look at it, it is a wonderful thing. Here is life spoken of, as if spiritually she recognises life. There was growth in spite of the deluge, and the true workman would go back to his post having accomplished something; otherwise we are just roaming about like the raven.

God is a God of order. Well, she comes out a third time and she does not go back. That is perfect, it means that the judgment of God rests. These are some of the best things of the ancient mountains which we have to bring into Joseph's land so that there may be blessings there. How great is that thought, dear brethren.

The third thought is the altar. You can have nothing without that. In all these mountains I have read about there is an altar in each of them, and here Noah places an altar. We are told that he offered up of all clean fowl and of every clean beast on that altar. That means that Noah was an unselfish worker at Ararat. And that is one of the best things that I can learn, that is to be

unselfish. I hold nothing back from God. The last book in the Old Testament tells how unpleasurable the worshippers were to God, how they dishonoured Him by the kind of offerings they brought. Selfishness marked their offerings. So one of the best things of the ancient mountains is unselfishness at the altar, and God is pleased, for He smelt a sweet savour and He established a firm order of things. That is another good thing to see, the fervency of the divine order of things.

Well, now I go on to the second mountain. It has no name but it is on the east side of Bethel. That is the position in proximity to the house of God, and in gathering that is the place where brethren should pitch their altar. In that vicinity it is blessed. That is one of the best things of the ancient mountains, and that is that I pitch my altar at the mountain in proximity to the house of God. This mountain was not yet named, but the Spirit of God moves Abraham to this mountain. It is faith moving in relation to the house of God by instinct. In fact, I believe we know things by name as we know them in our souls. Abraham had thought extensively, so he pitched his altar at the mountain, on the east side and then in Genesis 22 we have, I suppose, the climax to this subject. We have a mountain later where you get a heap of stones, a witness between two brothers that they should not pass to each other. Think of putting up a heap of stones that I should not pass to you, or that you should not pass to me. Of course they should pass, but that is not the idea. That is not one of the best things, but this mountain in chapter 22 is a chief mountain. God has a great deal of interest in this mountain. "One of the mountains which I will tell thee of" is in "the land of Moriah", which means a place where things are shown. Some say that this is the mountain on which the temple was built. Well,

that is questionable. The idea was that it was shown. This is in the land of Moriah, "one of the mountains which I will tell thee of". I would that we should get that into our souls. We have the great principle set up, the mountain of Jehovah on which will be provided. It is a mountain of Jehovah. You say you would like to get to that mountain. Well, so would I.

The Spirit of God would show it to you tonight. So Abraham and Isaac set out and he sees the place afar off. What I want to bring out is the unfaltering faith of Abraham, and his faith brought him to the point of correspondence with God. Now I want you to follow this. It is the mountain of God in a spiritual way, which is reached by faith. Thus God is reached in this chapter. But it is wonderful as you dwell on this chapter. Isaac is bearing the wood, a type of the Lord Jesus who bore His own cross. Abraham takes with him all the necessaries for the sacrifice. What a test to his faith! God would test Abraham.

Is he equal? We come to one of the finest and best things of the ancient mountains with which the land of Joseph is blessed: faith that will go all the way, even to become correspondent with the blessed God Himself, who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us. That is Abraham. That thought is one of the best things of the ancient mountains. I think it is as God brings us to that, that we find the rich lands. That means that our meetings, our assemblies, should be rich. Abraham walked in love. He never stopped on that way, as he went to Moriah. He walked in love. He would give up his best to God. He who loves God is to keep His commandments. There is no other way to show our love, than by keeping His commandments. If I do not keep His commandments, it is useless to talk about love. Abraham carried out the divine thought perfectly. He was an imitator of God, and walked in love, even as Christ offered Himself up.

That is the mountain. Think of him piling up the wood! It means that there was plenty of it there. His son was to be offered and the wood was piled up, the son was bound to the altar, the knife was in the hand, and the hand was lifted up to slay his son. That is the best thing.

Dear brethren, let us enrich the land of Joseph with these precious things; these best things of the ancient mountains. Well, the time is gone, but let us look at the everlasting hills. I must just say a word and I do not think I can select a better scripture than the one read in Peter. None is more competent to speak about it than Peter, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of *his* majesty", 2 Peter 1: 16. That is a precious thing of the everlasting hills. That is Peter's word too, it is a choice word with Peter. "We ... were eyewitnesses of *his* majesty". He does not say anything about his own failure. That is not anything for Joseph's land. You do not bring self into Joseph's land. Peter slept with the others on the mountain, but he does not mention that here. He speaks about the precious things of the everlasting hills, and he says, "We ... were eyewitnesses of his majesty". What a thought of the majesty of God! Those who know Him love to consider it. There shall be no end to His majesty or His glory; He is Lord of glory. And then he goes on to say, "Such a voice being uttered to him by the excellent glory".

That is a precious thing. How one would love to hear that voice, as a voice from the "excellent glory", one of the precious things. Think of the man who used to be a fisherman, having the vocabulary of heaven from the "excellent glory". He says, "Such a voice being uttered ... . This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight". That is a precious thought of the everlasting

hills-it is an eternal thought. It never ends. It is the delight of the Father in the Son.

He does not say here, "Hear him"; he leaves that out. That was the point of the mount, to hear Jesus, but Peter leaves that out here. He is talking about precious things, and the precious thought is that the Father loves the Son, and that the Father says, "This is my beloved Son". That is an eternal thought. "Hear him" is not the point in this chapter, but we should hear Him now. The point here is the delight of the Father in the Son, and that belongs to Joseph's land. How often we stress it in the assembly as we are gathered together-"This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight". That would be eternal. That precious thing of the everlasting hills is shared by us. Let us bring it into the assembly now, into Joseph's land, the blessings of the everlasting hills. The assembly comes in for a share of all these things, and we are to understand the majesty of Christ and the delight of the Father in Him.

Well, that is all that I had in mind, and may God help us in these matters to be drawn into moral elevation and eternal relations.

LEAPING (JT 99)

Acts 3: 7 - 9; 2 Samuel 22: 30; Deuteronomy 33: 22

I Have been thinking, dear brethren, of the use of the word 'leap' in the Scriptures, and what the Spirit had in mind in using this word. It is an athletic term, which is not foreign to Scripture. Perhaps we wonder at Scripture alluding to the arena and the racecourse, but Scripture was indited by the Holy Spirit, and the power of holiness is never affected by any detrimental element in the sphere of inspiration; indeed, the word in this respect is "To the pure all things are pure". And yet one would warn young minds of things that are in themselves impure-not to play with them. We may safely follow the Spirit of God in His use of language. Even the word 'dancing' has a great place in the Scriptures. It applies to physical ability in itself; the members of the body, the framework, are taxed by the exercise. God Himself, in the parable of the prodigal son, inaugurates the thought of dancing-"music and dancing". The psalmist alludes to it, "As well the singers as the dancers shall say, All my springs are in thee", Psalm 87: 7. That is in Zion-not in the arena or field, but in Zion. That is where we are just now, to be simple. All our springs are drawn from Zion, and I think it wise to begin with an example.

The book of Acts is a book of examples. That book is rightly named; but whose acts are they? Someone would say, The acts of the Holy Spirit. But that will not do. The book is intended to convey human acts, angelic acts; acts of the Spirit of God, too, but we do better to get to the title; not that it is inspired, but it is like many other things, semi-inspired, because it has had such a holy and wide usage. It is as if heaven would say, 'The saints are to be seen in their own setting'. The saints are in their element in this book. No one, if he is a christian, is in his element in any music place or any dance hall or any picture hall or any theatre; he is not in his place at all; he is out of his element. And the Spirit of God would say, You are to be engaged in relation to the book of the Acts. It is the place of acts, a word that is also used in a desecrated way. One of the acts is in this man that I have read of, and another one is Peter. I selected this man to begin with because it is said that immediately Peter took him by the right hand and lifted him up, "leaping up he stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God", Acts 3: 8. He is immediately brought into action, but as usual, there is initiative in the divine action. The great first cause is God in anything that is of Him. And so the action here is distinctly through Peter. The man is taken by the right hand. Peter took him by the right hand and lifted him up. So that I am speaking to the younger brothers and sisters, and the idea of initiative comes down the line from God, as we had it this

afternoon. He selects His vessel, and in no book do we find His selection more than in this. God is going to act and act mediately, and He is bringing in the actors. It is a great honour to have part in such a book as this.

The writer had already written to Theophilus, but lest he might be taken with what are called 'democratic' ideas, Luke is not concerned about that. He is not shutting it out either, the idea of men acting, men as men. But he has selected a man that had a place among men. You cannot imagine that God would leave all the places of distinction to the devil on this earth. We read of seven thousand names of men that were destroyed. God did not give them their names, and they were destroyed in the fall of the city, for they were of the world's system. The world is systematised, involving individual, political, and social distinctions. The devil, of course, makes much of their names, and there were seven thousand names of men that were destroyed at once. If we were to go over the realm of 'Who's Who', we should find a good many in all the country, and they are not diminishing. Seven thousand is a goodly number. There are gradations in it, of course, but the word 'name' covers all, and they come under judgment. Well now, coming to this book, as I said, we have a distinguished man in the opening. "I composed the first discourse, O Theophilus"-it is a slight reduction; he was called "most excellent" earlier. So that we get a good start in this book, not on the line of the seven thousand names, but heavenly names. "Rejoice that your names are written in the heavens".

And so I select one of the names of this book, and he is described by the Spirit: "A certain man who was lame from his mother's womb was being carried, whom they placed every day at the gate of the temple called Beautiful, to ask alms of those who were going into the temple" (verse 2). Well, that is the Spirit's introduction of this man, this actor. He is taken from the dunghill and placed among princes. Peter ennobled him, as he does others in the book. "Peter, looking stedfastly upon him with John, said, Look on us". So that we can see how the idea of personality comes into the scriptural account the Spirit gives of this man; he was, of course, marked by lameness; that is, he was unfit for any distinction on athletic lines. He could never aspire to that naturally. Peter fastened his eyes upon him. These are words of great importance as to this book-what is to be worthy of our eyes. The book of Leviticus makes a great deal of the priest's eyes, and where we are defiled by sin, any of us (I hope none of us is), we have to do with the priest's eyes, that is, God's eyes through the priests. "All things are naked and laid bare to his eyes, with whom we have to do", Hebrews 4: 13. So the priest fixes his eyes on anyone who is erring from the truth and is turning aside. But this is not the point here; the point here would be the eyes of the apostle, the eyes of a

person who had power to help. The priest's eye is discriminating. He names the thing, whatever it be, whether it be a white hair or a black hair. There is distinction as to colour, and that, of course, is necessary, but what the man needed here was a question of power. It says, "Peter, looking stedfastly upon him, with John", showing that this book brings out the idea of association with persons, two or more. It is a great thing to have two associated. I say a great thing because there is blessing in two associated together in the fellowship. But the idea of special links, making special links among ourselves, is to be abhorred. With Peter and John, if their links were special it was because they were formed by the workmanship of Christ; they were made fishers of men. The Lord said to Peter and Andrew, I will make you fishers of men. They were made by the Lord, and their special links are safe. They are associated in what the book indicates, which is the fellowship. The fellowship of the apostles is really one of the leading points in the book. "Our fellowship is indeed with the Father, and with his Son" (1 John 1: 3); the twelve of them are linked in special fellowship, and here Peter and John are linked together. But Peter was the one who looked on the impotent man; he fixed his eyes on him. It is a most serious matter to offend the divine eye in that sense, because it acts mediately; it acts through others, and in this case it was on the poor lame man who had no distinction at all save that he was lame and a beggar. But he is going to be distinguished, taken up from the dunghill and set among princes. That is what is going to happen, and that is what has happened to all of us who are christians, and I believe most of us have been taken from the dunghill and set among princes. Therefore how great it is to have men linked together by heaven; one of them fixed his eyes on this man. Later on, another great servant (that is Paul, another great actor in the book) has to do with a similar man, and it is said of him by the Spirit that Paul saw that he had faith to be healed. That is not said of this man, but it is true of him, as the sequel shows. I would remind the brethren of the necessity for having faith if we are to come into the things of God at all, or to have any part in what He is doing. "Without faith it is impossible to please him", Hebrews 11:6. It says of the man whom Paul healed that he "heard Paul speaking, who, fixing his eyes on him, and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Rise up straight upon thy feet and he sprang up and walked", Acts 14: 9, 10. He was raised in the same sense, but I am not going to speak further of him. My point here is that he leaped up, it says, "Peter ... having taken hold of him by the right hand he raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones were made strong".

I want to work up from the bottom in this man. Most of us work from the top, even spiritually, and in a certain sense that is right, because God needs our

mouths and eyes and ears, but then we may stop too soon in the downward course. This man began down at the bottom, his feet and ankle bones. So we must not hide behind our diseased feet. Mephibosheth was lame on both his feet, and sometimes we say his feet were under the table, but not always. You cannot always hide your feet under the table. There are feet-examiners as well as eye-examiners, and you have to look after your feet, where they take you and where you go. You cannot hide your feet. You cannot say, My heart is right but my feet are not. You cannot hide behind your feet when you have bad ways. The feet must be dealt with, and that is the first thing that is in mind here. It says, "And having taken hold of him by the right hand he raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones were made strong". Where would those feet go now? Our feet need examining. Jesus' feet were feet for anointing and the woman in Simon's house did that. His feet are mentioned several times. Many of us have often touched on the frequency with which the word 'feet' is introduced in Luke 7. But there was one person there whose feet could hardly be anointed then, but she anointed the feet of Jesus. She knew those feet deserved anointing. The Lord later said to her, "Go". That means, 'Use your feet', and it implies that her feet were affected. The Lord's feet were anointed by her with myrrh. How beautiful that she should have myrrh! If God is working with us and things are to be done, we shall have the means wherewith to do them. The Samaritan had the means wherewith to look after the needs of the poor man that fell among the thieves. He had the means with him, and so had the woman in Simon's house. She certainly did not borrow from Simon, and the Lord in due course said to her, "Go". How could He say, "Go" to her unless she had feet that could be guided? She would never go to a picture show any more with those feet. She would not go anywhere that could not be approved by the divine eye.

Well now, here you will observe that "immediately his feet and ankle bones were made strong. And leaping up he stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God". Now I just touch on these matters, because spiritually we are simply out of it unless we are in these things, simply out of it as to any special recognition of heaven: first the feet, then the ankle bones, then the idea of leaping, then the idea of walking, and then the idea of praising God. But where did the thing begin? Sometimes we seek to help souls, and we meet people that have no record at all of their spiritual birth, no record of their conversion, no record of any such event as this. Well, their christianity is simply doubtful; it is just doubtful and worse. There must be a beginning spiritually. There must be a beginning in everything. If the creation is made out of nothing, its beginning is with God. Jesus is the first-born of all creation. There must be a beginning, and anyone

who has no record of his beginning is just out of it. He is doubtful, and I should not go around this world with any such papers. They are no papers at all; they have no credentials in them. Even if I have had credentials I have not got them now. All this is what is going on now — what can I use now in my walk and ways? My point here is that the leaping is first. That idea is stressed. He leaps, and that immediately. Peter looked on him and took him by the right hand, that is where the link is. The universe is one thing; judaism is one thing; Israel is one thing; christianity is one thing; the human race is one thing. It has a beginning, and so with each of you. You must go back to the beginning. Whence the beginning? Here the beginning is not that Peter fixed his eyes on the man, or even that he gave him his right hand, but that is really the point. He fixed his eyes on him, took him by the right hand and lifted him up. At any time in the future you may be certain this man would say, I will never forget that, when Peter took me by the right hand. It was a transaction. It was a delegated transaction. It was from God, and that is the way it is with every christian. What are they without history? I must have a history in heaven, and what is my history among the brethren? It must correspond with heaven if it is real. And this man's history really was morally in the link that Peter established with him in taking him by the right hand, and the power began there. It was delegated power flowing out through Peter to him. Now what I am saying is most important, because we are challenged constantly as to our history, and as to what we are at the present moment; and what we have to bring forth.

One could say a good deal about the papers we have to carry now. Aliens have to carry certain papers, or to be sure they have them within ready reach. The Government relies upon us. And so it is with those in the assembly, the searching character of the Spirit of God is sure to light upon us, to fix His eyes on each of us. And then there is this matter as to whether I have got any power. Peter took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and he, leaping up, stood. He never needed Peter's support again. It is what I get inwardly by the link which is from God. This man, we are told, leaped up, and as I said, illustrates the idea of superiority, beginning down at the bottom with the feet and ankle bones, and reaching up to the knees; it applies, as we get elsewhere, to the loins, so that we are able to swim. We must know something about all these members and their actions, and swimming is another divine word. "Waters to swim in", waters are waiting for the believer to swim in, and without these members that I mention, we cannot swim, nor can we leap. This man leaped and walked and then afterwards walked and leaped, as much as to say, we are going back to the proper order. When I was a babe, I began to walk, maybe when I was twelve or fifteen months. I did not leap then. So that the first idea is the transmission of power as a believer

through the right hand. He leaped up and "stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God". That is the order in which the power comes and operates. That is the general idea, I have power to leap, but that definite order is in mind, and I go back to the walking, and then to leaping, and then to praising God. That is a very wonderful thought, standing in the assembly and praising God, but what about the feet? We come afterwards to dancing, but you need the feet for dancing, the whole being is brought into the thing, the Spirit of God operating in each member. It is a living situation, dear brethren, that is in mind and the order that God has is walking first. Naturally, it would be creeping, but it is not creeping here. It is walking, first, and then leaping. He is walking and leaping and praising God, and it implies that I am doing this in the strength that I have. I have the strength in myself that I need for walking and leaping, and I am turning it to account and praising God.

This is, I might call it, the beginning of my subject, and I cannot go very far beyond, just enough to get to this idea of being made to live by the heavenly touch, and that we are to be associated together in our praise. No one is to be like a wandering star, which is out of hand. The morning stars were not out of hand when they sang together. Dear brethren, these are great thoughts for us, practical thoughts for us to have, so that we might praise God in the leaping and in the walking, reverting to the source of the power, that is, God. We are made to live also, but the whole idea is that of reverting to the source, so that he praised God. And then it is said not only that he did that, but all the people saw him walking and praising God, as much as to say that we must have the walk anyway. The leaping may be left out. It is already there, but the walking and the praising God are normal things among christians, but not praising God by itself. It is the walking and praising God that the people saw, and it is a great testimony, that you can walk and at the same time praise God; people take notice of that.

Well now, in Samuel, I only want to show how the idea proceeds in the believer. There is great education in this second book of Samuel that touches on this matter of leaping, and that is what we saw in Acts 3.

David says, "For by thee I have run through a troop; by my God have I leaped over a wall". David is a believer; he is a type of the believer and his song is largely due to his experiences with God. "I have been young, and now am old, and I have not seen ...".

That is where he has it. This is his dying word. Let us face that. It is for us, no doubt, dear brethren. The coming of the Lord is near, but for most of us it may

be death. For David, it was very near in this chapter. He speaks about the last words of David.

It is how you are in the last moment, you know. One wants to be right in the last hours. This is largely David's book, the first and second books of Samuel, but especially this second book. The twenty-second chapter is a great song, one that David had composed; it may be a great deal earlier as he incorporated it in the Psalms, in the first book, and he says, I will put a title in the beginning of it. That makes it worthy of its place in the book of Psalms; it is a song here.

Psalm 18 is this song, and verse 30 here says: "By my God have I leaped over a wall"; it is not simply by God, but by my God. He had a God, you know. Sometimes you are prone to ask some brother or sister, Who is your God, whom do you worship? David says, "My God", Paul says, "My God"; Jesus says, "My God". And I thank God that I can say that, "My God". Paul says, "But my God shall abundantly supply all your need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus", Philippians 4: 19. And so David says here, "By my God have I leaped over a wall". That means a lot, you know. He had overthrown the Philistines by his God, and he did many other things by his God, and he could have said that these things were done by God. But he says *he* did them by "my God". Let us get the idea not only to walk and leap and praise as the result of a touch of Peter in the first flush of conversion, but let us learn through real experiences, because David is a man of experience and he can tell us of many things that he did by God, and one was that he leaped over a wall by God. Many an athlete has leaped over a wall, but not by God. Many of us have perhaps leaped over a wall, but not by God; that is, we get into difficulties, even dangers it may be, and we get out of them by our own ingenuity or cleverness it may be, but that is not what David says here. He says it is not by them but by God. I would like to ask what wall it was and why it was he had to do that. Paul had to go over a wall. It does not say that he leaped over it by God nor by any one. He was let down by the brethren. It is worth while to face that; that one can submit oneself to the brethren. He escaped from the king of Damascus through the way the brethren let him down. It is a very wholesome thing to be let down sometimes. They lowered him over the wall through a window. It is a remarkable thing that there should have been a window in the wall at Damascus. We read of the street called Straight, but I think it would be very interesting to know what that window in Damascus was like. I believe that street is there to this very day, but I do not suppose there would be any monument set up to commemorate the window. Paul says, I was let down through a window and I escaped his hands. But the brethren did not help David. We may get into straits by ourselves, and none of

us is much when we get into a strait. When you get into a strait things seem despicable, but God can take you out of them, and that is what David has in mind here. He was in some strait place, and God enabled him to leap over a wall. We are told in one instance that when Saul was set to slay him, his wife Michal, who had enough good in her to let him down by a window, helped him to get over a wall to flee his father-in-law. The devil attacks us through our natural relatives sometimes. They are close to us and have some advantage, but then the Lord used Michal, who was a natural relative, to save David, but he is not alluding to that here. He is alluding to some other wall, and says, "By my God". I am stressing now that it is the simple thought of experience. David is picturing himself as a man who learned how to use God. Pardon my using that expression, but he says, "By my God", and that is superiority. "By my God have I leaped over a wall".

In Deuteronomy 33 Moses, the man of God, blesses the tribes of Israel; some of the tribes are not mentioned by name, but Dan is not left out. He is left out in other places, but not in this; as much as to say, if Dan is the first to introduce idolatry into Israel, he straightened it out. If a man or brother gets into difficulty, sometimes you think you can say just anything against him. People are very free in saying things against a brother if he has a bad name. It is a horrible thing to have a bad name, but it can be changed into a good name. Why not? God blesses, you know, as well as curses. The book of Deuteronomy has a blessing and a curse, but this chapter is not a chapter of cursing. It is a chapter of blessing, and that is why I venture to speak of Dan as he is here. I would say to anybody who has a bad name, and has himself to blame for it, that God can change that name and turn it into a blessing. Dan, when his father was blessing, was included like the rest, but at the same time Jacob says, "Dan will be a serpent on the way ... which biteth the horse's heels", Genesis 49: 17. The allusion is to Dan the bad, Dan the apostate, Dan the idolator, but he is Dan the blessed. He was blessed of his father and that blessing can never be reversed. We must be on our guard about saying what we like about a brother or sister who may have a bad reputation, because in spite of what was said about Dan in Genesis 49, he was blessed. It is a question of what a man is as the subject of the work of God, so do not forget what he has been or what he really is abstractly. Dan was blessed according to Jacob's blessing, and now Moses has a say in the matter, and Moses is the lawgiver. I would be more afraid of Moses than of Jacob. Pardon my homely remarks. I would be much more afraid of criticism from Moses, because he is the lawgiver. He has a peculiar place with God, and he is now saying something about Dan, and he is not telling us that he bit the horse's heels: Moses is not saying that here. Let us have our blessing words ready and forget

many of our cursing words! Cursing is necessary at times, but blessing is always necessary. When there is nobody to bless on earth, then the Spirit of God is not on the earth. There is always somebody to bless. You say, What about Adam and Eve? how long did they remain without a blessing? A very, very short time. There was somebody to bless all the time while Adam sinned. I want to be among those who bless and curse not. Let us learn to bless, as Moses here is blessing. "And this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel", Deuteronomy 33: 1. He was king in Jeshurun. He has a great charge. He is king among the righteous and dwells among an upright people; I would be afraid of anything that is to be arraigned or condemned if Moses sits down on the judge's seat. The Lord speaks of those that sat in Moses' seat, and there is such a thing as that. Let us not forget that! that there is such a thing, but then the Moses who is there is the blesser. Our Moses is Christ, and He went up to heaven blessing. He stretched out His hands and blessed them, and so it is now. And that is why I ventured to speak about Dan, not as under a curse. As in Christ, he is blessed, whatever else you make of him. God blessed him. It says in verse 22, "Dan is a lion's whelp; he shall leap from Bashan". We have got to find out about this brother- how he has got out of the difficulty. He has got into an unholy place, and he has got out of it. He has gone up in power. What can I say about him now? He is out of it. Bashan is called the great place of strong ones, there are bulls there that encompass Christ, but that is not the point. We must read Scripture contextually, and if a man as seen in this chapter is blessed by Moses as leaping from Bashan, then Moses is saying something of him as a brother, and we are to leave off our cursing for a little while. We may have to use it again, but leave it off. Dan is blessed. He is left out of it sometimes, but he is blessed, and the blessing is irrevocable. "The gifts and the calling of God are not subject to repentance", Romans 11: 29. And so it is that I ventured to bring Dan in last after David, a man who learned to do things by God. This man learned to do things in his own power and to do big things; leaping from Bashan belongs to Deuteronomy, and we are to understand Dan, what he has been. Moses says, Do not disrespect him any more. He belongs to the blessed. He is of the family of the blessed. He is amongst those of whom it is said, "What hath God wrought!". So we are to learn not simply to leap, or leap over a wall, but to leap from somewhere. Dan has been in Bashan and has leapt out of it. May God bless the word!

THE SERVICE OF CHRIST IN LEADERSHIP (3) (SMC 4)

Isaiah 63: 11 - 14; Exodus 2: 15 - 25; Exodus 3: 1 - 6; Exodus 15: 13 - 17; Deuteronomy 33: 1 - 5

SMcC The service of Christ in leadership, and also the spirit of it working out amongst the saints in administrative service, care for them is before us. We come now to Moses - an outstanding type of Christ, and an outstanding example of leadership amongst the people of God. When we come to Moses, I suppose we come to what is really unique in a man like ourselves, because as J.N.D. says of Moses in the Synopsis on Deuteronomy, he was a man who scarce had his equal, Him excepted Who had none, that is Jesus. But amongst men there was scarcely the equal of Moses, because there are certain things said of Moses that are never said of any other man in the scriptures. Great as David was, the things that were said of Moses were never said of David. So that Moses in a sense is unique. It is said that the form of Jehovah doth he behold. That is a unique expression in regard to Moses, that we do not find, said of anybody else. And another expression that we get in regard to Moses that is not said of anybody else is, "See, I have made thee God to Pharaoh." Not made thee *as* God, or made thee *for* God, but "I have made thee God to Pharaoh." It points to Christ in the mediatorial position. So that we should see that there is a certain uniqueness entering into leadership as we have it in Moses, yet principles set out in it which are to be of great gain in the working out of this great administrative service linked with the flock, the people of God. It is remarkable how the passage comes into Isaiah. We should see in Isaiah the way that God seems to have pleasure in bringing up this matter of Moses' ministry and Moses' service, and the great ends that were in mind in it, that is, God making Himself an everlasting Name - a distinctive feature entering into Moses' leadership of the people. And in fact in Isaiah, Moses' leadership is merged in God's leadership. And then in Exodus we should see how the service of God is in mind, both in chapter 3 and in chapter 15 in the song. And then in Deuteronomy 33, the finishing touch in Moses' service, the glory of the saints, the work of God in the saints. Numbers 21 having been passed, the brazen serpent and the springing well having been arrived at, the people in the land of Moab about to cross over, we get a wonderful review of the work of God by Moses, which again serves to set out the greatness of the man Moses, who was meek above all those on the earth.

JHH Do you see in God's ways with Moses at the very outset, the training for a leader?

SMcC You do. It starts very early with him. The parental care, his baptism, the way he was trained by his mother, all would enter into what the man was constitutionally; showing the great part that parental care and early training has in our part for the testimony.

PB Is there a link between this in Isaiah 63, "But he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people," with what Paul says to Timothy, "Remember Jesus Christ raised from among the dead, of the seed of David, according to my glad tidings, in which I suffer even unto bonds as an evil-doer: but the word of God is not bound. For this cause I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that *they* also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory"? Would that fit in there?

SMcC Well it would. We are to allow divine Persons to bring into our minds the glory of leadership in that way.

PRP Is there some significance in the fact that Moses is linked with the people? It says, "Moses and his people," and then, "with the shepherds of his flock."

SMcC Yes, showing how the flock was cared for. "Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he that put his holy Spirit within him," - a remarkable allusion to Moses. "His glorious arm." What a reference to God! "His glorious arm leading them by the right hand of Moses, dividing the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name." Showing the greatness of this leadership in Moses, that glory enters into it.

JC Does not Stephen elaborate on that in his address in Acts 7? He distinguishes Moses.

SMcC Yes, whereas in Acts 13 David seems to stand out. But Stephen makes a good deal of Moses, especially it being the final word to Israel, as it were. They made a good deal of Moses, and Stephen makes a good deal of Moses.

NBS Would you say a word as to the prominence of the Holy Spirit in this passage in Isaiah, and in Exodus typically?

SMcC It is important that we should see in the type this matter of the Spirit, because it is a remarkable expression, almost a mysterious expression, in Isaiah 63: 11. I think it is to intensify in our minds this thought of spiritual leadership. "Where is he that put his holy Spirit within him." And Moses sat by the well in Exodus 2. I think it is to cast us back upon the importance of the Spirit in the matter of leadership, and especially when we come to the service

of God, because we worship God by the Spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh. "We ... boast in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in flesh."

ENJ Moses really had to be brought to that. When he first went out in his own strength, Stephen says of that occasion, "he thought that his brethren would understand." But now as you say, he is under the control of the Holy Spirit, and it almost synchronises with what God does Himself.

SMcC That is a lesson every one of us has to learn; that is, to rely on the Spirit constantly in all that we do, and in all that we say. However keen our minds may be, and retentive our memories, and absorbing our minds in ability to gather up the ministry, we must always remember the necessity of making room for the Spirit.

ENJ Was it somewhat the same in Elihu's case, who could speak of the Spirit, and he spoke in a spiritual way, and then it is difficult to tell when God takes the matter up?

SMcC Just so. And we see the results of this kind of administrative service in verse 13, "who led them through the depths, like a horse in the wilderness, and they stumbled not? As cattle go down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah gave them rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name." When you think of the history of the wilderness, and all that entered into their coming up out of Egypt and through the sea, through the wilderness, this imparts a wonderful impression to us in regard to the position there. We might say that many of the details would show the contrary, but here it is.

GJG The thought of the cattle going down into the valley, suggests a restful scene, does it not? It is restful. Would that enter into leadership even in the sea and in the wilderness, as it is said?

SMcC That would be the point, that right leadership would involve this matter of the people of God entering into rest. We see that in the great service of the Lord Jesus, how it has in mind to lead us into rest. That is, He is the Lord of the sabbath. When He was taken up by those that criticised Him. He emphasises this fact that He is the Lord of the sabbath. "The Son of man is Lord of the sabbath," Matthew 12: 8. That is that He is the administrator of rest. In His administrative service He brings souls into rest.

JC Would all leading be from God; and the leader, whoever he may be, instrumental to that?

SMcC Yes. All right leadership is of God, and God is represented in it. And it is touching to think that it says here, "he remembered the days of old, Moses

and his people." Not just His people, but "Moses and his people." I think perhaps God would bring into our minds this kind of thing, what has gone before us in the way of spiritual leadership and ministry, along with the people.

JHH I have often wondered why Paul discoursed till midnight in Acts 20? I was wondering if there was a danger of them stumbling. He discoursed at length before they broke bread. Was that spiritual leadership in Paul?

SMcC Yes, a kind of leadership that enters into the whole dispensation. That is, the breaking of bread is regulated in the light of Paul's ministry, that is, it enters into and imparts a touch to the whole dispensation.

FW Is your thought to identify for us the true spiritual leadership with Christ personally?

SMcC Yes, and how the spirit of it works out amongst the saints.

FW And in the end of verse 11, it says, "Where is he that put his holy Spirit within him." Is that God putting His Holy Spirit in Moses? "His glorious arm." That is, God's glorious arm, is it? "Leading them by the right hand of Moses." So that God and the Holy Spirit and Moses are all identified there with the position.

SMcC It helps us to see the authority that enters into ministry, the distinctive ministry that we are all the products of. The authority, divine authority, entering into it. Ministry is not infallible. Ministry is not the scriptures. The scriptures stand alone as the divinely inspired word of God. Ministry is not divinely inspired, but ministry carries the weight and stamp of divine authority; as it says here, "His glorious arm leading them by the right hand of Moses." That is, God is in the matter.

FW So do you mean that we are to look for that element in connection with leadership, so that we get a spiritual consciousness that it is Christ and not a certain leader?

SMcC Well, that would be the point in all true ministry and in all true ministers, that they leave an impression upon your soul of Christ. Christ, of course, is the ascended Man in heaven. The gifts come from Him, and His own stamp is on all the ministry.

FW And is that how it becomes authoritative amongst the saints? Not just the ability of the servant, but the spiritual impression that is brought in by spiritual power?

SMcC That is where the authority lies, in what the servant has from Christ as the ascended Head. The authority lies in the commission; although there is another side, for there are two words for authority in the Acts, one entering into the idea of a commission; but the other, "dunamis," referring to the power linked with the ministry, that is the ability to set the truth out, dynamic power, as we see it in the Acts. "Peter, standing up with the eleven." He had his commission, but then as having the Spirit he had the ability to set out the truth in a remarkable way, divinely given.

PB So it says of the Holy Spirit, "He shall not speak from himself; ... he shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you." Does that come in where it says, "Dividing the waters before them, to make himself and everlasting name," and then, "so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name." Is that what you have in mind in regard to ministry, that the name of Christ, and the glory of Christ, might be prominent in ministry in the power of the Spirit?

SMcC It is not to make ourselves a name, it is to make a name for God. God is making Himself a name, as it says, "to make himself an everlasting name." Ministry is not to make anything of us. It is to make everything of Christ and of God.

GWB David went to meet Goliath. He says, "I come to thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts."

SMcC Take the ministry of J.T. that was given in this city in 1947. What was in it? Paul's militant ministry, dealing with what had arisen in Corinth - leaders in Corinth that were making themselves a name to distinguish themselves. That is the point. The ministry has in mind that God is making Himself an everlasting name, not that men should make a name for themselves.

WHF And is this typically a suggestion of the absence of the Lord Jesus? Chapter 61 would be the Lord personally. Would this be the glorious Name, as a result of the leadership of the Holy Spirit now making much of Christ during his absence?

SMcC That is, whether God or Christ, the whole point is that an everlasting Name is made for divine Persons in this kind of leadership. And we should all be concerned in our local gatherings that, as the Spirit of Christ is working out amongst the brethren, and administrative service is operating in care for the flock, the whole point in view is what is said here, that God might make Himself an everlasting Name.

WJB And as a result of that leadership, the saints do not stumble, and they enter into rest. Is that so?

SMcC That is the point. There is no stumbling. "They stumbled not." And "as cattle go down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah gave them rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name." The adverb "so" is to be noted. This is the way it was done.

FW Is that why the matter is unique? That if the ministry and administration is seen to be identified with Christ Himself, there can be no rival ministry and no rival leadership?

SMcC No, exactly. And it is important that the spirit of rivalry should be eliminated, because there is plenty of room for what there is among the saints, for every impression of Christ; and it is important that we should see what the Lord may be doing in a distinctive way at any time; always keeping in mind what is said here, "He remembered the days of old, Moses and his people." I suppose it would enter into all the ministry that has gone before, J.N.D. and F.E.R., and J.T., into the great principles of leadership where the Spirit of Christ has been expressed in leading the saints forward in this day of recovery and revival that Isaiah is contemplating.

JD Would the word in the end of Hebrews help as to this? "Remember your leaders who have spoken to you the word of God; and considering the issue of their conversation, imitate their faith." And then again, "Obey your leaders, and be submissive; for *they* watch over your souls as those that shall give account."

SMcC That is a salutary word, that we should remember those that have gone before, that have spoken to us the word of God, and value all that has come to us, as they have represented God in their service. Now we come over to Exodus. We see how this is all working out practically in the initial position in Moses, where the matter of the well comes up, and the watering of the flock; and then Zipporah coming into view, the assembly coming into view, as the assembly will come rightly into view in all right leadership according to God, and in all true administrative service. And then in the opening of the third chapter, how the service of God is in mind.

CEJ I was wondering if what we get here in this section, is seen peculiarly in the way Paul moves in relation to the Corinthian saints as in the spirit of Christ; and he was amongst false shepherds, was he not? But he helped the saints, and watered them. And what was in his mind was the assembly, as in the second epistle, "I have espoused you unto one man."

SMcC What a model Paul is for us in his service to the Corinthians. What a spirit of Christ shines in his service in the way that he cared for them, the care of the flock that was on his heart. It is an important thing to see this, that

linked with every administrator in the Old Testament is this matter of care for the flock. It is an integral part, you might say, of administrative ability and leadership in the Old Testament.

GM Was Moses concerned about leadership in Numbers 27?

SMcC Yes, that they be "not as sheep that have no shepherd." That is, what is in his soul comes out in what he says. That was what marked the man constitutionally. There were two things outstanding in Moses' administrative service; they were the great impression he had of God, and the great impression that he had of the saints.

PB So Moses has to learn the faithfulness of God in relation to His people under all circumstances; and Paul, in addressing the Corinthians, although there were those who wanted to make a name for themselves, addresses them in the light of what they are as God's assembly - the thorn-bush burning but not consumed, would you say?

SMcC Well, what a touching reference that is. We think of the greatness of what is involved in it. Whether we think of it in relation to Christ as in incarnation according to John, the Word tabernacling among us, becoming flesh, or whether we think of it in relation to the saints, the marvel of the divine presence in these circumstances.

JNG Does the care for the flock seen in the administrators in the Old Testament you have spoken of, come out before there is any official commission given to them?

SMcC That is an important thing, that before Moses gets his commission, he is marked by certain administrative features, certain features of leadership, so it is not exactly what is handed over to him like a piece of paper, it is what the man is that comes upon our view in this section, as it says in verse 17, "the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses rose and helped them, and watered their flock." Notice how that expression "helped" comes in. "Moses rose and helped them." He had been sitting by the well. Well, it is like our readings. The shepherds would represent elements that are abroad in the professing body that hinder the saints getting a spiritual ministry; but Moses rising and helping them shows how spiritual ministry in the type comes to the saints.

WJB-n So that when it says, "Why are ye come so soon today?" would that indicate that this ministry is finding its way into the hearts of the saints? Prosperity in that way?

SMcC That is a good word. "Why are ye come so soon today?" That would be a good word after our care meetings. I mean if Moses comes in and helps, as having sat by the well, maybe someone would say, "Why are ye come so soon today?" Perhaps we need a little of this to help us on administrative lines; not that the care meeting is administrative, but it has in view what is administrative.

RCMcC Is that the result of Moses' service, the "so soon"?

SMcC That is the point. When you get spiritual leadership coming into matters, especially marked by sitting by the well, making room for the Spirit, not a question of business ability, business keenness and the like. It is a question of persons who can do things by the Spirit; and so the word is, "Why are ye come so soon today?" That is, matters were dealt with with alacrity.

GWB So is there a touch in the daughters' testimony? They say, "An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water abundantly for us, and watered the flock."

SMcC Yes, I suppose that if Moses had heard that word, he would have felt a little humbled by it. It might have been a good thing, too, because I suppose the way he acted in the beginning of the chapter took on that Egyptian character; but then a great inward change has come about, and we are to recognise this, you see. We might get occupied with Moses in the beginning of the chapter, but we want to get occupied with Moses now, that he is helping on in the truth, and he is doing things that you would say would bring in divine support.

JD I was going to ask if it is noticeable that first of all it is what Moses does.

SMcC Well it is, and we who are here are to be on the line of helping, are we not. We are helping one another.

JD I was thinking of what you are saying in regard to doing things by the Spirit.

SMcC An important thing, that if we are to help rightly, we should learn to do things by the Spirit. That enters into the care meeting as well as anywhere else.

JHH Is the care meeting a place where there is great teaching? Where the young are taught? And if it is not conducted rightly, they are not being taught rightly. Is not that a solemn matter?

SMcC The care meeting is our education in view of the world to come, because we are going to serve in the millennium. Questions will have to be

answered in the millennium, and whatever need might be existent in the way of help in regard to the truth and the knowledge of God, the saints of the assembly will serve in that capacity; and the care meeting is a great learning time in connection with these matters.

PB Those shepherds were apparently connected with their own interests, because it says "The hand of the shepherds." But Moses has power, has he not? How wonderful is the power of Moses to be able to deliver them out of the hand of the shepherds.

SMcC You notice it does not say the *hands* of the shepherds. It is the *hand* of the shepherds. They were all together in the matter of keeping the flock from getting the water.

KAW It was taken account of that Moses had been drawing on the Spirit, you may say; and is that the kind of leadership that is going to help us?

SMcC It is. It is what helps us in every circumstance, and it is well that the young men and young women should take it on too, this matter of sitting by the well. So that whatever we do or whatever we say, it is done and said as by the Spirit.

WJB The man himself becomes characterised by the Spirit, that is to say spiritual. Is that right?

SMcC So at the end of Deuteronomy, in chapter 32, he says, "Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak," and so on. He appeals to the earth, "My speech flow down as dew." The whole passage there points out that the man is characterised by the Spirit.

PB According to this scripture, it would not be right, would it, for certain brothers to arrange beforehand what they are going to take up at a care meeting? Would not Moses be a man who in spiritual power would deliver the brethren out of the hand of such considerations by persons?

SMcC Moses is remarkable in the way he comes into the matter and takes care of what is needed, what needs to be taken care of, as being a man of resource, having sat by the well.

JC Is not Reuel's second question as important as the first? "Where is he? why then have ye left the man behind?"

SMcC It is important that we bring him in, that we do not leave him out. Remember how in 1 Samuel 16 they left David out. Here too, they received the gain of the administrative service, but left the man outside. That is what is

generally done in christendom, that Christ is left outside, but we must bring Him in.

ENJ At the end of Hebrews, in relation to what is said about leaders, one of the remarks is, "Salute all your leaders." That was what they neglected here, to salute Moses.

SMcC Well, it is interesting to see that the assembly comes into view in Zipporah along this line, where things are being done. It is not just a matter of talk with Moses, things are being done, and the assembly comes into view on that line.

PRP Does this also lead up to the mountain of God and the service of God?

SMcC That is what is in mind in a prime way; as it says, "And Moses tended the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock behind the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God - to Horeb." Now we have brought to our minds here the whole scope and range of Moses' administrative service. The unfolding of the law, all the light as to the tabernacle system, the whole idea of the service of God, is suggested in what is done here. "He led the flock behind the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God - to Horeb."

JD Is it suggestive that Zipporah, involving what you are saying in regard to the assembly, is brought in prior to that?

SMcC Yes, light comes in as to her in the end of chapter 2, before the mountain of God comes into view - not that we can say too much about it. And then again in chapter 18, before the service is formally set forward, she again comes into view, preceding chapter 19 and onwards in Exodus.

WLW In Revelation 15, there is a victorious company who have harps of God, and "They sing the song of Moses bondman of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and wonderful are thy works, Lord God Almighty," and so on, ending up with the thought, "O Lord, and glorify thy name."

SMcC Yes, what have you in mind linking that with what we have here?

WLW The thought of the service of God, in the harps of God and the company praising.

SMcC So that this matter of the service of God is a prime matter in the working out of administrative service of this kind. Tending the flock - not now only specific care, although that is entering into it - but the matter of the service of God, the mountain of God, Horeb. And then the revelation of God connected with it. We come to something new now, what is revealed, the

revelation of this wondrous name that comes into this chapter. It is linked with Moses in this service as to the mountain of God.

JHH I was wondering too, if we could see in some sense a similarity with the touch Moses is getting now as to the greatness of the people of God, the thorn-bush not consumed. God in the midst of His people, and being called, "Moses, Moses!" and Saul of Tarsus getting that touch, "Why dost thou persecute me?" It was "Saul, Saul." Would there be a similarity there?

SMcC So you look upon the saints in relation to the disciplinary ways of God; you see their sufferings and their trials and their afflictions; you see as it were the thorn-bush burned with fire, and yet it is not consumed; they are not consumed because God is there, and not there just in an arbitrary way, but there in relation to His good pleasure. "The good will of him that dwelt in the bush." A wonderful expression.

JC Have we not been defective in this land in our thoughts as to administration? We have limited it to what is corrective, whereas what is in mind is the emergence of assembly features and the consequent service of God.

SMcC So that it is most interesting to notice, that one of the distinctive features of the authoritative ministry that we are all the products of, has been the place that administration in the local assembly has. The local assembly, and administration linked with it, has been an outstanding feature of the ministry of the last fifty years.

PB Do you think that God takes account of what we are seeing? Firstly it says, "And Moses said, Let me now turn aside and see this great sight, why the thorn-bush is not burnt," and then it says, "Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, and God called to him out of the midst of the thorn-bush and said, Moses, Moses!" Is there something in that, as to what God takes account of, as to those that would have the spirit of shepherding His people?

SMcC I think that is a word for all of us, as to whether we are turning aside, whether this sight impresses us; all the difficulties and the sorrows of the saints, but God amongst them. And they are not consumed, the position is maintained. It is a great sight and worthy of turning aside to see.

CEJ Would you say why the thorn-bush was not being consumed? Moses in verse 3 said, "Let me now turn aside and see this great sight, why the thorn-bush is not burnt." He wanted to know why it was not burnt. Would you say a word as to that?

SMcC Because God is there. That is the whole point, that God is there. For it says, "God called to him, out of the midst of the thorn-bush and said, Moses, Moses!"

JM Is that like Malachi, where we read, "I Jehovah change not, and ye, sons of Jacob, are not consumed?" And later He says, "Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of Hosts." Is that an indication of the feelings of God in relation to His people, He never gives them up?

PB I wonder if you would help us as to your remark as to the thorn-bush applying to Christ? How does it apply to Christ?

SMcC Well, from another angle, the lowly circumstances into which He came, "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us;" tabernacled among us. The lowly external circumstances in which Christ was here, God was there in the position.

CW I was wondering as to the end of Luke, where the Lord comes to the disciples and opens up their understanding, so that they might understand the scriptures; and they were to wait in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high.

SMcC Yes, they are getting help. We shall always get help when there is an interest, and we come under the Lord's hand.

GHW-n Does this emphasise the need for the recognition of the Spirit, in order that we might be maintained on the elevation of the mountain of God?

SMcC It is mentioned before Horeb, notice. They did not come to Horeb first, but to the mountain of God, as if the writer Moses, would take into account, faith would understand, the importance of this remark; "came to the mountain of God." It is where God discloses Himself, unfolds His heart to the people. And entering into this particular section is the peculiar feature of revelation. That is, Elohim is not revelation, it is what someone arrives at in their souls in the apprehension of God; but what enters into this commissioning of Moses is not just that, but revelation.

JD And He says later, "ye shall serve God upon this mountain."

LPJ Would you say a word more as to what you had in your mind when you spoke of God dwelling amongst His people according to the good pleasure of His own will?

SMcC Well, I think it is God there in the saints - the mystery of it. It is a great mystery. The gospels in that way are a great mystery, how God was there in Christ, in Jesus. We certainly turn aside to see the gospels, the great sight, to

look over the gospels more, with the help of the Spirit; and then how wonderful is the position, God amongst His people.

GGB Would you say a little with regard to leadership? Moses, in Isaiah, leads them through the depths; and here now he is leading them to the elevated thoughts of God.

SMcC Well, I think the one underlies the other. The Psalms are the great Song book of Israel. They give us both sides, the side of the depths and the mountain of God too. Both sides run collaterally through the Psalms. What the mountain of God is in all its blessedness, and what the depths are.

JEH Thinking of God's great pleasure in His people, would we see it in Numbers, even though it comes out of the lips of a man like Balaam?

SMcC Well, it does. That is really what comes out in what Moses had to say in Deuteronomy. He sees the people according to what they are in God's sight.

FW Is the matter of the thorn-bush primarily incarnation?

SMcC I think it is. I think that is the great suggestion in it.

FW There has been the thought before us, of its bearing upon the saints, but I suppose primarily it is Christ in incarnation?

SMcC Well, exactly. So that the gospels, as we were saying, is what we should turn aside to see. The prime thought is God coming down into these circumstances in Christ. Wonderful sight!

WJB It says that they contemplated His glory. Would that have an analogy with Moses contemplating this sight?

SMcC That corresponds. It is a great sight. And then as it goes on to say in verse 7, "Jehovah said, I have seen assuredly the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and their cry have I heard on account of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good and spacious land, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." Showing what was in mind, as it were, coming in in Christ. The mystery of the incarnation. It is a marvellous thing, when we take account of it. A Divine Person here, in these lowly conditions.

JC Did not Moses act intelligently, to bring this in as one of the blessings on Joseph. "The good will of him that dwelt in the bush"?

SMcC Yes. Now when we come to chapter 15, we get this remarkable song, and we can see the exalted objectives that are in mind, and brought into the view of the people so early; as in verse 13, referring to God, Moses says,

"Thou by thy mercy hast led forth the people that thou hast redeemed; Thou hast guided them by thy strength unto the abode of thy holiness. The peoples heard it, they were afraid." Then verse 17, "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, The place that thou, Jehovah, hast made thy dwelling, The Sanctuary, Lord, that thy hands have prepared." The full thought in David's ministry and Solomon's ministry is looked on to, showing how right leadership would keep in the minds of the saints, before the hearts of the saints, these great objectives in the truth.

JD We read in chapter 3, "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Here it says, "Thou has guided them by thy strength unto the abode of thy holiness." Would you say a word as to that?

SMcC Well, I suppose an allusion is made to the tabernacle, "the abode of thy holiness."

JD I was wondering about that, the cloud covering it and the glory filling it?

SMcC When we come on to verse 17, it is the ministry of David that would be in mind. We have the ministry of Moses in "the abode of thy holiness," pitching the tabernacle. Moses pitched the tabernacle; but then verse 17, "in the mountain of thine inheritance," would involve the Davidic and Solomonic side, showing how all the truth is in mind. The Spirit is come to guide us into all the truth, and it is brought into their view so early.

JC Does that come into prominence in Nehemiah's time, "Moses the servant of God," and "David the Man of God"?

SMcC Yes, you find that in all the revivals, the light is cumulative. You get the ministry of Moses, in one revival, and in the next revival the ministry of David; then in the next revival, the ministry of Moses, David and Solomon; showing how cumulative light is.

PB In relation to the song, it is noted that Moses is linked with the children of Israel, in the singular, why is that? "I will sing unto Jehovah ... My strength and song is Jah." He says "my God," and, "I will glorify him."

SMcC Yes. It says, "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song." Moses is leading in this great matter. It could be rightly called the song of Moses. The refrain is taken up by Miriam; but Moses is, as it were, leading in this great matter as to the truth.

PB And all the saints are one in it, the singular; is that the idea?

SMcC Yes. It shows how far we can be carried in light, even while we may not be in it actually as to state. Under this kind of leadership, the saints may be

carried a long way in light.

JHH Is the power seen in the next chapter where Moses instructs Aaron what to say? It says in verse 10, "that they turned toward the wilderness." That is the power in leadership, is it not, turning them toward the wilderness - even though at the point they may be murmuring a little - and the glory appeared?

SMcC And they see the glory. This song is something like that, it is on that principle.

ENJ You were speaking of the distance to which leadership might take us, beyond where we have actually reached subjectively. Would that help us in relation to some of the hymns which are not readily understood by the brethren, that we should continue to sing them?

SMcC The song of Moses is a channel or vehicle of light; responsive movement, in which the people move with the help of Moses; but their state, of course, is not equal to it.

JD Is there not a beautiful touch in Revelation in where it says that "they sing the song of Moses bondman of God, and the song of the Lamb saying, Great and wonderful are thy works, Lord God Almighty; Righteous and true are thy ways, O King of nations," then, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?"

SMcC It is remarkable that it should come in there, where it does.

JNG Do you think that leadership would mean that we would always be left with the impression, in ministry, that there is something greater left to come?

SMcC Yes. A great thing that we should be reminded of, that in regard to the truth, there is always something beyond us. Now when we come to Deuteronomy 33, it says, "this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said, Jehovah came from Sinai, And rose up from Seir unto them; He shone forth from mount Paran, And he came from the myriads of the sanctuary; From his right hand went forth a law of fire for them. Yea, he loveth the peoples, All his saints are in thy hand, And they sit down at thy feet; Each receiveth of thy words." This section brings before us and leaves with us an impression of Moses' regard for the people. What, in type, the work of God would mean to him. He had been with them all through the wilderness, all through the various trials and vicissitudes of the wilderness, the desert; but look at the way he can speak now about the saints. What a man he was! What princely spiritual power is there in type?

GJG And along with that, he is speaking about God, is he not? He is attributing all the leadership to God himself.

SMcC And it says in verse 5, that "he was king in Jeshurun. When the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together." What a reference to Moses, the place that he acquires amongst an upright people. How the affections of the saints surrounded him, reminding us of the great place Christ has amongst His people, on the lines of headship.

JMcN And then the fact of his writing a song at the end of the wilderness, as at the beginning of Exodus 15 would indicate the spirit of triumph in which he went through the wilderness.

SMcC Yes. Making much of God. And then his eulogy of the saints here. Not what the flesh was, what mere nature was; but what the saints are as the result of the work of God, for that is what the type would mean. And the result of all true leadership, the spirit of Christ in leadership, and in administrative service amongst the saints, would leave an impression like this. That is, the greatness of the saints.

JMcN I have been wondering why Aaron and Miriam are included in leadership in Micah 6: 42?

SMcC Well, I think it is to stress the great features of it that were seen in all three. Moses and Aaron are referred to in Psalm 77, but when you come to Micah 6 it is Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, stressing the full thought of what the people were under in the wilderness.

GGB A little earlier you mentioned the thought of meekness as connecting with Moses, in leadership. Perhaps you had something further in mind?

SMcC Well, you remember that when they spoke against him in Numbers 12, the Spirit of God gives us that reference. Moses does not say anything, but God comes in Himself to defend Moses. What marks him is meekness. That is, he was not seeking to defend himself. No one who is with God would seek to defend himself. God can come into any matter, as He does in Numbers.

EJ The thought of the commonwealth, our commonwealth is in heaven and we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ?

SMcC I do not think that is the side of the truth so much. I think the side of the truth here is what the saints are in Moab, not in heavenly places; but what they are in Moab, as a result of the teaching of the brazen serpent and the springing well. It is what they are according to the work of God in them, even in these surroundings.

JD And these are the people that are going in?

SMcC That is the kind of people that is going in.

ENJ Does it connect with what the Lord Jesus says to his disciples, "*ye* are they who have persevered with in my temptations"? He is giving them great credit?

SMcC Yes. So that we should all be on the lines of making the most of the saints, speaking the best of them and about them, because they are God's chosen.

GOD'S DWELLING (WJH 17)

1 Timothy 6: 13-16; Deuteronomy 33: 13-16; Isaiah 57: 15; 1 John 4: 7-13

One felt, dear brethren, that the Lord might help us to consider the subject of where God dwells. The great goal of divine activities is to have conditions that God can dwell in, and that for ever. Nothing could exceed the blessedness of an eternity marked by God dwelling with men. I trust we have all tasted, at least for a few moments, the joy of God being with us — the happiest moments of our lives! But think, dear brethren, of an eternity marked by this wonderful blessedness — "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will *dwell* with them." There will be a new heaven and a new earth — a heaven no longer defiled by Satan, the father of lies, but cleansed and new, with all Satan's unholy influences gone for ever. And a new earth — no wonder the prophet exclaimed, "O earth! earth!" — the earth stained by sin and corruption, the earth which opened to receive the blood of Abel — these things will have disappeared never to return; but instead, God is going to be with men. How blessed to think of! And the apostle Peter says we look for it — we do! more earnestly than ever we did. "A new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

And so I thought the Lord might help us to speak together of where God *now* dwells. God is pleased in His grace to approach men in spite of their condition. He did not leave Adam alone when he had sinned; He drew near to Adam. Later on, when men were busy building Babel, God said, "Let Us go down" — not dwell, but go down. But God has in mind that, before the eternal day, we should know what it is to have God dwelling with us. "Will God indeed dwell with men?" Solomon with true wisdom says, "The heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee." I am sure the Lord would desire to give us all a deeper sense of the greatness of God. Timothy says, "He dwells in unapproachable light" in a sphere beyond the heavens. What a wonderful sense of altitude the heavens give us, do they not? Think of the first heaven, the second heaven, the third heaven, and *all* the heavens, and the heaven of heavens, and beyond that there is still a sphere where God has His essential abode. "Whom no man hath seen," ever inscrutable, none can look into it, none can approach where God dwells essentially. He dwelt there before there were any heavens or the earth. God, in His own abode! What was in that domain? No man can tell beyond what the precious Scriptures have revealed, and that is very little. *God* was there, and in the Godhead there was distinction of Persons, and love existed there as between Divine Persons. I do not know that Scripture tells us much more. "To Whom be glory for ever. Amen."

Isaiah speaks of the "High and Lofty One," and God would have us grow in the sense of this, for it remains eternally true. Then, "Who inhabits eternity," another of His dwelling-places; He does not live in time. *We* live in time, and God has divided time up into gradations we can take in; we live in minutes, hours, days, years, and so on. But He, Himself, inhabits eternity — He *lives* in eternity. Yet He takes great account of time, for it says, "When the fulness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son." And "in due *time*, Christ died for the ungodly." Isaiah adds that the high and lofty One, who inhabits eternity, dwells — "and with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Put these two together, "the high and lofty One" and *also* "the contrite and humble spirit." God wants each one of our hearts and spirits to be His dwelling-place. He wants to live in our hearts as individuals. Do we want it? Think of it! He desires *also* to have a place in your heart. But He will not live *anywhere* — you would not if you could help it. In His grace He approaches men, but He will not come and *live* in unsuitable conditions. But these conditions suit Him always — a humble and contrite spirit. God is very sensitive as to where He dwells, but if there are the conditions in one heart, God says, "I will come and live there." You do not wonder the apostle Paul could speak of God being with him, for what a humble and contrite spirit marked him — the contrition of his heart got deeper and deeper as he reviewed what had marked him in the past. Do *we* forget it? God never wants us to forget it. I do not think we would have much difficulty in getting on together if this spirit marked us. The apostle could say, "Sinners, of whom I am the chief," "I persecuted the church." He was of a humble spirit, too — he could say, "I, who am less than the least of all saints." So we need to continually judge the movements of pride. If we depart from a contrite and humble spirit, God will not *live* with us. He will come to us and speak to us, but He will not *dwell* with us.

To have God with us is the very greatest thing possible. If we are self-sufficient, self-important, we lose the presence of God.

In Deuteronomy 33 we get a wonderful statement "The goodwill of Him Who dwelt in the bush." There is a great lesson in that if we are going to serve the saints. This incident came just as Moses was going out to serve, after much education leading up to it; this was his final lesson, so to speak. And we cannot serve if we do not travel this way, and learn that He dwells in the bush; that His goodwill is such that He will come and live in the bush — a thorn bush! Will God dwell there? The thorn, as we know, is the proof that the bush has been affected by sin; and Moses sees the bush, and it is in the fire; but the bush is living and not consumed, because of the goodwill of Him Who dwelt there. I know the Lord's people have got thorns, but God loves them and would dwell in them. He was not in the fire, but in the bush, and He

spake out of the *bush*. People may go through all that the fire represents, testings and discipline of many kinds, but they do not perish, because God dwells in the bush. Moses says, "Yea, He loved the people," and Moses had learnt to love the people, too. After going through much trial on account of them, and having been spoken against so bitterly, "As for this man we wot not what has become of him," and after their idolatry, he says, "Forgive them — if not, blot me out" — he had imbibed some of that same goodwill.

Dear young men, and older brothers and sisters too, who want to serve the Lord, let this sink into your heart, that the Lord loves His people, even though they are thorny and weak. He wants you to see this great sight so that you will not be weary in your service. Moses departs blessing the people, and speaks of the goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush.

And now a word about the last scripture. Not only does God want to give us as individuals the sense of Him dwelling in our hearts, but He wants to give us as together, dear brethren, the consciousness that He is dwelling with us. When you look at the Lord, you can understand that everything in that wonderful Vessel was according to God. It says, "God was in Christ." That blessed Man was His perfect abode, as suitable as the light unapproachable. Matthew tells us His name is "God with us." Let the sweetness and fragrance of every act of Jesus so shine into our hearts! God's dwelling-place was here in Jesus — God expressed in His every act. It would revolutionise Scripture if we took this more into our hearts — God is there! What a theme for the Gospel! As one of our hymns puts it — "Sinner, see thy God beside thee,

In a servant's form come near."

But John says, "If we love one another, God dwells with *us*." Individually we require a contrite and humble spirit, and this cannot be altered. In the same way love is essential collectively. What is love? We often have wrong thoughts about it. It is firstly expressed in obedience, and then sacrifice — the two great expressions of love. When we think of the love of God, we cannot apply obedience, but "in this was manifested the love of God, that He sent His Son." What sacrifice! beyond all words can tell. But looking at the Lord Jesus as a man, we see love expressed in two ways. He expressed His love towards God in that "He became obedient unto death," and then secondly, "Hereby perceive we love — He laid down His life for us." What a sacrifice!

Do we want God with us? dear brethren. We do, I am sure. We shall have it on these two lines — obedience first of all to the Lord, subjection to Him and subjection to one another. But someone says, "*I* think — " You will lose the presence of God on that line. Let the younger be subject to the elder, and obey them that — have the rule over you — the first great feature of love.

This is love, to keep His commandments, and they are not grievous. The next great feature is sacrifice. I cannot tell you tonight the various ways in which sacrifice is available to us. I would speak to the young ones — if you want God with you it must be on the line of sacrifice. If we have nothing else, we have a body. What are we doing with it? The apostle says, "I beseech you ... that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." So where there is obedience and sacrifice amongst the saints, God dwells with us.

What is going to mark the new heavens and the new earth is to be with us now — a touch of eternity. These things are not known by the study of theology; they are not forms, but realities. Externally, there was *nothing* that Laodicea lacked, but the Lord was outside and standing at the door. One dreads Laodiceanism. It is the danger of the present moment to have everything externally and not have the Lord. I appeal to, us all. Obedience, sacrifice, and God is with us — nothing can replace that. He sees into our hearts, our motives, our ways. If we love one another, we get His presence.

Let these two features be with us in Melbourne or Sydney or anywhere, and God is with us. One just desires to leave these thoughts with us as to where God dwells, ever remembering, in a spirit of worship, that there is a sphere above all heavens where is His eternal abode. And *never* forget that God dwells in the bush. And as to ourselves as set together: "If we love one another, God dwells in us."

May the Lord help each one of us!

Deuteronomy 34

- (Deuteronomy 1)
  SPIRITUALITY (6) (JT 48)
- (Deuteronomy 33)
  ADMINISTRATION (5) (JT 59)
- DEUTERONOMY 34 (CAC 5)
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- PATERNAL, MINISTERIAL AND KINGLY QUALITIES (JT 34)
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DEUTERONOMY 34 (CAC 5)

Deuteronomy 34

There is no more impressive instance of the operation of the government of God than the fact that Moses was not permitted to enter Canaan. But while this was so, he obtained peculiar favour in being allowed to see "the whole land" concerning which Jehovah had sworn unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He saw it in communion with God as it was in divine purpose, and such a view of it corresponded with his outlook upon "the tribes of Israel" in the previous chapter. "Before his death" the man of God was privileged to see the people whom he loved in full blessing according to the thoughts of God concerning them, and he was also permitted to see "the whole land" as it was in divine purpose.

What a compensation it must have been for the "man of God", who had suffered rejection at the hands of the people in Egypt, and who had been tried by their rebellion and naughtiness in the wilderness, and who knew, moreover, all that they would be after his death, to see them according to chapter 33!

Moses' view from Pisgah has its heavenly counterpart in John's vision from the "great and high mountain" in Revelation 21. Both Moses and John had painful knowledge of present failure in the people they loved. Both knew prophetically how that failure would develop, and what its issue would be in divine government. But both were privileged to look beyond all the failure to the complete realisation of divine thoughts, whether on the earthly or the heavenly side.

John's writings develop the character of the saints viewed as born of God, and in conscious possession and enjoyment of life eternal. That answers to the blessings of Deuteronomy 33. But John also saw One like the Son of Man in the midst of the seven lamps, and fell at His feet as dead. He knew full well that things in the assemblies would not bear the scrutiny of those eyes as a flame of fire. To five of them he had to address, as the Lord's scribe, a call to repent. He had to learn the Lord's government in relation to the assemblies and its solemn results, whatever blessing there might be for the overcomer. Indeed the Lord's warnings to the assemblies, and His promises to the overcomer, are in striking analogy with much that has come before us in Deuteronomy concerning blessing and curse. How could one who loved the children of God feel about it all? One fully identified with the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, and who was in the Spirit? He knew the present actual state of things in the assemblies, and whereunto it would develop, as surely as Moses knew the present state and future departure of Israel.

But John reached his Pisgah, and saw the holy city coming down out of the heaven from God, having the glory of God! He saw prophetically the complete realisation of the divine thoughts as secured and displayed in the bride, the Lamb's wife, in the world to come. Nothing comes short there; everything is up to full measure; the city has the glory of God. The "northward and southward and eastward and westward" of which God spoke to Abraham have a heavenly counterpart in the city that lies four-square. The complete administration of blessing in the world to come is there. Moses saw prophetically the earthly side; John saw the assembly as the perfect vessel of heavenly administration in virtue of whose shining the earthly blessing will be secured.

Moses died in full view of the world to come, and of the accomplishment in that world of all that had been the subject of God's promises and oath. It was reserved for him to have the land in a better way than.. those had it who went over with Joshua. He actually stood upon it in company with the Son of God, for it is interesting to see that Moses and Elias did not appear in the air on the mount of transfiguration; we are told that they "stood with him". And Moses in a coming day will have all the promises from the heavenly side as one of those for whom God has prepared a city. He had to accept death *here*, but he was buried by God in view of resurrection — in view of the mount of transfiguration, and of all that is now secured, through death, in Jesus glorified.

We know from Jude that the devil was observant of what God had done, and would have acted in some way — we are not told how — to frustrate the thoughts of God. But this brought out the fact that Michael the archangel had a special charge with regard to the body of Moses. The devil is not allowed to do as he will with the saints while they are alive, nor is he permitted to have his way with their bodies even after they are dead. Michael *disputed*, we are told, with the devil about the body of Moses; he had to resist what the devil would have done. But he also "reasoned", which would indicate intelligence as to the mind of God in the matter. Michael understood why he had such a charge as to that body. The angels know where the saints are buried, even as two of them sat "one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain". One grave may look much like another to the natural eye, but there are millions of graves in the world which have a very special character under the eye of heaven because they are the graves of "the dead in Christ". It was said of Moses' burial that "no man knows his sepulchre to this day". It was removed from all human guardianship, nor could it be made an object of idolatrous veneration, but it was known to Jehovah and to Michael, and whatever the devil's thoughts might have been, he could not prevail.

"Archangel's voice" will be heard when the Lord Himself descends from heaven to raise the dead in Christ, and to catch up the living who remain. It will be no longer necessary for the archangel to dispute or reason with the devil; his voice will ring forth in everlasting triumph as death is swallowed up in victory.

It will be remembered that Michael has a special charge in relation to Israel. Daniel was told that he is "the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people" (Daniel 12: 1). Israel at the present time is sleeping in the dust of the earth, but those written in the book will be delivered; they will awake to everlasting life. The two references to eternal life in the Old Testament connect it with the quickening power that will awake many who sleep in the dust of the earth (Daniel 12: 2), and with brethren as dwelling together in unity (Psalm 133). The one shews that it is a people quickened out of death who enter into it; the other that it is enjoyed in the happy and holy unity in which brethren dwell together.

Moses, as permitted to see "the whole land" but not to enter upon it, may be regarded as representing all those who "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off and embraced them" (Hebrews 11: 13). Before the promises are received the greater part of the faith family will, like Moses, have passed through death. In the government of God death is present as the result of sin, and saints die as well as other people; but they die in the faith of resurrection, and of all that is now secured by the resurrection of Christ. All that will remain in resurrection will be what God has wrought. Moses will get his prayer answered: "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy majesty unto their sons. And let the beauty of Jehovah our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us: yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it" (Psalm 90: 16, 17).

Moses did not die a natural death, for we are told that "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated". He died "according to the word of Jehovah", and not by the failure of his natural strength. Moses' death was not the evidence of his own physical weakness, but of the inadequacy of the natural, even when in unabated force, to enter into what is spiritual. The surpassing greatness of the power that wrought in Christ in raising Him from among the dead is needed for that, and such is the power that is "towards us who believe" (Ephesians 1: 19, 20). "Flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom"; resurrection, or what is equivalent to it in changed bodies, is needed for that kingdom.

All the Old Testament saints will have the inheritance from the heavenly side, for God has prepared for them a city, "having foreseen some better thing for us, that they should not be made perfect without us" (Hebrews 11: 16, 40). The fulfilment of the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob depends on

something else being secured which is altogether heavenly in character, and Old Testament saints will come into possession of the promised inheritance as taking it up along with the saints who form the holy city.

In the meantime "the whole land", and the conditions on which it can be enjoyed, have a spiritual import which is to be apprehended at the present time in relation to the promises of God having their Yea and Amen in the Son of God Jesus Christ for glory to God by us. We have sought to trace, so far as grace has been given to do so, something of this import as we have gone through Deuteronomy.

I have no doubt that when Israel comes to take things up literally in the land their doing so will derive a peculiar character from the knowledge that the instruction of this book has been taken up spiritually by saints of a heavenly family. For Israel will take it up in the light, and under the administration, of the holy city which is composed of those very saints. In this way the whole book will acquire for them an elevated and spiritual character; it will be taken up in the light of a risen and heavenly Christ, and of the administration of those who have had part in His rejection and reproach, and who will be glorified au His joint-heirs.

The wisdom of God in all this bows the heart in adoration, while it intensifies the desire to take up in wisdom all that in which God would glorify Himself in His saints today. As having understood it spiritually, and answered to it by God's grace, the saints of the assembly will be competent to bring its influence to bear in a coming day upon those who will be found in the place of a divinely favoured earthly people.

But very much in this book has not millennial conditions in view. Having to do with enemies, the great danger of departure and idolatry, the possibility of curse, indeed all in the book that speaks of active evil, shows that it has a bearing *now* which will not have place when the kingdom is established, and there is rest on every side, "neither adversary nor evil event". But what is learned of God now, and maintained for God in the presence of what is adverse, will remain in its own blessedness to govern everything in a day when evil will no longer molest.

PATERNAL, MINISTERIAL AND KINGLY QUALITIES (JT 34)

Genesis 48:8 - 19; Deuteronomy 34:1 - 4; Deuteronomy 34:7; 1 Chronicles 29:10 - 19

I have been encouraged as before the Lord to turn to these scriptures. I wish to treat of them separately and together in this meeting. The first, indicating what is patriarchal, is an important side to the position of believers, and it properly begins with Abraham the believer, who is said to be "the father of us all", those who are on the principle of faith being blessed, as the scripture says, "with believing Abraham", (Galatians 3:9). Then, from the passage in Deuteronomy 1 hope to show in a few words what I may call the ministerial development, a most important feature also of our position as believers. Then, finally, what I may call the royal development, in its place also most important, for what is kingly is specially intended to stand out in these last days against the radical spirit that has become dominant.

The first is marked by love of the *saints*.

The second is marked by love of the *truth*.

The third is marked by love of *the house of God*.

David stands out distinctly in this latter way, as indicated in the verses I read; indeed, he speaks in the same chapter of his affection for the house, saying also elsewhere, "I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth". (Psalm 26:8).

To go over the ground again, so as to make the subject clear, the first quality — the paternal or patriarchal — necessarily circles around the family; the second centres in the truth, Christ being the truth and the Spirit being the truth: and the third centres in the throne, which, as I hope to show, implies *moral* greatness now.

Having the subject thus briefly set out, we may dwell on the first, the patriarchal thought. It is not beyond any of us, for, as I remarked, it is really a question of love of the brethren. Although we may begin to love the brethren very young, as left here in the testimony we shall not remain young; we quickly pass the youthful stage and others come in who are younger. So that we, as actuated by love, begin to regard those who are younger as the objects of paternal care. As we grow older, this becomes accentuated as younger ones come along constantly. One generation passes away and another comes — that is a fixed fact, and as we merge into middle age, or old age, we begin to

think of the passing away. Not indeed that saints all live to be very old; it is of course not so, but I am speaking of how *love works*, and nothing can be more interesting in the whole field of knowledge than love's way. The first commandment with promise is to the young, "that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth", (Ephesians 6:3). It is a promise to be valued, and will not be abused by love.

As the youthful stage passes, we begin, as governed by love, to look with fatherly care on those who are younger; and as we are allowed to continue here in the wisdom of God, there is scope for love to operate in this as in other ways. As I said, one of the most interesting features in the whole field of knowledge is the movement of divine love, and it will be observed that it eventuates in a fatherly development in believers. Perhaps the need for fathers is as great as any that is current. One could count a great many who have reached, under the wise government of God, the stage in life to which spiritual fatherhood properly belongs, and God would lay it upon us that it should be assumed. It is not exactly an office, it is a family relationship developed in love, but developed too, in certain moral connections as indicated in the name of the great father — Abraham. His first name was *Abram*, which, as no doubt most of you know, means "high father". That was before he had a family, as if the idea of *moral* elevation as attached to separation from the world, is essential to fatherhood. That is to say, we begin to love the saints, not from natural proclivities or because of natural links or natural correspondence; we begin to regard them differently, that is in elevated moral relations. The idea of "high father" is in contrast to all that attaches to man in the flesh which is low and gravitates towards the earth and grovels there, and so we begin to look at the brethren from the standpoint of moral elevation, and thus love in this connection begins to show itself.

Now, all this is seen in the history of Abraham, and then to some extent in the history of Isaac, and finally in the history of Jacob; and what comes out in Jacob is that he had the experience of the *loss* of children. He temporarily lost two, and so had experience thus occasioned. Now that enters into love's position at the present time. Many have been lost, and we qualify among other things, in the way we regard those who have been lost, for we cannot afford to lose *any* of our brethren, however unlovable they may seem to be. I believe that Jacob had in his thoughts the essentialness of the twelve, that they *must not* be lost. Divine counsels required the twelve, but "one is not"; that was the sorrowful note that had to be struck. And again, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not", Genesis 42:36. That is to say love is wrenched and tortured by the loss of children, children once possessed, but possessed no longer.

That comes out in the history of Jacob, and the Spirit of God records the patriarch's delight in the recovery of the lost. "Israel said, it is enough: Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die", Genesis 45:28. It was intelligent affection, because it was not only a question of the loss of one son, but one of *twelve*, one of a required number. Let us never forget that there is a required number with God, and the loss of one of a required number enters into the sorrow. One could point that out in many ways. How the Lord felt the loss of the twelfth! But His love never wavered; He gave Judas the sop just as he was about to go out. That is a point of great importance; the power to love what is unlovely, and even what is opposed. I am not for a moment saying that Judas represents a brother, or the work of God, but he represents one of twelve, and the Spirit of God stresses the *eleven* afterwards. So that the Lord would put it upon us to think of the lost ones; there are those who are lost to us, although the Lord knows those that are His, 2 Timothy 2:19. Every true believer, however obscure or feeble he may be, is known to the Lord, and each is included in the family. There are those who have not been lost to us; we have not had them, so to speak; but there are those we have had, who are lost — and Jacob represents fatherhood in regard of sons once possessed but lost. How one could dilate on that in regard of Luke 15! — but I only touch upon it in regard of Jacob.

And now he said to Joseph, "Who are these?" It is an old man speaking, a man of great experience — largely through his own failure, indeed, but in spite of this of God's love, for God loved Jacob; as scripture says, "Jacob have I loved". He met him at Luz as he was on his way to Haran, and He met him as he came back, and in a most familiar way, and ennobled him, giving him a great spiritual name; and He told him His own name also. He met him again as He was going out of Canaan to Egypt, and said He was the God of his father Isaac, assuring him, in type, that every thought of His was secured infallibly in a risen Christ. And now, "Who are these?" We may well look around and ask such a question. "And Joseph said unto his father. They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said. Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them". Then "Joseph brought them out from between his knees", showing that they were *cared for*, and brought them to his father, and his father kissed them and embraced them. What a word that is for us from the paternal side — "he kissed them, and embraced them", and in doing so, he was perfectly intelligent as to the mind of God about them, although his eyes were dim. I believe God would speak to us as to these qualities, many of us, as I said being in the fatherly and motherly stage of life; but old age is not to rob us of the power of affection, for "love is strong as death"; it never fails. Old age does not rob the man of faith of divine love; and

what wealth there is in brothers and sisters of the fatherly and motherly age retaining spiritual affection in full fervour for the younger, and withal knowing exactly the mind of God about them — able to tell, able to discern the children of God, where nature fails!

Nothing is more blinding in the things of God than nature. So that Jacob at the advanced age of a hundred and forty-seven years has maintained freshness of affection for the young, and discernment, where nature would blind him, as it blinded his father Isaac. Nature did not blind Jacob. He was able to say, "I know it, my son". He knew which was the elder and which the younger, and he knew the mind of God about both. He blessed them both, the Spirit of God tells us in the New Testament, Hebrews 11:21; but he put his right hand upon Ephraim's head and his left upon the head of Manasseh, against the wishes of the most powerful man outwardly in Egypt, next to the king. We must not think it was regarded as a trivial matter by Joseph; it was not. Jacob's action was regarded as "evil" in his eyes, and what was evil in the eyes of a man like Joseph in Egypt was something to be stopped, and he sought to stop it. We have to learn in our old age to go against the current, and maintain the mind of God. As we grow older we are apt to give way to the more powerful features that are coming up, but not so with Jacob. The words of Joseph, who was lord of all Egypt, were: "Not so, my father", taking hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head; but Jacob *refused*, saying, "I know, my son, I know ... truly his younger brother will be greater than he". The hand of the patriarch is not to be turned aside by the demand of his son in the carrying out of the will of God, although that son was very great.

That is what I had in mind as most needed and important at the present time; that God would put it upon the brethren to develop the fatherly and motherly instincts, and to maintain the affections proper even in old age, so that the will of God goes through unimpaired. Then, to go a little further, you see in Jacob how he gathered his sons together to listen to Israel their father. It is not now a question of young people brought to one, so that he might express his love to them and the mind of God about them, but here is definite initiative on the part of the patriarch. "Hearken unto Israel your father", he says, and I will "tell you that which shall befall you in the last days"(Genesis 49:1). What an advantage to have a father like that! And he hesitates not to tell them all the truth. Sons of his though they were, he tells them all the truth. It is necessary that we should have the whole truth told us; it is no love to withhold the truth from the brethren. And then we are told that he *blessed* them. Everyone of them was blessed — such is a father; he cannot think of the saints otherwise than that they should be blessed. It is the true fatherly instinct that the young

should be blessed; and so he blessed each of them according to his blessing. Jacob as dying was in the mind of God.

Now I come on to the ministerial side. God is greatly helping us on this line, and there are many now, thank God, who are able to serve in the truth, but there are not enough. The need is great. The need of pastors and teachers especially is urgent; and the Lord would thrust out qualified ones into His field. I want to show how the ministerial feature is seen and developed, for God loves development in His people; He loves full fruition, whatever phase it may be; the apostle says, "that we may present every man perfect in Christ", (Colossians 1:28). Moses represents the ministerial side; he is, indeed, called in the New Testament, "a ministering servant", (Hebrews 3:5). He is said to have been faithful in all God's house. What a word that is! What marks the minister, as I said at the beginning, is love of the truth. The Spirit of God is said to be the Spirit of truth. Christ is said to be the truth objectively; the Spirit in John's epistle is said to be the truth, as I may say, subjectively. He maintains it here in the saints; He is also the Spirit of truth; and one is pressed to say a word as to this because the need for ministry is great, and, although there are a goodly number in the service, more are needed. But we need to have our eye on what God regards as a perfected servant, and that, I think, is set out in Moses.

What is to be observed is that his eyesight was good; we have often remarked on that: "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated", (Deuteronomy 34:7), and he was able to *go up:* that is to say, he was a man of energy in spite of his advanced years; he "went up ... to mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah" — as Deuteronomy puts it; he did it. The suggestion is that in the servant there is to be no giving in or lapsing into lethargy or quiet restfulness. I am not speaking of what is physical, but of spiritual energy. The Lord would put it upon those of fatherly and motherly age, as I was saying, to retain the strength of affection; and He would put upon the ministers — the same persons, as I may say — the necessity for energy in regard to the whole scope of God's thoughts for His people, and in regard to the freshness that belongs to ministry.

If we take chapters 32 and 33 of Deuteronomy together, we see something cognate with what we find with Jacob, that is, a faithful setting out of the history of the people in chapter 32, and then a beautiful pronouncement of the blessing of each of the tribes. Moses is called a "man of God" in chapter 33. I do not suppose there is any title that is so to be desired in the service of God as that. It is applied sparingly in Scripture, only to Timothy in the New Testament. It is applied to Moses and to David, and I do not think there is any

character a minister should aim at more keenly than that of a "man of God". That is, in our service, to think for God, and at the same time for the people, to maintain the truth at all costs — "love of the truth", as is said, 2 Thessalonians 2:10, and in ministering it, to minister it in freshness. As you will observe in the beginning of chapter 32, Moses says, "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he", Deuteronomy 32:1 - 4. It seems to me that this has a voice for all who minister. If I call the heavens and earth to hear, I cannot be given to repetition, I cannot be given to staleness: heaven knows if I am *merely* repeating, and earth knows, though the present audience may not know. Moses would remind us that ministry is to be always in freshness; and in its freshness it is to maintain the rights of God at all costs. The truth must be maintained. In no way can we serve the saints better in ministry, than to insist on the truth; that is chapter 32. Then, on the other hand, to set out in the clearest manner the mind of God about His people, for God's heart is full of blessing for His people. He lavishes it upon them. Let the servant be in the hands of God, and there will be abundance and freshness of matter, and ability for the setting out of the great thoughts of divine love about the saints. Chapter 33 sets out God's mind about the tribes; then chapter 34 sets out the great features of the land, the extent of the land seen by the eyes of this same minister, as shown him by Jehovah. Moses valued it, requesting earlier: "Let me go over, I pray thee, and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan, that goodly mountain and Lebanon", Deuteronomy 3:25.

Now I come on to David, and, as I said at the beginning, we shall see that the king is concerned about the house. That is to say, kingly qualities imply moral greatness, and that I regard any greatness that I may have, whether it be moral or official, just as a means to an end. I am not speaking of these three features as belonging to three different persons; they are three features of the same person, and the kind of person that is so needed, so essential to the present exigency. If I have moral power, affording me it may be some little official position — although officialism is really out of place today — what is the intent of it? It is a means to an end; it is a means to the house — that is David. His great thought was the house; he loved the place of God's habitation, the place where God's honour dwelt. How is that to be reached? How is the house to be brought about? By kingly power and resources. This is strikingly seen in David, as typifying Christ, and it is to be reflected in us all.

Any little bit of moral greatness that one may have is just a means to an end, and there is no greater evidence of true greatness in a person than that. *The greatness* is not an end. Great as the kingdom and our service in it are, they are not the end; they are a means to an end, and that end is for God — that He should have a dwelling-place. That is God's idea for us; and as honestly received by each, it wipes out at one stroke all ambition and pride amongst the people of God in His service.

So that what you find with David is that at the beginning he is marked by personal greatness, for the thought of a king is that he is a man that is *able*, the official comes afterwards. The introduction of David in Scripture is most beautiful. The first description we have of him in 1 Samuel 16 is intended to attract the heart; that is the first thought. A brother, if he is to be morally great amongst the saints, is first to be *lovable*. I am not to climb into prominence by my ability; the first thing is personal lovability. That is the idea, that one is loved; a man like David is bound to be loved. Samuel said to Jesse, "Are here all thy children?" There is yet one, he says, "and, behold, he keepeth the sheep". And Samuel said, "Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he comes hither", 1 Samuel 16:11; and as he arrived, Jehovah said, "Arise, anoint him: for this is he"(1 Samuel 16:12). But that is not all. "Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance"; he was of a lovely appearance. The idea is that he was attractive. The attention of everybody there could not but be riveted on that young man. I suppose Jesse never saw such beauty in David before, as he saw when Jehovah called attention to him; and there he was in the midst of his brethren. I suppose they, too, never saw such beauty in that young man before!

Well, that is the thought. God will call attention to a man as to his personal character first — what he is. Then the next description we have of David is by a young man in Saul's service. "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse",(1 Samuel 16:18) and he plays well. Some of us have been engaged with that today. It was inherent in the man, as I may say. Although a shepherd by occupation, he knew music, he knew how to play well. He was a valiant man, too, and a man of war, and of good presence, and Jehovah was with him. That is the second introduction to David. Need I say that all the qualities of kingship were there? But the kingly qualities are not the first presented; the lovableness is the first thing presented in David. So that one becomes an object of affection to the brethren, and then one's ability comes into use. David served even a Saul! It would be most difficult to serve persons like Saul, one affected by an evil spirit, but David served him acceptably, such was his moral greatness.

Proceeding now to the closing moments of his life, we shall see that in these he is equal to all this. It is the full development; his heart is still full of the house of God. His heart was on the house from the time when he said, "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood", (Psalm 132:4 - 6), and he brought the ark to Zion. That was the great burden of his life; his kingship was subservient to that, to make a place for God. What a great thought, to have any part, however small, in making a place for the habitation of the mighty God of Jacob! So, from the time he saw the sheathing of the sword at the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, until this chapter 29, he is full of the house. It was the great end and result of his kingly power and resources.

But what I want to show further is what is most important for ministers. As we get older there is a tendency to assume priority, and to set up a little throne and refuse anyone a place near it. Now that is the very disposition that David did not have, because he made Solomon king along with himself. He did not say to Solomon, You wait, do not come into power till I am gone. True greatness in the elders will make ample room for the younger; the more ability the better. So that David made Solomon king, chapter 23; and we read here, chapter 29, that he was made king "the second time". I ask the brethren to examine these chapters, and see how much is made of Solomon being made king. You say, why do you speak of that? Just because of the importance of the elder making room for the younger, that is, for those in whom moral greatness appears. They will only enhance us; they will not interfere with our ministry. The more royalty the better; and Solomon had true royalty. It is said that Jehovah loved him; he was loved from his youth; like David, he was lovable; Jehovah loved him. He was loved of his father and mother, too. So, throughout this section, from chapter 22 onward, the Spirit of God dwells upon the fact that Solomon the son of David is king; and David is perfectly restful in the kingly position of his son alongside of him.

So these three features, dear brethren, as I said before, are intended to attach to each, and God would press them upon us so that the testimony should go on. There is no idea at all of any interference with the carrying out of the will of God. As one generation passes away, the coming generation is to carry on the service, and it is the intention that they should have every possible advantage, and, on the other hand, it is imperative they should be in suitability and seemliness in their service. Solomon was made king by David, and he sat on the throne with David, so that we have the father and the son exercising royal power together, and all with a view to "the palace". Beloved, let us have in our hearts the thought of the *palace*, 1 Chronicles 29:19. If there is to be a

palace for God we need all the help that God has provided to this end. The building was to be “exceeding, magnifical”, and David had that in mind. He says: “Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine: is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all”. How powerful and beautiful is that language! And how fitting it is for us, in any little place or work He has given us, that it should be always fully owned that it is He who is providing and doing all! May God bless these thoughts to us!

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION (SMC 8)

Mark 8: 22 - 26; Deuteronomy 34: 1 - 6; Ezekiel 8: 1 - 6

E. E. Hoyte What is in mind in reading these scriptures is the idea of spiritual perception. To be able to see things from the divine viewpoint is a quality that is very much needed by us, for it is not as we naturally see things. How much this is needed today amongst us, as one matter after another arises in our various localities, calling for spiritual perception. Whether we can see aright in matters is of great importance, and as to whether we can see with God in a matter. As far as spiritual things are concerned we are born blind, and I think sight begins with new birth; that is the first divine operation in our souls and it has that in view, as the Lord Jesus says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom". The first operations on the part of God in relation to us is to open our eyes. That is in the commission to the apostle Paul; he was to open men's eyes. Then the idea came in as to turning from darkness to light and from Satan's power to God, and that they should have the forgiveness of sins, and that they should come into the great inheritance that God has purposed for them. It was to begin with the opening of the eyes, our spiritual eyesight at first has to be opened. So that this is a great matter, and it would seem to me that the divine Persons all have this in mind in relation to us, to enlighten us, so that we eventually come into the knowledge of divine Persons.

Now the first scripture I read, a blind man is before us, so that this is something that is initial. The Lord comes into Bethsaida, and they bring Him this blind man, beseeching Him that He should touch him. The Lord has to do with him, and how sympathetic our Lord Jesus was! - that blessed Man here, for God's pleasure, relieving men of all the pressure that rested on them. Now here this blind man is brought before Him to be touched, and the Lord does not hesitate. He would act immediately, which is a very great feature of Mark's gospel; things are done immediately and without hesitation. 'Forthwith', 'immediately', are words used repeatedly in Mark's gospel, as I am sure we are acquainted with. So it says, "And taking hold of the hand of the blind man he led him forth out of the village". He led him out; the Lord must have had something in mind in relation to that, to lead him out of the circumstances in which he was at that time before He could touch his eyes. So that sometimes we must be led divinely out of circumstances in which we are found, in conditions that are not clear to us perhaps, or in which we are closing our eyes. The Lord has to lead us out, and we need the Lord's help for that. He then spits upon his eyes, and lays His hands upon him, and asks him if he beheld anything. Why did the Lord have to do that? He could have healed him

by one stroke and given him his sight. Think of how these details must be gone through in our souls! It would cause exercise on the part of the blind man; he would, so to speak, be beginning to use his senses. How necessary that is, dear brethren, that we should have our senses exercised to discern between good and evil, so that when matters arise in our localities, we have this idea of full grown men. Full growth is of that nature, that we are able to discern between good and evil. If not, we are of very little value in our localities. If I cannot distinguish between good and evil, how can I defend the things of God in my locality? I am incompetent to do it. And so the Lord asked him if he beheld anything. The man uses his senses, he says, "I see men". You say 'Very good to see men', but is that all? So sometimes we see things, but have we the true and the correct vision of things? He saw men as trees walking, and that perception is far from being a perfect one, I should not see men as trees walking. So the Lord Jesus has to lay His hands again upon his eyes. He needed a second touch. So that, is it not a lesson for us, dear brethren, that sometimes if we do not see things very clearly, it is a question of having to do with the Lord again about the matter? Let us go to the Lord, when things are not clear. We should not continue for any length of time. Then it says He laid His hands again upon his eyes, and he saw distinctly. No more distortion, he saw distinctly, and was restored, and saw all things clearly. How much this is needed, dear brethren, that the whole position might be clarified in our locality! When there are matters that need adjustment, the Lord is fully equal to it, there is no weakness with Him. So that if we continue to be distorted in our view, there is something lacking and we need to get to the Lord about it, and He will restore us so that we may see things distinctly. Then he is dismissed to go down to his house. Think of what a different person this man would be as he would go down to his house, no longer blind, but now seeing all things. What an atmosphere he would bring in to his house! I might apply the house to our localities, for that is where it would come in, I now have a right perception of things, I am seeing clearly, and I can be trusted.

Now I would pass on to Deuteronomy. We have here, not a matter of what is initial, but a full-grown man in Moses, the great servant and prophet. What is said about him in Exodus 3 is that he saw. The angel appeared to him in the burning bush, and he turned aside to see; that is what is said first of him.

He turned aside to see. And God was so delighted with the man, that He called him twice. Now that is what is said of him in that chapter; he was one who could be arrested by something extraordinary, and not pass it by, not ignore it, but he turned aside to see why the bush was not burned. So that that would apply to us too, would it not, dear brethren, in our localities, that we are ready to look into matters? They are not allowed to take their course;

we are not disinterested about divine interests, but we are alert, and ready to turn aside to see things. That is what is said of him. And then further to that, in Hebrews it is said that he saw Him who is invisible. You think of that, dear brethren, between his exodus and this chapter, how much can be said of him. One, you might say, was initial, but in this chapter he is a fully-fledged man, who has gone through the wilderness. He is certainly not a blind man! Think of the service of this great man, and what a personality there is before us in this man Moses - "the man Moses". As you look into chapter 32 and chapter 33, what a man there is there! What a knowledge of God! He says, "Give ear, O heaven, and I will speak" - think of a man on earth like that, who can call heaven and earth to listen to his speech! That is the man we are speaking about, this great servant and prophet, who had in his heart the divine purpose for his people, and who could bless them. In this chapter he is viewed as going up to die, according to the word of Jehovah, his course finished. A certain end is reached in the history of God's people in this book; they had been brought out of Egypt, and brought through the wilderness under his leadership, and now they are ready to enter into the territory that God had provided for them. And chapter 33 shows him blessing them. You say, 'Moses, your history is closed, your work is finished and accomplished, you are to die', Moses would say to you, 'I have the people of God upon my heart. I want them to come into the inheritance that God devised for them'. How much can we devote to the people of God, how can we look at them? Well now, what he says about these tribes in these chapters is evidence that he saw them established in the divine territory, in the land. And so he is blessing them and He says, "Happy art thou, Israel!" All this is in his soul in blessing them; for instance, when coming to Joseph's blessing, there was nothing but what was precious. You will remember, everything there is precious - the precious things. How necessary it is for our young people to be able to take account of these precious things! Can I convey this to the people of God? Something of the preciousness that God has devised for them. But now it is not his portion to go into the land, but he had it in the faith of his soul. How he treasured it in his soul. He is not allowed to go over, in the ways of God, into the land itself actually, but what a provision God made for him in that he was to go up to the top of Pisgah, and there he sees something, for he looks into the land as alongside of Jehovah. What a look that must have been, a man on the mountain with God, you might say, speaking reverently, by the side of God, looking into the land, the great divine territory. That is how Moses viewed the whole land, for Jehovah showed it to him. Well, we are in for this, dear brethren, it is open to us to see things from the divine viewpoint. This man had this tremendous privilege of standing here as he had stood before on the rock, and seen the glory of Jehovah pass by. What a man he was! It entered

into his personality, and dear brethren, I suppose, that is what we need. It is a question of what we are as a result of divine formation. How wonderful, dear brethren, to look upon each other in this manner today, every one of us exhibiting the divine work in our souls. It struck me recently as to the number of dear brethren who are away from us, what a great number this is at these meetings, and yet we are but a small number of God's people, and naturally as we sit down together our minds revert to those who are not with us; we cannot be unmindful of them, we must think about them. So that this great servant heard from the divine lips, "When ye come into the land". As you look back into these scriptures you will find such expressions as that, "When ye be come into the land", and so on, I think that at this point in the history of the assembly, we can say that in some sense at least we have come into the land, I do not think anyone would deny that. The blessed Spirit of God having been given His place amongst us, what blessed times we are having, and how we are entering into the divine realm as led by Himself. So that the need therefore arises for continual purification amongst us. We need purification constantly in order that our lines of communications might be kept open, so that the Spirit of God might have His free course amongst us. The Lord's present service to the assembly is on that line, is it not? He is washing us, purifying us by the washing of water, in order that He might have the assembly for Himself, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. So that as we are maintained in this position in purity, we afford the precious Spirit an opportunity to continue His operations in our souls, and to lead us into the land. So we naturally look back upon our dear brethren who are away from us. We think of them and what they are missing, but what we are missing as not having our brethren with us to enjoy these great things, when we come into the land. It comes to me now that in the year of Jubilee they were all to be set in liberty. How we would welcome that idea, for all our brethren who have gone out from us, that they should be released. How we would invite that!

What can we do? I think we can ask ourselves. What can we do to relieve our brethren, to release them, so that they are brought into liberty to enjoy these great things that we enjoy? Moses was not permitted to go in, but we have gone into the land in some sense and are enjoying God's purpose for us; and in order to do it we need the brethren, so that perhaps it might interest us to think about it a bit, as to what we can do to help to liberate our brethren, so that they might be free for the service of God.

Now I pass on to the next scripture in Ezekiel, because I want to convey here how the Spirit of God enters into the matter. This is not Revelation, this is Ezekiel, but we are acquainted with the wonderful expressions in Revelation, where John the great prophet, is shown things. We were speaking of that

today, how he turned back to see the voice, and Revelation makes so much of what John saw. There is another man who was available to the Spirit, for he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and that is how the vision in Revelation is introduced. And the whole realm of things described in that book are portrayed by him, as the result of that vision, that spiritual eyesight. Lastly, John sees this vessel of divine glory coming down from God out of heaven. We all wait for that, and it says in that chapter the Spirit carried him away into a high mountain, and he saw "the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, having the glory of God". What a sight that was, from an elevated position! But we are not in Revelation now, we are in Ezekiel, and it is of much interest to me to think that the Spirit is spoken of in this way in Ezekiel. As we all know, He has a great place in the book. But here is an extraordinary thing, in this chapter, for Ezekiel is taken up by a lock of his head, and the Spirit lifted him up between the earth and heaven. You think of that, what an extraordinary thing this is - a man available to the Spirit. It is a vision, of course, but it is not written here simply for the sake of reading, it is something to help us in relation to the blessed Spirit of God. This man is available, and so the Spirit lifts him up, and transports him to Jerusalem. But it is not now to see something positive and great and blessed and wonderful, but to see this image of jealousy, showing that we need the Spirit's help, whether to see what is positive in the way of blessing and the divine inheritance, or in order to be able to see what is evil. I have often thought of this passage - a man being transported through the heaven, from where he was, for he was in captivity, to Jerusalem. The divine mind was to show him things, that was the point, to show him this image of jealousy, this abominable thing to God. So it says "the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heavens, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entry of the inner gate that looked toward the north, where was the seat of the image". Then in verse 5, "he said unto me, Son of man, lift up now thine eyes toward the north". Think of the Spirit of God taking these pains to bring him to this point! He therefore wants him to see, he is not to miss, he said "lift up now thine eyes toward the north". He says, "And I lifted up mine eyes toward the north, and behold, northward of the gate of the altar, this image of jealousy in the entry. And he said unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? the great abominations that the house of Israel commit here, to cause me to go far away from my sanctuary? And yet again thou shalt see great abominations". He leads him in the chapter from point to point, to see the great abominations. The Spirit of God would have this man to see what they were going on with in Jerusalem at that time. So that, dear brethren, we need to be available to the Spirit of God in order that we might be able to see things. We need to see what God would bring before us at the present time, in

our localities, so that we might have a clean place, clean conditions in which He can operate, and bring about conditions that are suitable to God. Not this unholy condition, and idolatry that is here. Think of how the blessed God must have felt it to see it! We cannot close our eyes to what is around us in Christendom, and to all that is coming in, but what is the object in mind in our seeing it? It is that we ourselves are to be on our guard against it, and to be separate from it, so that we might be free for the service of God.

May the Lord help us to this end for His name's sake.